**A star is born – the making of Kitty Clive**

**G. F. Handel (1685-1749)**

L’Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato: Mirth Admit me of thy crew

**Traditional (17th Century)**

Greensleeves – Song with Variations as sung at the Beggar’s Opera

**J. C. Pepusch (1667 – 1752)**
Virtue’s Treasure
The crow or daw, to the tune of: The Bush aboon Traquair

**F. Geminiani (1687 – 1762)**
The bush aboon Traquair

**G. F. Handel (1685-1749)**

With plaintive notes and am’rous moan (from: Samson, HWV 57)

**J. C. Pepusch (1667 – 1752)**

Six English Cantatas: When loves soft passion

**G. F. Handel (1685-1749)**

Was ever a man possest (originally “No, non temere o bella” from “Ottone”)

**(INTERVAL)**

**G. F. Handel (1685-1749)**

The Symphony or Overture in Rinaldo Largo – Allegro – Adagio – Gigue

**G. F. Handel (1685-1749)**

L’Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato: Sweet Bird

**T. Arne (1710 – 1778)**

The card invites

**S. Germanotta (\*1986), M. Ronson (\*1975)**

Shallow (arr. Apollo’s Cabinet)

**Traditional (18th Century)**

On Strawberry Hill

**G. F. Handel (1685-1749)**

L’Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato: Haste thee nymph

**Musicians & Roles:**

Ella Bodeker Soprano, Kitty Clive, Polly, Delilah, Nell, Miss Lucy

Harry Buckoke Viola da Gamba, Director Mr Cibber, Horace Walpole

Thomas Pickering Harpsichord, George Clive, Mr Thomas

Jonatan Bougt Theorbo & Baroque Guitar, Drury Lane Actor

Teresa Wrann Recorder, Narrator, Sir John Loverule

**About the programme:**

Kitty Clive was the most famous singer-actress of the mid-eighteenth century and was 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 Kitty throughout her career and starts with her being discovered by the director of the Beggar’s Opera whilst still working as a housekeeper. In the early days Kitty makes it clear that she transforms and owns every character she plays and takes over the Beggar’s Opera in a heartbeat. The most influential composers and managers are all infatuated with her talents and charm and all want to win her for their performances. She rose to fame, with star roles not just at the Beggar's Opera but performing famous cantatas and operatic arias, like Pepusch’s "When loves soft passion" or the role of Delilah in Handel’s "Samson".

With age, 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 one of the first female comedians, singing mock arias, making fun of operatic “Prima Donnas” and becoming a true entertainer. In “The Card invites” by Thomas Arne, she hunts, Diana-like, the gaming tables of like-minded ladies, ignoring her husband’s criticisms and restrictions.
Kitty continues to push boundaries, not only musical but societal ones too, advocating for female empowerment throughout her lifetime. A portrait exists, 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 music making so far had only been educational and was to be kept private and only for their own home entertainment.

The contemporary piece “Shallow” is taken from 21st 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 something, girl, are you happy in this modern world? Or do you need more? Is there something else you're searching for? I'm falling'. In all the good times, I find myself longing 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 writes her a little poem:

“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”