Kitty Clive, 
or The Fair Songster

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Goldsmiths, University of London
Catherine Clive (1711-1785)

William Verelst, *Catherine Clive*. Oil on canvas, 1740.
contributions

• first singing star of the playhouse
• equal command of high- and low-style song
• first female player to triumph over a manager by using the press
• one of few mid-eighteenth-century female playwrights
• more than 220 stage parts!
her person

• exclusive wage earner, no patron
• supported dependents until she died
• championed female rights
• same-sex sympathies
• Horace Walpole’s close friend

Cliveden near Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, formerly the Villa of Mrs. Catherine Clive. Watercolour, c1810
‘I am sorry to hear you have an indifferent part in the new Comedy, but I don’t at all wonder when you tell me the author. [H]e is a wretch of wretches, however I charge you to make a good part of it[.] Let it be never so bad, I have often done so myself therefore I know it is to be done[:] turn it & wind it & play it in a different manner to his intention and as hundred to one but you succeed’

Letter of Catherine Catherine Clive to Jane Pope of 15 December 1774
at Drury Lane April 1728

a Voice and Manner in singing Songs … peculiar to herself. Those Talents Mr. Theo. Cibber and I (we all at that Time living together in one House) thought a sufficient Pasport to the Theatre. We recommended her to the Laureat [manager Colley Cibber] … and the Moment he heard her sing, [he] put her down in the List of Performers at twenty Shillings per Week’

Henry Carey (1687–1743): teacher, friend, songwriter

- music master, playhouse composer
- feminist: first-ever English-language journal for ladies
- from 1717 recommences 1723 Drury Lane
- grooms her technically, fits songs to Clive
- champions high-style English ballad
Audio 1. Henry Carey, ‘Sally in our Alley’, arr. Benjamin Britten

Of all the Girls that are so smart
There’s none like pretty SALLY,
She is the Darling of my Heart,
And she lives in our Alley.

There is no Lady in the Land
Is half so sweet as SALLY,
She is the Darling of my Heart,
And she lives in our Alley.

‘[I] drew this little Sketch of Nature … [observing] a Shoemaker’s ’Prentice making Holiday with his Sweet-heart … [to show the] Beauty of a chaste and disinterested Passion, even in the lowest Class of human Life’ Henry Carey (1718)
Masque – Clive’s first stage line

Minerva (1728) in Perseus and Andromeda (John Pepusch) Dorinda (Jan 1729) The Tempest: Or, the Inchanted Island; Amphitrite in Neptune and Amphitrite (Pelham Humfrey); Night (1729) in Apollo and Daphne (Henry Carey); title role of The Fairy Queen; or, Harlequin Turned Enchanter (1730); Procris (1730) Cephalus and Procris (Henry Carey) ...
Dear pretty youth, unveil your eyes,
How can you sleep when I am by?
Were I with you all night to be,
Methinks I could from sleep be free.
Alas, my dear, you're cold as stone:
You must no longer lie alone.
But be with me my dear, and I in each arm
Will hug you close and keep you warm.
The Beggar's Opera
opens 29 January 1728
To Miss Beswick, alias Fenton, alias Polly Peachum.

Be not vain of your fancy’d Success I desire you,
Nor think that Lords love you, because they
admire you;
A Monster does, doubtless, deserve Admiration,
As much as the Prettiest Girl in the Nation;
And hourly Experience, Lavinia, will shew you,
A Granny is fear’d at, as much as a Cub.

This Ballad-Singing-Beggar (which our present Race of Beauties so much Admire) is a raw-bred,
large-faced Female Virgin, and having the
necessary Qualification, required by Serjeant Kose,
of being six Foot high, is, no doubt, born to be a Great Woman.
Audio 3. arr. John Pepusch, ‘O ponder well!’ in *The Beggar’s Opera*

O ponder well! be not severe; So save a wretched Wife! For on the Rope that hangs my Dear. Depends poor Polly’s Life.
While Crowds attentive
sit to Polly’s Voice,
And in their Native harmony
rejoice;
Th’admiring Throng no vain
subscription draws,
Nor Affectation prompts a
false Applause.
Nature untaught, each
Pleasing strain
supply’s,
Artless as her unbidden
Blushes rise,
And charming as the
Mischief in her Eyes.
LOVE IN A RIDDLE
A PASTORAL.
As it is Acted at the THEATRE-ROYAL,
by His MAJESTY's Servants.

Written by Mr. CIBBER.

LONDON:
Printed for J. WATTS, at the Printing-Office in
Wild-Court near Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

MDCCLXIX.

[Price 1s. 6d.]
Love in a Riddle (1729) – a disaster

‘The People in the Beginning of the Play seemed inclinable to attend, and give it a fair Hearing; but when you [Cibber] … began to sing … not in a mimick, not in a false, but in your own real natural Voice, and they found that you intended to impose this upon ’em for Harmony, which they perceiv’d hurt their Ears extremely, they did grow somewhat outrageous, and in the second Act they call’d aloud several Times to have the Curtain dropt … then damn’d his new-fangled innocent Performance’.

