

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: NEW YORK, NY, MARCH, 2021:



For **Women's History Month**, Acis presents *In the Salon of Madame Brillon: Music and Friendship in Benjamin Franklin's Paris*—another exciting album from **REBECCA CYPRESS** and **THE RARITAN PLAYERS** that showcases the rediscovery of women in music history:

In late eighteenth-century Paris, composer and keyboardist **ANNE-LOUISE BRILLON DE JOUY** hosted artists, statesmen, and philosophers, including her good friend, **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN** for musical salons: “twice in every week... she kindly entertains me and my Grandson with little Concerts, a Dish of Tea and a Game of Chess. I call this my Opera: for I rarely go to the Opera at Paris.”
B.F. June 1780

This is **THE RARITAN PLAYERS'** third release by Acis and includes several world-premiere recordings. GRAMMY®-nominated producer **GEOFFREY SILVER** has said, “This is our third time working with Rebecca Cypess’s ensemble, and on each occasion, the melding of first-rate scholarship and award-level performance takes our breath away. As a matter of course, the role of women in music has been ignored or downplayed over the centuries, and Dr. Cypess’s work shines a light on such an important missing thread in our understanding of historical performance.”

Founded by musicologist and historical keyboardist **REBECCA CYPRESS** (Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University), the **RARITAN PLAYERS** explore little-known repertoire and performance practices of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries based on new musicological research, especially on the music and musical environments cultivated by women. **CYPRESS** has said, “This recording imagines a program of music that might have been heard in the salon of Madame Brillon, juxtaposing her own compositions with works dedicated to her.” The album cover features a portrait of Brillon by the Rococo master Fragonard, itself a testament to the esteem with which she was held during her lifetime. “Charles Burney, writing in 1773, offers a contemporary picture of her vast network of professional musicians and composers, describing her as ‘one of the greatest lady-players of the harpsichord in Europe,’” says **CYPRESS**.

The performers are: **DONGMYUNG AHN** (violin), a musicologist and an early string specialist who performs with the Sebastians, **TENET Vocal Artists**, and Pegasus; **SONYA HEADLAM** (soprano), a member of the GRAMMY®-nominated choir of Trinity Wall Street, and Vocalis; **EVE MILLER** (cello), principal cellist of the Philadelphia Bach Collegium and member of Tempesta di Mare; **YI-HENG YANG** (square piano) who performs with the Sebastians, the Knights, and, along with **CYPRESS**, won the 2018 AMS Noah Greenberg Award for contributions to historical performance; and **STEVEN ZOHN** (flute), who performs on historical flutes and is principal player for the Philadelphia Bach Collegium and NYS Baroque.

Critical Acclaim for The Raritan Players' previous releases:

SISTERS FACE TO FACE: THE BACH LEGACY IN WOMEN'S HANDS, Winner of the 2018 Noah Greenberg Award

“An unexpected treasure...This album could be better only if they could find a way to scent it with freshly-baked cookies.”
American Record Guide

“The performances are excellent in every way.”

Early Music

“Compelling and fascinating...a perfect showcase.”

Early Music America

“The timbral combination is so pleasing that it will leave the listener astonished that there aren’t more recordings like this. Highly recommended.”

CD Hotlist

“Cypess’ scholarly annotations delve deep into detail, and the sonics convey more than a semblance of salon-like intimacy. An enchanting disc.”

Classics Today

“An illuminating release.”

Fanfare

IN SARA LEVY’S SALON

“As ravishing as it is fascinating...stylish, brilliantly realised.”

*Classical Music 5**

“The performances are lovely, making an afternoon of genteel entertainment.”

Early Music

“Cypess’s liner notes...are but one stellar facet of this recording...The sheer historical value of the album is immeasurable, but its musical value is certainly no less...simply mesmerizing...flashes of wit and humor.”

Early Music America

“Rarely do albums of classical music provide such great insight into cultural history at the same time that they give such intense aesthetic pleasure...I don’t mind admitting that I wept the first time I heard this exquisite and touching rendition with Cypess on harpsichord and Yi-heng [Yang] on piano.”

Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women’s Studies & Gender Issues

“This was already early music at the time of Levy’s Salon...these pieces would not have survived without her...”

Cypess interviewed by BBC Radio 3’s Lucie Skeaping on The Early Music Show

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