

The upcoming release of *Fête Galante* and *The Happy Prince*, the first review of *The Jubilee*, and much more!

In this Newsletter, we report on progress on our disc of Smyth's Fête Galante and Lehmann's The Happy Prince, a review of Dibdin's The Jubilee, and more of our news here at Retrospect Opera.

The recording engineer was Dave Rowell and the recording producer was Richard Sutcliffe. Neither were strangers to Retrospect Opera, having worked with us on previous recordings, nor indeed to the University of Surrey, since both were students there.

Chris was also on hand to help out—and Valerie says that his page-turning skills were invaluable!

Recording of *The Happy Prince*

Our latest recording—of Liza Lehmann's melodrama *The Happy Prince*, based on Oscar Wilde's story of the same name—took place in the main studio at the University of Surrey on 2 August.

We are delighted that the reciter for the performance was none other than the world-renowned **Dame Felicity Lott**, accompanied by our own **Valerie Langfield** on piano.



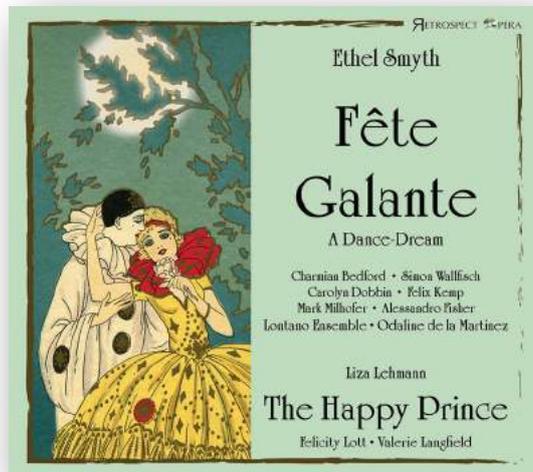
(l-r) Richard Sutcliffe, Valerie Langfield, Dame Felicity Lott and Dave Rowell in the recording studio



Dame Felicity Lott and (at the piano) Valerie Langfield

The Happy Prince is the companion-piece to our recording of Ethel Smyth's opera *Fête Galante*. The disc will include remastering's of the historical recordings of excerpts from Smyth's final three operas, conducted by Adrian Boult. This includes movements from *Fête Galante* and *Entente Cordiale*, together with the short Interlude from *The Boatswain's Mate* which often goes unmentioned on Internet listings because nobody recognises it (!).

The disc is coming along very nicely and we hope that it will be released in late October. Here's a preview of an advanced draft of the album cover.



The album cover of Fête Galante and The Happy Prince

Reviews of *The Jubilee*

Our recently released disc of Charles Dibdin's collaborations with David Garrick—including *The Jubilee*, *Queen Mab*, and *Datchet Mead*—has already started to be favourably reviewed. Here's an extract from the *Light Music Society's* review:

"Garrick seems to have brought out some fine music in Dibdin, as this CD will attest. [...] *Queen Mab* is the only part of the CD to feature a small ensemble, beautifully executed adding to the piano stylings of Stephen Higgins [...] Higgins, who graced Retrospect's previous Dibdin release with his playing is undeniably the best man for the job here and clearly has a feel not only for the period, but also the capacity of the instrument. Simon Butteriss also appeared on the *Christmas Gambols* CD and it is thrilling to have him back for this one. In many ways, he has the hardest job, as it is down to him to not only play the role of Dibdin the impresario, but also multiple characters he created—it is a tour-de-force of vocal characterisation and sensitive singing. Three other voices are present at different times on the recording: the soprano Soraya Mafi, who

carries the air *O Happy Bard* in *Queen Mab*, which is a real highlight of this recording for me, mezzo Heather Shipp, who sings the comical *All this for a Poet* in *The Jubilee* with fantastically pithy humour and tenor Robert Murray, who shines as the fairy minstrel in *Datchet Mead*—particularly the charming aria *Shepherds Bring the Oaten Reed*. As an ensemble, it is a dream team—blending beautifully with one another in the (rare) full ensemble moments [...] Listeners of light music really should cherish this as a true example of light music of another century; it is full of humour, wit and great tunes."

– Dan Adams, *Light Music Society*, June 2019
<https://lightmusicsociety.com/2019/06/19/charles-dibdin-david-garrick-the-jubilee-with-queen-mab-and-datchet-mead/>

In addition, our release of Edward Loder's *Raymond and Agnes* received international coverage recently when it was reviewed alongside another opera release conducted by Richard Bonyngue, Alfred Cellier's *Dorothy* by Victorian Opera Northwest, in the July/August issue of the German magazine *Orpheus: Oper und mehr*.

