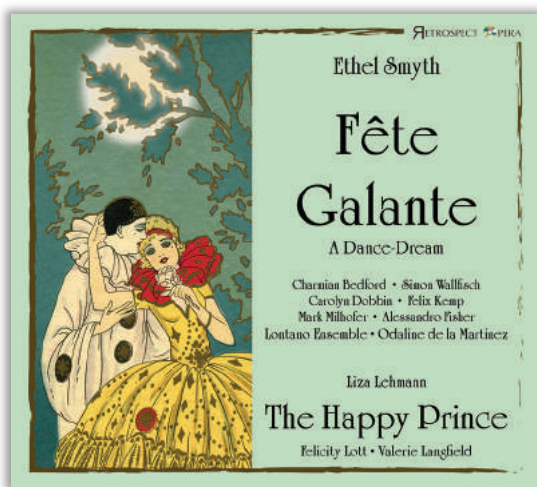


RETROSPECT OPERA

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We are thrilled to share that our latest disc, Smyth's 'dance-dream' *Fête Galante* and Lehmann's musical recitation *The Happy Prince*, has been sent to press and will be released, sent to subscribers, and in all good record stores by the middle of November 2019.



We are equally excited to announce that our next project will be George Alexander Macfarren and John Oxenford's 1864 *opera di camera* *The Soldier's Legacy*.

Retrospect Opera's David Chandler writes:

George Alexander Macfarren (1813–1887) was, in the words of British music specialist Nicholas Temperley, 'the pioneer of English musical nationalism', and *The Soldier's Legacy* of 1864 'his most thoroughgoing nationalist opera'. While his British contemporaries were still, very consciously, seeking out and absorbing influences from Italian, German and French Romantic opera, Macfarren, equally consciously, sought to create a truly English style of opera inspired by folksong. His extensive work with William Chappell on what eventually became *The Ballad Literature and Popular Music of the Olden Time* (1855–1859) was the bedrock on which Macfarren's mature music was built.

The Soldier's Legacy is a delightful rural comedy for four singers with an exceptionally localised setting in and around Tutbury, Staffordshire, in 1814. Jack Weatherall, a hussar, returns from the Napoleonic wars seeking to fulfil a promise he made to his dying friend Dick Firebrand. Little does he know that his act of kindness will bring him the ultimate reward: a loving wife! The libretto by John Oxenford, Macfarren's regular collaborator, unfolds naturally into a sparkling series of musical numbers, all imbued with the flavour of folk music. Reviews were extremely positive; *The Era* reported a 'triumphant success', and noted: 'Of Mr. Macfarren's music it may be most truthfully said, that had he given to the world nothing but this charming composition, it would have been alone sufficient to proclaim him an honour as a musician to any country.'



Portrait of Macfarren by
Julia Goodman (1812–1906)

The Soldier's Legacy was composed for the famous Gallery of Illustration, opened by Thomas German Reed and his wife Priscilla in 1856 – an intimate 500-seat theatre, located at the Piccadilly end of Regent Street, designed to offer refined, family-friendly entertainment. In 1863 the German Reeds began presenting what they called *opera di camera*, the first such work being Macfarren's *Jessy Lea*. *The Soldier's Legacy* was a second effort in the same style, and the *Morning Post* declared: 'we congratulate Mr German Reed upon having advanced one more step towards the attainment of a most desirable object – namely, the institution of a permanent English operetta

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERS

house.’ Later in the decade, both W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan would have works performed at the Gallery of Illustration, and it was here that they first met. Macfarren’s pioneering operettas have long been recognised as an important influence on Gilbert and Sullivan’s subsequent development of English comic opera.



John Oxenford (1812–1877), Macfarren’s chief literary collaborator for many of his dramatic works.

Further details about Macfarren and *The Soldier’s Legacy* can be found on our website via the following link:

retrospectopera.org.uk/macfarren/soldier

The project is being led by Retrospect Opera’s Andy King who writes:

The *opera di camera* of the Gallery of Illustration featured a small number of soloists with piano and harmonium accompaniment. Even though this is one of our smaller projects we will need to raise around £15,000 to bring this charmingly melodic and witty piece to the world. As ever we rely solely on the good-will donations of our loyal supporters and earnestly implore you to consider contributing to this unique project.

For full details of how to support us and subscriber benefits, please visit our website:

retrospectopera.org.uk/donate

We are pleased to remind subscribers that they may purchase any of our single-disc releases for **£8.95** and double-disc releases **£14.95**.

With the imminent release *Fête Galante*, for the first time on CD it is possible to get a sense of how Ethel Smyth’s operatic career developed from the grand opera of *The Wreckers* to the comic opera of *The Boatswain’s Mate* to the neoclassicism of *Fête Galante*. To celebrate, we are offering all three recordings for a limited period at the bargain price of just **£30!** Own Retrospect Opera’s complete Smyth discography today, and please do spread the news of this very special deal to your music-loving friends.*

In the run up to Christmas we are also pleased to offer three copies of Dibdin’s *The Jubilee* for the price of two and/or three copies of Dibdin’s *The Jubilee* and get your choice of *Christmas Gambols* or *Pickwick* free. The ideal Christmas present for music lovers!*

*Offer ends 31 December 2019.

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We have now established a dedicated Retrospect Opera YouTube channel and would be delighted to hear from subscribers about what sort of content you would enjoy – interviews with artists, music historians, conductors, extracts from our recordings – you tell us. **Please get in touch!**

Why not help these wonderful recordings reach ears all over the country by writing into your local radio station and requesting your favourite track?

**With best wishes from
the team at Retrospect Opera,
Valerie, David, Andy, and Chris**

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