

RETROSPECT OPERA

www.retrospectopera.org.uk

Registered Charity no. 1164150

Newsletter #9, 8 May 2018

Updates on current projects and announcing the reissue of *The Wreckers*!

In this Newsletter, we announce our re-release of the 1994 recording of The Wreckers, report on recent reviews and endorsements, and give updates on the progress of current projects.

Our latest release: Smyth's *The Wreckers*

Our reissue of the 1994 Conifer Classics recording of Ethel Smyth's *The Wreckers* was released, a little later than scheduled, on 13 April.

As reported in the last Newsletter, this is the 2-CD recording of the live performance at The Proms in 1994 with the Huddersfield Choral Society and the BBC Philharmonic, conducted by Odaline de la Martinez.



Album cover of our re-issue of *The Wreckers*

Subscriber rates for purchase

The Wreckers is priced at £17.95 and can be purchased on our website, via email or by post (and owing to difficulties with the Amazon listing, it is better at the moment to buy direct from us). Don't forget that subscribers benefit from the discounted price of **£14.95!** To get the discount, you should either email us direct and we'll confirm the price, or just pay through the Sales page, putting in the discount price.

Subscriber rates are as follows:

£14.95 for 2-CD sets
(*The Boatswain's Mate, The Wreckers*)

£8.95 for single CDs
(*Pickwick, Christmas Gambols*)

Update on current projects

Our next release will be Edward Loder's *Raymond and Agnes*. The opera has been recorded and edited already, and we are now in the process of finalising the booklet and packaging.

This is therefore the last opportunity for subscribers to donate to *Raymond and Agnes*. **Remember that donating a little more money may mean that your name appears on our website or in the CD booklet!**

If you're not sure what level you've already subscribed to, e-mail us or write to us, and we'll let you know.

As to our other projects: the dates have been set for our recording of Ethel Smyth's *Fête Galante* to take place in the first week of November, at a venue to be confirmed.

We hope that subscribers will want to donate to our latest recording project, *Charles Dibdin's Shakespeare*, which was announced in the last Newsletter. Please do take the time to read the wonderful endorsement we received from Flora Fraser, the writer and biographer, reproduced below.

Finally, having recently teamed up with the distributor **Discovery**, we are delighted to report that this is enabling us to reach new audiences, thereby widening the market for our releases.

default assumption that consent is being granted.

Please give serious consideration to responding positively to our request when you receive it, so that we can continue to keep you updated on the wonderful and far-reaching contributions to art and culture that your generous support and donations are making possible.

More reviews of Retrospect Opera releases

Our disc of F.C. Burnand and Edward Solomon's *Pickwick* and George Grossmith's *Cups and Saucers* has received the following review from *Gramophone* magazine:

"I must commend Gaynor Keeble (Mrs Bardell) and the marvellous Simon Butteriss, the Martyn Green de nos jours [...] Both pieces are directed from the keyboard with admirable skill by Stephen Higgins. The disc has been produced and packaged by Retrospect Opera to a very high standard and [...] provides a rare and thus valuable opportunity to hear two late Victorian entertainments that were immensely popular in their day."

– Jeremy Nicholas, *Gramophone*, May 2018

And a little bird tells us that our latest release, Ethel Smyth's *The Wreckers*, will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of *Opera* magazine.

Endorsement of Charles Dibdin's *Datchet Mead*

In our last Newsletter, we announced our intentions to record Charles Dibdin's *Datchet Mead* alongside Dibdin's and David Garrick's *The Jubilee, or Shakespear's Garland*, to be performed by a group of four singers led by the hugely talented Simon Butteriss.

Flora Fraser (<http://www.florafrazer.com/>), the author of *Princesses: The Six Daughters of George III* and many other critically acclaimed books, has written us the following generous endorsement:

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

Please note that we have recently redesigned the 'CD Sales' section of the website to make it more user-friendly.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

No doubt you are all aware that the legislation on data protection is due to change in the UK on 25 May 2018. We are working hard to ensure that we will continue to comply with all legal requirements regarding our customer base and retention of information. We will be in contact separately about GDPR by e-mail but, in brief, one of the questions we will need to ask you is whether you will renew your permission for us to be able to contact you. This is because GDPR requires consent to have a positive and explicit opt-in, together with an easy mechanism for withdrawing consent, rather than merely a

“Following George III’s widely publicized bout of mental disturbance in the late 1780s, the King’s doctors impressed on his Ministers that two subjects must not be raised with the monarch, as likely to prove too agitating: measures to effect Catholic emancipation and proposals that any of his six daughters marry. Queen Charlotte pitied her daughters, but was more fearful of seeing her husband once more incoherent and confined to a straitjacket. But the Princess Royal, eldest of the Princesses, was a strongminded woman. When she reached her early thirties, she determined to suffer spinsterhood at Windsor no more. In 1797, she defied her father’s doctors, and took as her husband Frederick, Hereditary Prince of Württemberg. ‘Fritz’ had been married before, and his enormous girth caused much merriment when he arrived in London to marry ‘Royal’. His bride was undeterred. Though she parted with real anguish from her family, ‘Royal’ went on to have a fulfilled life as Hereditary Princess, then Duchess, and later as a Napoleonic Queen.



