

## A Star is born The making of Kitty Clive

Kitty Clive was the most famous singer-actress of the mid- eighteenth century and sought after by the managers of Drury Lane theatre. Composers such as Pepusch, Arne and Handel composed arias specifically for her and she even collaborated with them on rewriting music to make it fit her style and persona, leading and creating new forms of English musical theatre.

Clive championed women's rights at the playhouse throughout her career, defined her own image and, after her voice started to change in older age, she reimagined herself as the first female comedian.

The programme follows her throughout her career:

The early days look at her self-invention and the possessiveness and infatuation the most

influential men of the Beggar's opera - composers and managers alike – hold for her.

Then exploring her rise to fame, with star roles in cantatas and operatic arias, where she establishes herself as THE star of Drury Lane, picking the most fitting roles for her character as well as new or reworked compositions dedicated specifically to her.

Getting older, Clive's voice begins to change and rather than continuing in her old and so far very successful ways, she recognises this and changes her role, reinventing herself as a comedienne, singing mock-Italian arias, making fun of operatic "Prima Donnas" and becoming a true comedian. In "The Card invites" by Thomas Arne, she hunts, Diana-like, the gaming tables of like-minded ladies, ignoring her husband's criticisms.

There exists a portrait depicting Clive sitting in front of a harpsichord, ready to perform Handel's Aria "Sweet Bird". She in fact never actually sang "Sweet Bird", rather she was the sweet bird of the English stage. Depicting her as a professional musician was something unseen to this date, women's musicmaking so far had only been educational and to be kept private and for the own home. Kitty continues to push boundaries, not only musical but societal ones too, advocating for female empowerment throughout her lifetime.

The contemporary piece "Shallow" is taken from 21<sup>st</sup> century musical theatre: Being the title song of the film "A star is born", the text fits Kitty Clive's life and achievements:

"Tell me somethin', girl, are you happy in this modern world? Or do you need more? Is there somethin' else you're searchin' for? I'm fallin'. In all the good times, I find myself longin' for change"



Clive's career stretches over 40 years, always looking for new opportunities and opening up new horizons to the theatre scene of London, singers and actresses and women in general, and pushing the boundaries of societal norm at the time.

Kitty cultivated her popular image as an actress and fought public battles in the media to achieve greater rights for theatrical performers. She wrote and performed in several satirical sketches with feminist undertones, and published a pamphlet, ill-treatment by theatre managers. When Clive retires, her friend and novelist Horace Walpole gifts her a house called "Little Strawberry Hill" in the London borough of Twickenham. After her death, he composes her his own tribute to her memory:

"Ye smiles and jests still hover round;  
This is mirth's consecrated ground:  
Here liv'd the laughter loving Dame,  
A matchless actress, Clive her name.  
The comic muse with her retir'd  
And shed a tear when she expir'd"

# A STAR IS BORN

## The making of Kitty Clive

<b>George Frideric Handel</b> (1685-1749)	<b>L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato</b> Mirth Admit me of thy crew
<b>Traditional</b> (18 <sup>th</sup> Century)	<b>Greensleeves</b> Song with Variations as sung at the Beggar's Opera
<b>Johann Christoph Pepusch</b> (1667 – 1752)	<b>Virtue's Treasure</b> from: Polly
<b>Thomas Arne</b> (1710 – 1778)	<b>Where the bee sucks</b> from: As you like it
<b>George Frideric Handel</b>	<b>Was ever a man possest</b> (originally "No, non temere o bella" from "Ottone"), from: The Devil to pay
(possible Interval)	
<b>George Frideric Handel</b>	<b>The Symphony or Overture in Rinaldo</b> Largo – Allegro – Adagio – Gigue
<b>Johann Christoph Pepusch</b>	<b>When loves soft passion</b> Recit: When loves soft passion – Aria: Oh love, thou knowst my anguish – Recit: The god of love – Aria: Why should I love the fair
<b>George Frideric Handel</b>	<b>L'Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato</b> Sweet Bird
<b>Thomas Arne</b> (1710 – 1778)	<b>The card invites</b> from: Lethe, or Aesop in the shades
<b>S. Germanotta</b> (*1986), <b>M. Ronson</b> (*1975) (arr. Apollo's Cabinet)	<b>Shallow</b> from: A star is born
<b>Traditional</b> (18 <sup>th</sup> Century)	<b>On Strawberry Hill</b>