

# The Corners of the Moon

## Uncanny Music for Halloween

Your vessels and your spells provide,  
Your charms and everything beside.  
I am for the air. This night I'll spend  
Unto a dismal and a fatal end.  
Great business must be wrought ere noon.  
Upon the corner of the moon  
There hangs a vap'rous drop profound.  
I'll catch it ere it come to ground.  
And that distilled by magic sleights  
Shall raise such artificial sprites  
As by the strength of their illusion  
Shall draw him on to his confusion.

—William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

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| 1 Gray's Inn Masque                             | John Coperario (1570–1626)                         |
| 2 The Cypress Curtain of the Night              | Thomas Campion (1567–1620)                         |
| 3 On the Cold Ground                            | <i>The Dancing Master</i> (1665)                   |
| Whiles I this Standing Lake                     | William Lawes (1602–1645)                          |
| 4 "I am thy father's spirit" from <i>Hamlet</i> | William Shakespeare (1564–1616)                    |
| 5 Dance After my Pipe                           | Pepys Ballads (c.1620–80) arr. K. Burciaga         |
| 6 Grim King of the Ghosts                       | Roxburgh Ballads (17th-c.)                         |
| 7 "The owl is abroad" from Masque of Queens     | Ben Jonson (1572–1637)                             |
| 8 Come Away Death                               | 16th-c. arr. David Douglass                        |
| 9 Faire and Foule Weather                       | John Mundy (c.1555–1630)                           |
| 10 Nobodys Jig / Black Nag                      | <i>The English Dancing Master</i> (1679/1652)      |
| 11 The Mad Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow     | Roxburgh Ballads                                   |
| 12 Introduction from <i>The Tempest</i>         | Matthew Locke (c.1621–1677)                        |
| Satyr's Dance                                   | Robert Johnson (c.1583–1633)                       |
| 13 Emperor of the Moon                          | <i>The Dancing Master</i> (1690)                   |
| 14 from <i>Anatomy of Melancholy</i>            | Robert Burton (1577–1640)                          |
| 15 Fantasia no. 7 in D minor                    | William Lawes (1602–1645)                          |
| 16 Tom a Bedlam / Mad Moll                      | trad. English, arr. Alastair Thompson              |
| Mad Maudlin's Reply                             | 17th-c. English / <i>The Dancing Master</i> (1698) |
| 17 The Irish Ho-Hoane                           | <i>Pills to Purge Melancholy</i> (1720)            |
| 18 Pow'rful Morpheus Let thy Charms             | William Webb (c.1600–1657)                         |
| 19 Barrow Faustus Dreame                        | Rosseter's <i>Lessons for Consort</i> (1609)       |
| 20 In Envy of the Night                         | William Lawes                                      |
| 21 "To rest, to rest" from <i>Oberon</i>        | Ben Jonson   |
| 22 The Dawning of the Day                       | John Rook manuscript (1840)                        |

### SEVENTIMES SALT

Karen Burciaga – violin, guitar, harp, voice

Dan Meyers – recorder, flute, cornamuse, percussion, voice

David H. Miller – bass viol, voice

Matthew Wright – lute, voice

*with special guests*

Agnes Coakley Cox – soprano, percussion

Alastair Thompson – harpsichord, voice

*live concert recording October 2019*

## Notes

From the fifteenth century on, the season of revelry at the Inns of Court began on All Hallows' Eve and lasted until Candlemas in early February. This span of time is at least one reckoning of winter in the early modern British Isles, because it is the darkest quarter of the year, being roughly six weeks either side of the winter solstice. It is in that darkness that the two threads of our program are united. One thread is that courtly season of splendor "when winter nights enlarge the number of their hours," as Campion puts it in another song. The other thread in the darkness is very old; for ordinary mortal souls who worked the land, the night before All Saints' Day was when the spirits of the dead walked the earth again, and other creatures, too. In the West Country, the church bells rang all night long to dissuade malignant spirits. Throughout England and Scotland, All Hallows' Eve was a time for divination, too—if you went alone to the mirror with a candle that night, you would see your future spouse in the reflection; if you put a pair of hazelnuts in the fire, you could discern from how they roasted and whether they scorched or popped whether a love affair would run smoothly. After summer's long, laborious days and the hard work of harvest, at this time of year, the nights of leisure begin to crackle with power.

We begin with Coperario's **Grays Inn Masque**, to welcome you to this night of revelry with candlelight and suave music in a comfortable hall. Campion's ode to a restless night, though elevated in tone, wrestles with existential anxiety. At night, mortality is somehow closer, and with it come dreams and visions of hell. The sublime, serious side of the seventeenth century admits two kinds of supernatural: one, comical and surprising (**The Satyrs' Masque**, later in the program) and the other eerie and grotesque (**Whiles I this Standing Lake**).

