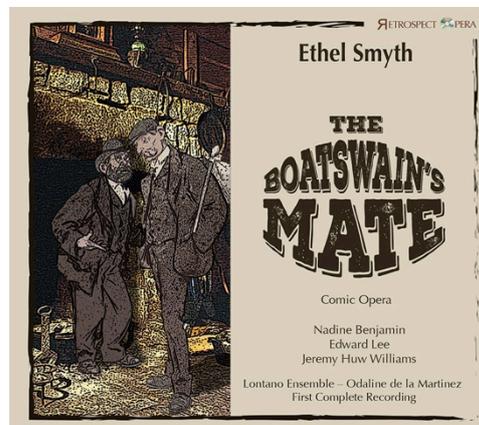


Odaline de la Martinez champions opera, *The Boatswain's Mate*, by suffragette composer Ethel Smyth in debut recording with Retrospect Opera

***The Boatswain's Mate*  
Out Now**

**Ethel Smyth:** *The Boatswain's Mate*

**Nadine Benjamin** *Mrs Waters*  
**Edward Lee** *Harry Benn*  
**Jeremy Huw Williams** *Ned Travers*  
**Simon Wilding** *Policeman*  
**Ted Schmitz** *The Man*  
**Rebecca Louise Dale** *Mary Ann*  
**Mark Nathan** *Chorus*  
**Odaline de la Martinez** *conductor*  
**Lontano Ensemble**



Odaline de la Martinez champions suffragette composer Ethel Smyth's opera *The Boatswain's Mate* in debut recording with Retrospect Opera. This period comedy written by British composer and suffragette Smyth was completed in 1914 and first performed in January 1916.



Smyth joined the Women's Social and Political Union in 1910. Her work, *The March of the Women*, became the anthem of the women's suffrage movement. When the WSPU's leader, Emmeline Pankhurst, called on members to break a window in the house of any politician who opposed votes for women, Smyth was one of the 109 members who took part. She served two months in Holloway Prison for it as a result. It is thought that when her friend Thomas Beecham, who was a great champion of her music, went to visit her there he found suffragettes marching in the quadrangle and singing, as Smyth leaned out a window conducting the song with a toothbrush.

*The Boatswain's Mate* is a one-act opera, set to her own libretto, based on a story by W.W. Jacobs, that tells the story of feisty widow Mrs. Waters who owns an inn. Boatswain, her customer, tries to win her heart and arranges a soldier to scare her so he can rescue her. Mrs. Waters consequently scares the soldier with a gun. A battle of the sexes ensues as she fools Boatswain that she has in fact killed the soldier; it is left with an open ending.

Odaline de la Martinez, has championed and recorded the music of overlooked female composers and has promoted Smyth's music across several continents. Martinez has given numerous Smyth performances in North and South America, Europe and New Zealand. Her recordings of Smyth's *Symphonic Serenade* and the *Double Concerto* are now available on the Chandos record label. She has also conducted Smyth's great opera, *The Wreckers*, at the 1994 BBC Proms, later released by Conifer in the UK and BMG in the States. 2016 saw the release of her edition of Smyth's *Symphonic Serenade*.

*The Boatswain's Mate* proved to be one of the most popular British operas of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Smyth's suffragette anthem, *The March of the Women*, is incorporated into the overture, and nursery rhymes and folk tunes are utilized in the main body of the work to depict rural life.

This year Odaline de la Martinez will continue to focus on promoting female composers and performers in her 6<sup>th</sup> London Festival of American Music. The Festival will showcase works by both male and female composers, with an unusually high percentage of works by the latter (50%). The festival will feature works by female composers Jennifer Higdon, Augusta Read Thomas, Julia Howell, Annie Gosfield and more. The aim of the festival is to promote the work of outstanding American composers, well established in the States but less known to UK audiences. The opening concert features performances by The New London Chamber Choir, Lontano, and American viola soloist Stephen Upshaw, conducted by Martinez. The programme consists of music by the late American composer Earle Brown and includes Morton Feldman's *Rothko Chapel* to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composer's birth. This recording of Smyth's opera continues Martinez's revival of her music.



