



Happy Christmas, and renewed thanks to all our supporters!

It has been such a busy year at Retrospect Opera that we can hardly believe that it's already time for the Christmas Newsletter! Here's a round-up of our news on each of our projects. We apologise if some kind souls, through their generosity, receive this Newsletter more than once.

We are even more excited that the world-renowned **Richard Bonyng**e has agreed to conduct!

Richard has enjoyed a long and illustrious career as a conductor of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century opera in venues across the world, and has recorded over 50 complete operas. He is particularly known for his long-standing artistic collaboration with his late wife, the soprano Dame Joan Sutherland. Originally from Sydney, Richard was awarded the CBE in the Queen's Silver Jubilee year. Richard tells us how enormously impressed he is by the quality of Loder's music, and he is greatly looking forward to working on our project. Valerie has worked with Richard before, on other opera projects (Wallace's *Lurline* (Naxos label) and the CD of Victorian Opera Overtures (SOMM label)), and is delighted to have the chance to collaborate with him again.



Raymond and Agnes

We have been working hard these past few months to find ways to make our recording of **Edward Loder's *Raymond and Agnes*** economically viable. We're all too aware that it's a long time since we began fundraising, and following the Loder event last year in Bath, it must look as if there's been no activity, but in fact, there's been a great deal going on behind the scenes. We came to the conclusion that our previous budget figures were simply too high to be manageable, but we are very pleased to say that we have finally found a feasible path. We have asked the Royal Ballet Sinfonia to be our orchestra, but we are very sad that we have to say goodbye to the Bath Philharmonia – they've been so very keen on the project, right from the start. But the Sinfonia is funded in a completely different way from the Bath Phil, and this has enabled us to reduce costs drastically.



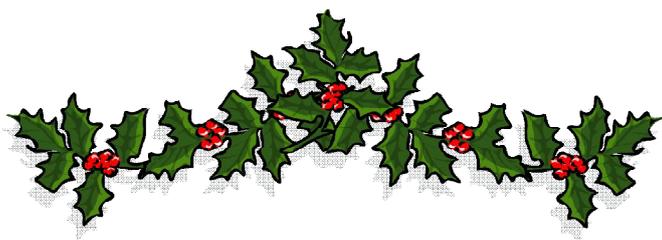
*Richard Bonyng*e

The recording of *Raymond and Agnes* will take place on **16–19 October 2017**, at St Jude-on-the-Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb – a beautiful North London church, and a very

popular venue for professional recording sessions!



St Jude-on-the-Hill, Hampstead



Pickwick and Cups and Saucers

Our recording sessions of **Solomon and Burnand's *Pickwick*** and **George Grossmith's *Cups and Saucers*** at The National Opera Studio, Wandsworth, London in September 2016 were very successful. The recordings are now in edit and they sound brilliant!

We are on schedule for a **release early in 2017**.

Time is therefore running out for you to **increase your donation** from Supporter to Sponsor, if you would like your name to appear in the accompanying CD booklet. Details on how to donate may be found below.

Special offer: anyone who introduces a new Sponsor who donates at least £50 to any of our projects will receive a free *Pickwick* CD as a thank-you for your continued support!

Just email (or write to) us with relevant details.

To donate to any of our current projects:
<http://www.retrospectopera.org.uk/Donate.html>

There is still a great deal to raise for the recording of *Raymond and Agnes*. Many of you were generous to donate very early on, before we became a charity, and these gifts were not eligible for Gift Aid.

But if you felt able to repeat your donation (even at a lower level), and if you are a UK taxpayer, we can **increase that donation by 25%**! This will make a big difference to the funding for *Raymond and Agnes*.

The Boatswain's Mate

Our major achievement this year was our inaugural release of the first complete recording of **Ethel Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate*** as a two-CD set, including some historic recordings of the composer conducting extracts from her opera.

We are thrilled that our release has received great reviews! Here are a few extracts:

The recording quality of the of the music is ideal. The clarity of the singing is never in doubt. [...] As a package this is exceptional. It is exactly how 'revived' operas should be presented.

– John France, *MusicWeb International*

Lontano plays [...] with pristine point and elegance [...] Nadine Benjamin's creamy lyric soprano hits her musical marks [...] three authoritative essays, a complete libretto and high production values all round, enhances an auspicious debut.

– Christopher Webber, *Opera*

Nadine Benjamin makes a lovely Mrs Waters, with Edward Lee and Jeremy Huw Williams providing a fine double act as the two conspirators. [...] This recording successfully brings out the work's charms.

– Robert Hugill, *planethugill.com*

and this absolutely outstanding one:

This recording, a wholly remarkable achievement, should be in the collection of everyone interested in British music. [...] this is the work's first complete recording, and one cannot imagine it being better done. [...] apart from the excellence of the performances from each member of the cast, and the fine quality of the recorded sound, there is equally no doubt that a great deal of preparation has gone into the realisation of this hugely original score. [...] this masterly little masterpiece is wonderfully well served by an admirable cast [...] This set will be a revelation to those unfamiliar with Smyth's work.

– Robert Matthew-Walker, *Musical Opinion*

Our CD was also made *Opera* magazine's **CD of the Month** for October 2016, received a favourable mention in the December edition of *BBC Music Magazine*, and extracts were broadcast on BBC Radio 3's breakfast show in October. Several extracts were also played on Radio Woking, during an extended interview with Chris, our publicity officer, speaking in his capacity as an expert on the music of Ethel Smyth (who lived in Woking for over 30 years).

So all of you Smyth subscribers – we hope you are very proud of what you have helped achieve!

All of you can continue to help, by asking your radio station of choice to play a track or two from the recording. Because we have set up our own label, the airtime royalties (paid by the broadcasting companies) accrue to us, and the performers get performance royalties too, so it helps us all. In the UK, the BBC and Classic FM have copies of the CD, so they've no excuse! We get (eventually) royalties from anywhere in the world that the recording is played, not just the UK.

Following the success of *The Boatswain's Mate*, we are now hard at work fundraising to record Smyth's next opera, *Fête Galante*, which we are delighted that Odaline de la Martinez has again agreed to conduct.

Please consider donating to help us revive this charming work – details on how you may do so are above.

A fantastic Christmas present!

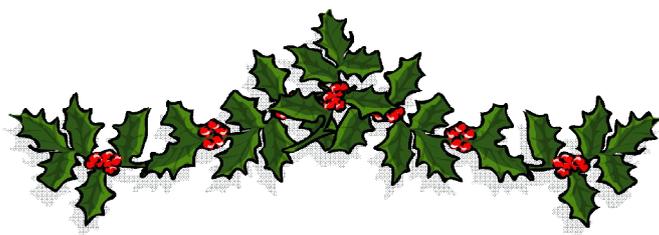
Ethel Smyth's *The Boatswain's Mate* is available for purchase from our website, priced at **£14.95** (post free within the UK, add £2.50 within Europe, £3.50 worldwide):
http://www.retrospectopera.org.uk/CD_Sales.html

You have to pay using the 'Donate' button but be assured, you *are* buying the CD. You can always email us if you want to be certain.

It can also be found on Amazon at £15.95 (excluding delivery costs):
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Boatswains-Mate-Ethel-Smyth/dp/B01HIJX83Q/>

This is an exceptionally busy time for Retrospect Opera – planning the recording of Raymond and Agnes, continuing to market and sell The Boatswain's Mate, preparing Pickwick for release, and initiating fundraising for Smyth's Fête Galante.

It's also a very exciting time!



With all best wishes for the festive season and 2017, and many thanks from the team at Retrospect Opera for your continued support:

David, Valerie, Andy and Chris