Retrospect Opera at Harrogate

David and Valerie went to the Gilbert & Sullivan Festival at Harrogate on 10 August, at which Retrospect Opera had a presence in the form of a stall at the Memorabilia Fair.



David at the Retrospect Opera stall at Harrogate

There was plenty of interest in our recordings, particularly in *The Jubilee*, to which a number of people were introduced.

Change of Bank

Please note that we have recently changed our bank. Our new details are as follows:

The Co-Operative Bank
P.O. Box 250
Delf House
Southway
Skelmersdale
WN8 6WT UK

Please contact us if you'd like to donate this way.

Should you be kind enough to be considering a donation via bank transfer, please be sure to use these new details.

Dr Odaline de la Martinez

Many congratulations to Odaline de la Martinez, our wonderful conductor for our recordings of Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate* and *Fête Galante*, who was recently awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Surrey.



Odaline de la Martinez receives her honorary doctorate

Dr Martinez (on the left in the photograph below) received her award from the University's Pro-Chancellor at a ceremony last month. We are all delighted for her!

Don't forget that if you introduce a new supporter who donates £50 or more to Retrospect Opera, you can claim a free copy of any of our single-CD releases!

Special offer for Fête Galante subscribers

If you are a subscriber to our soon-to-be-released recording of *Fête Galante*, we would like to make you a special offer of **either *The Wreckers* or *The Boatswain's Mate* for £10** (or, of course, both for £20).

This is because, now that we have three Smyth opera recordings in our catalogue, we'd like to encourage interest in Smyth's career and artistic development, during a period that saw her embrace Germanic serious opera, English comic opera, and finally neoclassicism.

Should you wish to take advantage of this special offer, please contact us using the e-mail address below.

If you were unlucky enough to receive a damaged booklet for The Wreckers, or you have found that the second CD of Raymond and Agnes doesn't play properly, please contact us for a replacement.

Ethel Smyth: Grasp the Nettle—new dates

In a previous Newsletter, we reported on *Ethel Smyth: Grasp the Nettle*, a one-woman show telling Smyth's story through her own words and music, devised and performed by Lucy Stevens (contralto) and Elizabeth Marcus (piano).

Recently performed at the private villa that was once the residence of Smyth's librettist, Henry Brewster, in Florence, Italy, the show has now announced several dates for September 2019. Please see the website for further information:

<https://ethelsmyth.com/performance-dates/>



In addition, Lucy and Liz's second CD of Smyth's songs, to be released on the SOMM label, is due to be recorded next month. We wish them the very best with this project!

Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate*—performances at St Albans

If anyone is in the North London/Hertfordshire area, or can get to it, you might like to know of a production of Ethel Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate* by St Albans Chamber Opera.

It will take place on Thursday 24 and Friday 25 October at 8:00pm in the Abbey Theatre Studio Theatre, Westminster Lodge, Holywell Hill, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 2DL.

Tickets: boxoffice@abbeytheatre.org.uk
Tel.: (01727) 857861

It's a fully staged production, with piano. We're really pleased to hear about this—as with any other production of an opera we've recorded—as this means our recordings are achieving our aims, to increase awareness of the rich heritage of British opera.

Do please go if you can, and support the company.

Victorian Musical Celebration in Upham, Hampshire

Our subscriber Roger Hansford has let us know of a concert that may be of interest to you, taking place at the Blessed Mary Church, Upham, SO32 1JH on Thursday 5 September at 7:30pm.

Ann Dent (mezzo-soprano) and Richard Dewland (pianist and organ solo) will present a Victorian musical celebration, with the combined choirs of Blessed Mary, Upham and St Peter's Church, Bishop's Waltham. Roger himself fulfils the role of organist and researcher.

Tickets are £10 including refreshments, available from the Parish Office (bwuoffice@tiscali.co.uk or 01489 892197).

And finally...

We are still considering which project(s) to undertake next, and are in discussions with various people and bodies over several possibilities.

Thank you for some thoughtful and useful responses to our request for feedback over our shortlist.

Donations to Retrospect Opera may be made through this link:
<http://www.retrospectopera.org.uk/Donate.html>

Our CDs may be purchased here (you may have to copy and paste the URL in two parts):
http://www.retrospectopera.org.uk/CD_Sales.html



*With thanks, as always, from the team
at Retrospect Opera:*

David, Valerie, Andy and Chris