As the deep silence of the middle of the night falls, spirits of the dead begin to walk, and we are visited by the ghost of Hamlet's father. Shakespeare's reputation as England's greatest playwright was made not by performances in his own time, but by the huge success of revival productions during the Restoration. His plays dealing with the supernatural were especially popular with late 17th-century audiences, and Matthew Locke wrote music for successful revivals of both *The Tempest* and *Macbeth*, though sadly no complete scores survive for either. Locke's theatre music is one of the first instances in English music where dynamics are specified, such as "softer" and "louder by degrees" as well as tremolos for the strings, which Purcell later copied.

**Dance After My Pipe**, a doleful reminder that Death comes for all, is sung to the mysterious tune Shaking of the Sheets. Rather than use the jolly version of the tune played today, we reconstructed an older tune from two Elizabethan sources wherein it appears in fragments: Cobbold's New Fashions and a hexachord fantasia by Byrd. The "shaking of the sheets" refers both to bedsheets (and the joys of youth) and to the winding sheets used to wrap corpses. **Grim King of the Ghosts** was a popular ballad at the end of the seventeenth century, in which a young man calls down supernatural vengeance on his lover. We chose to pair it with a roaring dance tune called The Devil's Dream. But not all the dancers in our macabre spectacle are dead; we welcome to our nighttime revels the witches, who were believed to use unwholesome magic to poison and overthrow the social order. In this period, their power was seen to derive from the Devil, in a perversion of Christianity. In addition to causing sickness and death, witches were also widely believed to cause storms, "in thunder, lightning, or in rain." After a disturbing interlude of "horrible music" and incantations, you'll hear the inimitable David Douglass' arrangement of **Come Away Death**, originally set for the Newberry Consort. The tune usually appears in theatre sources as a slow, sad song—either "Come Away Death" or "There Dwelt A Man In Babylon" as in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*). David arranged this jaunty version for an improvised dance sequence, and we think the tune works well as a spooky, driving "Totentanz" (death dance). Then, the mischievous sprite Robin Goodfellow boasts of tormenting humans with his midnight antics in **Mad Merry Pranks**, set to the tune of Dulcina. His character appears across early modern Europe, including as the Scottish brownie, the Swedish tomte, and the rascal Puck in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Our masque continues with a vision of the satyrs of the forest dancing beneath the moon; the music is so clearly written for the dancers to strike extraordinary poses, inspired by classical and baroque statuary. And as soon as we have danced before the moon, we are transported there, perhaps like the main character of Francis Godwin's 1638 proto science-fiction hit, *The Man in the Moone*. Godwin's book begat a number of literary moon voyages, including the fantastical commedia **Emperor of the Moon** (1687) by Aphra Behn, which gave the sprightly, odd tune its name. The moon was also, by a very old superstition, believed to influence and damage our human wits, whence came the word "Lunatic" for a person who was not in full self-control. London's Bethlem (from "Bethlehem") Royal Hospital has been a mental hospital for six centuries. Conditions in the 1700-1800s were truly miserable, with filthy facilities, and patients malnourished and abused on a regular basis. Its common name of "Bedlam" came to be associated with lunacy and chaos, and it became the unfortunate fashion for well-to-do-Londoners to pay a fee to go and observe the patients as they would animals in a zoo. The characters of **Tom a Bedlam** and **Mad Maudlin** present theatrical, jolly versions of madness, with Tom commanding the Moon and night spirits, and Maudlin (a contraction of "Magdalene") boasting of her visit to Satan's kitchen and murdering giants. Some aspects of the strange interior worlds of Tom and Maudlin evoke the old belief in a supernatural origin for insanity. We offer these as a tribute to those who walk, and sing, to the beat of their own drum.

Continuing the vision of the vast loneliness of space, we perform **The Irish Ho-hoane**, a corruption of "ochone", an untranslatable expression of grief or regret found in Irish laments, the equivalent of "woe is me". This beautiful tune was likely written to sound "Irish" to the English ear. Interestingly, the note D# on the Irish uilleann pipe chanter is not a real note, but can sound anywhere between a sharp D and a flat E, and often has an eerie, hollow timbre compared to the rest of the scale. For this reason it's usually called a "ghost D" by pipers, we have chosen to perform the Irish Ho-hoane in E minor so that the flute can imitate the "ghost D" sound. Having reached the darkest moment of night, **Pow'rful Morpheus**, the god of sleep and dreams, finally brings some respite. Our lone consort lesson this evening is **Barrow Faustus Dreame** from Philip Rosseter's *Lessons for Consort* of 1609. Sadly, the partbooks are incomplete and Rosseter's divisions for this haunting tune do not survive, so we took the opportunity to write our own for recorder and violin, mingled with variations from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. As dawn arrives and drives away the night's fantastical visions, we conclude our program with **The Dawning of the Day**, a sword dance from northwest England. The terrors of the night are fled, the bells are ringing in All Saints' Day, and our journey through the happy nights of the season of feasts and music has begun.

