



## Recording of *Christmas Gambols* and our first re-release!

*In this Newsletter, we report on the recording sessions for Dibdin's Christmas Gambols, a cast change for Raymond and Agnes, the continuing success of Pickwick, and our imminent re-release of Smyth's opera The Wreckers!*

### Recording of *Christmas Gambols*

Our latest project, Charles Dibdin's one-man "Table Entertainment" *Christmas Gambols*, was recorded last week on Monday to Thursday, with editing on Friday – notwithstanding the uncharacteristically hot British weather!

As you'll see from the photos on the next page, the work was performed by **Simon Butteriss**, accompanied by **Stephen Higgins** at the fortepiano. Also in the photos is Andy, who edited the music of *Christmas Gambols*.



Stephen Higgins at the fortepiano



Alexander Skeaping, keeping the fortepiano in perfect order

For the sake of period authenticity, we used a 1978 Derek Adlam copy of a Heilmann Viennese fortepiano of 1785 – this particular instrument is frequently used at Glyndebourne, Garsington, Grange Park Opera, English National Opera, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Royal Albert Hall. It's a lovely example of a reproduction Viennese fortepiano – it has a five-octave compass with sustain, felt-damped "soft pedal" and 'Fagotti' stop, all operated by knee-levers. It was loaned to us by Alexander Skeaping, who stayed with us during the recording to keep it in perfect tune and adjustment.

We used fortepiano for the beautiful sound it contributes to *Christmas Gambols*, softer and sweeter in tone than a modern piano, and the unique sense of atmosphere it therefore creates.



Andy, our engineer Paul Riley, and Simon Butteriss, listening intently to the recording (above and below)



Simon bringing Charles Dibdin to life



All being well, *Christmas Gambols* will go on sale later this year, paired with *The Musical Tour of Mr Dibdin*, priced at £8.95 from our website (£9.95 if bought on Amazon). We are still raising funds to make this release possible, and if you or anyone you know would be interested in supporting this unique revival, please do get in touch!

### Cast change for *Raymond and Agnes*

The role of Madelina in our upcoming recording of *Raymond and Agnes* will now be taken by **Carolyn Dobbin**, replacing Madeleine Shaw, who has had to withdraw.



Stephen and Simon in the recording studio



Carolyn Dobbin

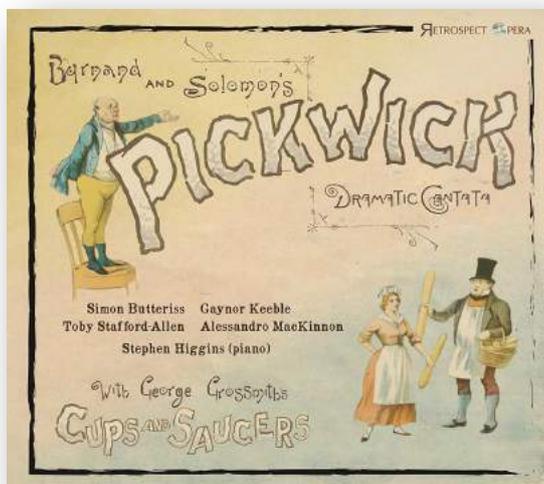
Carolyn studied opera at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and became

an Associate Artist at Welsh National Opera in 2010. She has sung a wide range of operatic roles during her career, and has performed across the UK and Europe. She is very excited about singing in such a remarkable opera.

The recording will take place on 16–19 October 2017 as originally planned. Soloist rehearsals have already begun!

### More reviews of *Pickwick*

Our latest release, of F.C. Burnand and Edward Solomon's *Pickwick* and George Crossmith's *Cups and Saucers*, continues to attract critical acclaim.



Retrospect Opera's *Pickwick*

In its Summer 2017 issue, *Light Music Society* wrote as follows:

*"Retrospect Opera, who pride themselves on releasing hitherto unknown British operas and operettas (pre-Britten) to the public in performance and on disc [...] are doing English music fans a great service. [...]"*

*Gaynor Keeble sings the role of Mrs Bardell with wit and insight and her voice is the kind that one could listen to for hours on end. Simon Butteriss plays the role of Mr. Pickwick and captures the character so well in an audio recording that the listener really does not miss a visual production. [...]"*

*"A highly recommendable CD for lovers of Dickens and of Gilbert and Sullivan style operettas, superbly recorded and packaged."*

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!

### Opera 5's performance of *Suffragette*

We are delighted to hear of the success last week of **Opera 5's** staging of *Suffragette*, a double bill of Smyth's operas *The Boatswain's Mate* and *Fête Galante*, at the Theatre Passe Muraille Mainspace in Toronto.

What's more, they used our performing materials prepared by Valerie. It's tremendous to know that our recordings (made possible by you, our subscribers) are enabling productions of these works worldwide.

Their reviews have been extremely favourable:

- *"The sheer exuberance of this production, its sweeping generosity of spirit, is utterly irresistible."*  
– Ian Ritchie, *Opera Going Toronto* (<http://operagoto.com/suffragette-review/>)
- *"Opera 5's SUFFRAGETTE is an impressive endeavour"*  
– Taylor Long, *Broadway World* (<http://www.broadwayworld.com/toronto/article/BWW-Review-Opera-5s-SUFFRAGETTE-20170623>)
- *"Suffragette continues to provoke and resonate today because of the vital relationship between art and politics in our everyday lives."*  
– Pamela Dungao, *Mooney on Theatre* (<https://www.mooneyontheatre.com/2017/06/23/review-suffragette-opera-5/>)



*Suffragette*, performed by Opera 5 in Toronto

### Current – and future – releases

Sales of *The Boatswain's Mate* and *Pickwick* remain steady. We are sending copies all over the world!

We are delighted to say that another release is imminent: we have negotiated with Sony BMG to re-release the 1994 recording of *The Wreckers* on the Retrospect Opera label!

This is a recording of a live performance at The Proms in 1994 with Huddersfield Choral Society and the BBC Philharmonic, conducted by Odaline de la Martinez and originally released by Conifer Classics. It will be a few weeks yet before our re-release appears. It will be priced at £17.95 if purchased on our website (£18.95 if buying through Amazon) – a little dearer than *Boatswain*, to cover the licence and other costs.



We are extremely pleased about this development – once we have recorded *Fête Galante*, we will have 3 of Smyth's 6 operas in our catalogue!

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](http://www.retrospectopera.org.uk/CD_Sales.html)

We've slightly re-vamped our Donations page, to make the donation levels and methods of payment a little clearer (we hope! – do let us know).



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

*David, Valerie, Andy and Chris*



The studio at Proper Music

Album cover of the original release of *The Wreckers*