*"It is an honour to have recorded Dame Ethel Smyth's fourth opera, The Boatswain's Mate, having been involved in the revival of her music since the 1980's."* – Odaline de la Martinez

*"It is about time that this very enjoyable work was revived, a century after the first production. It is an inspiring example of the work of a female composer and is conducted by the wonderful and talented Odaline de la Martinez."* - Sarah Gavron, director of *Suffragette*

## Odaline de la Martinez



Born in Cuba and raised in the United States, composer and conductor Odaline de la Martinez is one of the Britain's most dynamic and gifted musicians. Through the years she has established an international reputation as one of the most exciting and versatile pioneers of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century music. In 1984 Martinez became the first woman in history to conduct a BBC Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, and 1987 she was awarded the Villa Lobos medal from the Brazilian government in recognition of her outstanding work promoting and conducting his music. Martinez was made a fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in 1990, and to this day she is in demand throughout the world both as an orchestra and opera conductor, and with her ensemble Lontano. Her conducting repertoire ranges from Mozart symphonies to the latest contemporary music.

She founded Lontano in 1976 whilst studying composition at the Royal Academy of Music, and the ensemble's impact on the perception of new music has been profound and enduring. With Lontano she commissions, produces, performs and records with the primary aim of bringing to the fore the work of living contemporary composers, female composers from all periods, and Latin American classical music. The ensemble's sphere of activity includes contemporary opera,

music theatre, concerts, workshops, education projects, tours, broadcasts and recordings.

Always at the front of music innovation, Martinez' ensemble was one of the first ensembles to form its own record company when in 1992 it established the LORELT label. Now with a catalogue of 39 recordings, LORELT features soloists as well as other ensembles and is noted for its archive of important and often neglected compositions. Odaline de la Martinez is also trustee of The Mornington Trust, who together with **Lontano** has been responsible community and educational work in Waltham Forest and other London boroughs since 2000. Presently the charity is involved in an eight-year project working with Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities in the East of London.

*"It was her conducting, and her galvanising personality, that made an even more striking impression. New York is full of top-notch ensembles that play contemporary music accurately, even brilliantly. But the level of pointed, sinuous musicality that Ms. de la Martinez elicited from the Music Today players was unusual." - The New York Times*

## Lontano

Lontano's impact on the perception of new music has been profound and enduring. Since its inception in 1976 by conductor/composer Odaline de la Martinez and flautist Ingrid Culliford, Lontano has established an international reputation as one of the most exciting and versatile exponents of 20th and 21st century music.



Lontano commissions, produces, performs and records with the primary aim of bringing to the forefront the work of contemporary British and American composers, women composers and Latin American classical repertoire. The ensemble's sphere of activity includes contemporary opera, music theatre, concerts, workshops, education projects, tours, broadcasts and recordings. Performances feature some of the most noted, inventive and radical names in contemporary composition including Judith Weir, Martin Butler, Roberto Sierra, Errollyn Wallen, Nicola le Fanu, Peter Sculthorpe, Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Chen Yi, Lindsay Cooper, John Harbison and Steve Reich.

Lontano's global allure has resulted in performances as far a field as Istanbul (residency, Turkish-British Women Composers Week), Zagreb (performance of Jenni Ridenti's opera Inanna, at the Zagreb Biennale Festival), USA, Canada, Mexico, South and Central America. Activities include performances at the Huddersfield and Cheltenham International Festivals, Chard Festival of Women in Music, the Bath Festival, the BBC Proms, the premiere of Paul Barker's opera Stone Angels at the Bloomsbury Theatre, the enormously successful Émigrés Series on London's Southbank and the premiere of Jenni Ridenti's opera Spirit Child.

Lontano gave a very successful residency at MIT – the Massachusetts Institute of Technology – as part of MIT's 150th Anniversary celebrations. Dream-Hunter, a newly commissioned opera by Nicola LeFanu was premiered in the autumn of 2011 with a Welsh tour supported by a grant from the Arts Council Wales as well

as three London performances at Wilton's Music Hall in February 2012. Lontano's 4th London Festival of American Music took place in October of 2012 and featured the UK Premiere of John Harbison's chamber opera Full Moon in March. 2013 saw Lontano participating in several UK Festivals as well CD recordings for Lorelt. The 5th London Festival of American Music that took place in November 2014 featured the UK Premiere of Odaline de la Martinez's opera The Crossing, Eclectic Voices, Nadine Benjamin and John Coleyn Geyantey soloists, conductor Scott Stroman.

In March 2015 Lontano undertook a tour of Northeast USA with residencies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and at State University of New York at Binghamton. Later that year Lontano recorded Dame Ethel Smyth's 4th opera Boatswain's Mate just released by Retrospect Opera this summer.

*"There are concerts that make you realise what you've been missing...The first half of Thursday's Lontano concert at St John's, Smith Square, provided the answer" - The Independent*

**<http://www.lorelt.co.uk>**

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