Writer and biographer Flora Fraser

Charles Dibdin’s Shakespearean serenata, Datchet Mead, performed at the Sans Souci theatre in the Strand, celebrated the 1797 wedding, and was dedicated to Queen Charlotte. At a time when the Napoleonic Wars were a source of national anxiety and distress, the serenata’s patriotic sentiments

were welcome: ‘Bright gleam’d the moon! Zephyr in am’rous gale / Breath’d perfume over Datchet’s charming vale, / Where Windsor’s turrets kiss the ample sky; / Shrouding from mortal sight that family / So dear to every British heart ...’. The allusions to myrtle and other nuptial emblems testify to the unflinching resolve of the new Hereditary Princess to make a life, as an adult woman, where she would not be subject to the authority of her Royal parents. Though others might pour scorn on her ‘Fritz’, ‘Royal’ never wavered in her commitment to him. I am thrilled that Datchet Mead is being revived and recorded, and do hope people will support this unique project.”

Datchet Mead: An extraordinary coincidence

As you may recall from the previous Newsletter, we plan to dedicate our recording of Dibdin’s *Datchet Mead* to Prince Harry and Meghan Markle on the occasion of their wedding.

With the royal wedding just under a fortnight away, our attention has been drawn to an extraordinary coincidence:

- Princess Charlotte married on 18 May 1797
- Prince Harry is marrying on 19 May 2018
- *Datchet Mead* was premiered on 20 May 1797

There is surely something of destiny about this!

Upcoming productions of Smyth’s operas

We are delighted to report that several productions of Smyth’s operas are currently being planned, which we are very much looking forward to.

Arcadian Opera has recently announced a full production of Smyth’s *The Wreckers*, to be performed at the Roxburgh Theatre, Stowe, Bucks (England) on 27–28 October 2018. When we receive more details, we’ll let you know. One of the producers is Justin Lavender, who will be the musical director and knows the opera rather well, having sung

the role of Mark in the 1994 recording that we have just re-issued! See

<http://www.arcadianopera.com/>

The **Spectra Ensemble** is planning a production of *The Boatswain's Mate*, at a small theatre in London at the end of July. Spectra's production is with piano only and tickets aren't on sale yet as the production hasn't been officially announced; we'll let you know the venue when it's all official. Jessie Anand, the producer, says, of the production:

Fix a date for Dreamland Margate...

June 1952: peace reigns in Europe, and the waters of the English Channel are troubled only by excitable holidaymakers as Britain celebrates the coronation of its new Queen. Young and old alike have flocked to Margate for summer loving, healthful air and strolls on the promenade. But at a quiet pub set back from the seafront, the landlady has a nuisance on her hands. She's confronted with a suitor who simply won't take 'no' for an answer. When he comes up with a last-ditch plan to win her heart, our formidable heroine gives him more than he'd bargained for...

A hundred years since women were first given the right to vote, Spectra Ensemble presents a rare revival of this 1914 opera by Suffragette composer Ethel Smyth, complete with all the quintessential sounds and sights of British summertime.

There's also a production in the offing in the US (more details when we have them), and finally, Welsh National Opera will be performing extracts from *The Boatswain's Mate* in studio performances, in conjunction with the National Opera Studio.

These productions are all taking place on the back of our CDs, demonstrating how our recordings – and your donations – have a wider cultural impact that extends beyond the release of the discs themselves.

Thanks to you, our subscribers and donors, all this has been made possible!

Smyth and the Centenary of Women's Partial Enfranchisement in the UK

We thought you'd like to know that Chris has continued to be busy giving talks about Ethel Smyth in her home town of Woking, to tie in with the ongoing commemoration of many women receiving the vote in the UK for the first time, 100 years ago this February.

Chris gave a lecture for International Women's Day at The Lightbox (Woking's multi-purpose gallery and museum), and spoke at the annual symposium of Surrey Local History Committee at Surrey History Centre last weekend.

He also gave an interview for the Spring Edition 2018 of Pyrford TV ARTS programme, filmed at Woking Golf Club where Smyth was famously a member for many years. The link to the online video is here (watch from 09:18 for Chris's interview – you may need to copy and paste both lines):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAuVmbmmPw>



Chris Wile in conversation with presenter Tim Matthews
at Woking Golf Club

Listen carefully and you'll hear an extract from our recording of *The Boatswain's Mate* from 13:56!


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

David, Valerie, Andy and Chris