## Texts

2.

**The cypress curtain of the night** is spread,  
And over all a silent dew is cast.  
The weaker cares by sleep are conquered;  
But I alone, with hideous grief, aghast,  
In spite of Morpheus' charms, a watch do keep  
Over mine eyes, to banish careless sleep.

Yet oft my trembling eyes through faintness close,  
And then the Map of hell before me stands,  
Which Ghosts do see, and I am one of those  
Ordain'd to pine in sorrow's endless bands,  
Since from my wretched soul all hopes are reft  
And now no cause of life to me is left.

3.

**Whiles I this standing lake**,  
Swathed up with yew and cypress boughs,  
Do move by sighs and vows,  
Let sadness only wake;  
That whiles thick darkness stains the light  
My thoughts may cast another night,  
In which double shade, by heaven, and me made,  
Oh, let me weep and fall asleep and forgotten fade.  
Hark! From yonder hollow tree  
Sadly do sing two anch'ret\* owls,  
Whiles the hermit wolf howls,  
All warning me to die,  
Whiles from the graves  
My wronged love craves  
My sad company.  
Cease, Hylas\*, cease thy call;  
Such, oh such was thy parting groan,  
Breathed out to me alone  
When thou disdain'd did'st fall,  
Lo, thus unto thy silent tomb,  
In my sad winding sheet I come,  
Creeping o'er dead bones, and marble stones,  
That I may mourne over thy urn,  
And appease thy groans.

\*anchorite - hermit

\*boy beloved of Hercules who was drowned by  
water nymphs

5.

**Dance after my Pipe.** *The doleful Dance, and Song of Death,  
To a Pleasant New Tune.*

Can you dance the shaking of the sheets,  
a dance that every one must do?  
Can you trim it up with dainty sweets,  
and every thing as longs\* thereto?  
Make ready then your winding sheet,  
And see how you can bestir your feet,  
For death is the man that all must meet.

\*belongs

Bring away the Begger and the King,  
and every man in his degree,  
Bring the oldest and the youngest thing,  
come all to death and follow me.  
The Courtier with his lofty looks,  
The Lawyer with his learned Books,  
The Banker with his baiting-hooks.

And you that lean on your Ladies laps,  
and lay your heads upon their knee,  
Think you for to play with beautiful paps,  
and not to come and dance with me:  
No, fair Lords and Ladies all,  
I will make you come when I do call,  
And find you a Pipe to dance withal.

For I can quickly cool you all,  
how hot or stout so ere you be,  
Both high and low, both great and small,  
I nought do fear your high-degree.  
The Ladies fair, the Beldams old,  
The Champion stout, the Souldier bold,  
Must all with me to earthly mold.

Therefore take time while it is lent,  
prepare with me your selves to dance,  
Forget me not, your lives lament,  
I come oftentimes by sudden chance.  
Be ready therefore, watch and pray,  
That when my Minstrel pipe doth play,  
You may to Heaven dance the way.

6.

**Grim King of the Ghosts** make hast,  
And bring hither all your Train;  
See how the pale Moon dos wast!  
And just now is in the Wain:  
Come you Night-Hags with all your Charms,  
And Revelling Witches away,  
And hug me close in your Arms,  
To you my Respects I'll pay.

I'll Court you and think you fair,  
Since Love dos distract my Brain;  
I'll go and I'll wed the Night-Mare,  
And kiss her and kiss her again,  
But if she proves peevish and proud,  
Then a pise of her Love let her go,  
I'll seek me a winding Shroud,  
And down to the Shades below.

A Lunacy I endure,  
Since Reason departs away;  
I call to those Hags for cure,  
As knowing not what I say:  
The Beauty whom I do adore,  
Now slights me with scorn and disdain;  
I never shall see her more,  
Oh! how shall I bear my pain?

Strange Fancies doth fill my Head,  
While wand'ring in Despair,  
I am to the Desarts lead,  
Expecting to find her there:  
Methinks in a spangl'd Cloud  
I see her enthron'd on high,  
Then to her I cry'd aloud,  
And labour'd to reach the Sky.

Grim King of the Ghosts be true,  
And hurry me hence away;  
My languishing Life to you,  
As Tribute I freely pay:  
To the Elizium Shades I post,  
In hopes to be free from Care,  
Where many a bleeding Ghost  
Is hovering in the Air.

11.

### **The Mad Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow**

From Oberon in Fairy Land,  
The King of Ghosts and shaddows there,  
Mad Robin I at his command,  
Am sent to view the Night-sports here:  
What Revel Rout, is kept about,  
In every corner where I go;  
I will ore see, and merry be,  
And make good sport with, ho ho ho.

More swift then Lightning can I flye,  
And round about this ayrie welkin soon,  
And in a minutes space discry,  
Each thing thats done beneath the Moon:  
Theres not a Hag, Nor Ghost shall wag,  
Nor cry Goblin where I do go,  
But Robin I, their feats will spy,  
And fear them home with, ho ho ho.

When Lads and Lasses merry be,  
With Possets and with junkets fine,  
Unseen of all the Company,  
I eat their Cakes and drink their Wine:  
And to make sport, I fart and snort,  
And out the Candles I do blow,  
The Maids I kiss, they shriek, whose this?  
I answer nought but, ho ho ho.

From Hag-bred Merlins time have I,  
Thus mighty Revel'd to and fro,  
And for my Pranks Men call me by  
The name of Robin Good-fellow.  
Fiends, Ghosts, and Sprites, that haunt the nights,  
The Hags and Goblins do me know  
And Beldams old, my feats have told,  
So farewell, farewell, ho ho ho.

16.

### **Tom a Bedlam**

From the hag and hungry goblin  
That into rags would rend ye,  
The spirit that stands by the naked man  
In the Book of Moons defend ye,  
That of your five sound senses  
You never be forsaken,  
Nor wander from your selves with Tom  
Abroad to beg youra bacon,  
While I do sing, Any food, any feeding,  
Feeding, drink, or clothing;  
Come dame or maid, be not afraid,  
Poor Tom will injure nothing.

With a thought I took for Maudlin  
And a cruse of cockle pottage,  
With a thing thus tall, sky bless you all,  
I befell into this dotage.  
I slept not since the Conquest,  
Till then I never waked,  
Till the roguish boy of love where I lay  
Me found and stript me naked.

When I short have shorn my sow's face  
And swigged my horny barrel,  
In an oaken inn I pound my skin  
As a suit of gilt apparel;  
The moon's my constant mistress,  
And the lowly owl my marrow;  
The flaming drake and the night crow make  
Me music to my sorrow.

With a host of furious fancies  
Whereof I am commander,  
With a burning spear and a horse of air,  
To the wilderness I wander.  
By a knight of ghosts and shadows  
I summoned am to tourney  
Ten leagues beyond the wide world's end:  
Methinks it is no journey.

### **Mad Maudlin's Reply**

For to see Mad Tom of Bedlam  
Ten thousand miles I traveled  
Mad Maudlin goes on dirty toes  
For to save her shoes from gravel.  
I now repent that ever  
Poor Tom was so disdaind  
My wits are lost since him I crossed  
Which makes me thus go chained  
*Yet will I sing bonny boys, bonny mad boys*  
*Bedlam boys are bonny*  
*For they all go bare and they live by the air*  
*And they want no drink or money.*

My staff has murdered giants  
My bag a long knife carries  
For to cut mince pies from children's thighs  
And feed them to the fairies.  
The spirits white as lightning  
Would on me travels guide me  
The stars would shake and the moon would quake  
Whenever they espied me.

I went down to Satan's kitchen  
For to get me food one morning  
And there I got souls piping hot  
All on the spit a-turning.  
There I took up a caldron  
Where boiled ten thousand harlots  
Though full of flame I drank the same  
To the health of all such varlets.

No gypsy, slut or doxy  
Shall win my mad Tom from me  
I'll weep all night, with stars I'll fight  
The fray shall well become me  
And when that I'll be murdering  
The Man in the Moon to powder  
His staff I'll break, his dog I'll shake  
And there'll howl no demon louder.

So drink to Tom of Bedlam  
Go fill the seas in barrels  
I'll drink it all, well brewed with gall  
And maudlin drunk I'll quarrel.

18.

**Pow'rful Morpheus**, let thy charms  
Wrap the world in slumber's arms  
And Music's soft delicious strains,  
Thou that both heart and care doth change  
With the sweet composed numbers,  
Rock each mortal into slumbers.  
So no ear or eye shall know  
Where we are or what we do.

Watching Circe, play and sing,  
Touch your sweet enchanting string  
That Phoebus may in Thetis' lap  
Outsleep himself but one hour's nap\*  
Let his bright allseeing fires  
Rouse us from our wish'd desires.  
Lovers in their stol'n delight  
Wish it were perpetual night.

*Morpheus - the shaper, god of sleep and dreams*

*Circe - enchantress from the Odyssey*

*\*that the sun may sleep beneath the ocean for one more hour*

20.

**AMPHILUCA: In envy of the night**

That keeps her revels here  
With my unwelcome light,  
Thus I invade her sphere,  
Proclaiming wars to Cynthia and all her stars,  
That like so many spangles dress her azure tress.  
Because I cannot be a guest, I'll rise  
To shame the moon and put out all her eyes.

*Amphiluca - the planet Venus, herald of the morning*

*Cynthia - the moon*