The Laureat: Or, the Right Side of Colley Cibber, Esq (London, 1740), p.46.
DA M O N
AND
PHILLIDA:
A
BALLAD OPERA
OF ONE ACT.

As it is Performed at the
Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane
BY
His MAJESTY’s Servants.

With the MUSICK prefix’d to each SONG.

L O N D O N:
Printed for J. WATTS, at the Printing-Office in
Wild-Court near Lincoln-Inn Fields. 1729.
[Price One Shilling.]

Miss Rafter in the Character of Phillida,
1729. After Gottfried Schalcken
See native Beauty clad without disguise,
No art t’allure a paltry Lovers Eyes,
No stiff, sett Airs, which but betray the mind,
But unaffected Innocence we find:

Happy the Nymph with charms by Nature blest,
But happier Swain, who of the Nymph posset,
Can taste the Joys, which she alone can bring,
And live in Pleasures which alternate spring.
1731 summer company manager Theophilus Cibber (1703-1758)
August 1731: Career Breakthrough!

‘But sure nothing has had a greater Run, than a little Farce called, *The Devil to Pay* … it has been perform’d almost every Night this Season; your little Favourite Miss Raftor appears a Prodigy in this Piece, it has render’d her the Darling of the whole Town’.

SIR JOHN LOVERULE
Was ever Man possest of so sweet,
so kind a Wife!
NELL
Dear Sir, you make me proud
Be you but kind,
And you shall find
All the Good I can boast of,
Shall end but with my Life.
SIR JOHN LOVERULE: Give me they Lips
NELL: First let me, dear Sir, wipe ‘em
SIR JOHN LOVERULE: Was ever so sweet a Wife! [kiss]
NELL
Thank you, dear Sir!
I vow and protest,
I ne’r was so kist
Again Sir! [kiss]
SIR JOHN LOVERULE
Again, and again, my Dearest,
O may it last for Life
NELL AND SIR JOHN LOVERULE
O may it last for Life!
Francis Hayman and studio, A Scene in ‘The Devil to Pay’. Oil on canvas, 1730s.
Original frontispiece, The Devil to Pay (London: John Watts, 1731)
Henry Fielding (1707-1754)
Henry Fielding’s stage works at Drury Lane 1731-34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Led by Clive</th>
<th>Stage success</th>
<th>Ballad opera/spoken comedy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Lottery (Jan 1732) -</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>hit</td>
<td>Ballad opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Modern Husband (Feb 1732)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>13 nights</td>
<td>Spoken comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Old Debauchees (June 1732)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>flop</td>
<td>Spoken comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Covent-Garden Tragedy (June 1732)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>flop</td>
<td>Spoken comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mock Doctor (after Molière, June 1732)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>hit</td>
<td>Ballad opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Miser (after Molière, 1733)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>hit</td>
<td>Ballad opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Author’s Farce (rev, 1734)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>hit</td>
<td>Spoken comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Intriguing Chambermaid (after Regnard, 1734)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>hit</td>
<td>Ballad opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Old Man taught Wisdom, or the Virgin Unmask’d (1735)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>hit</td>
<td>Ballad opera</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHLOE
Dear Sir, be not in such a passion,
There’s never a Maid in the Nation
Who would not forego
A dull Squire for a Beau
Love is not your proper Vocation

LOVEMORE
Dear Madam, be not in such a Fury,
From St James’s to Drury,
No Widow you’ll find,
No Wife of your mind

CHLOE
Ah! Hideous! I cannot endure you!
Ah! See him now how neat!
Ah! Smell him how sweet!
Ah! Hear but his honey words flow
What Maid in her Senses
But must fall into Trances,
At the Sight of so lovely a Beau!
Clive’s First Spoken Principal Part

‘Dramaticus’, *Grub-street Journal* 15 June 1732:

“*The Common Garden Tragedy* … Such a scene of infamous lewdness, was never brought, I believe, before on any Stage whatsoever!”

*Clive’s first-ever epilogue:*

In short, you are the Business of our Lives,
To be a Mistress kept, the Strumpet strives,
And all the modest Virgins to be Wives.
For Prudes may cant of Virtues and of Vices,
But faith! we only differ in our Prices
John Faber after Pieter van Bleeck, *The Celebrated Mrs Clive, late Miss Raftor in the Character of Phillida*, 1734. Mezzotint.

Mezzotint after Jonathan Richards, *Anne Oldfield* (1683 – 1730)
Jeremiah Davison after Joseph van Aken. *Catherine Clive*. Oil on canvas, c1735.
Of all the Arts that sooth the human Breast, 
Music (blest Power) the sweetest is confest: 
Heightens our Joys, suspends our fiercest Pains: 
This each One proves who hears thy heavnly Strains.
After Jonathan Richards, Anne Oldfield (1683 – 1730)
‘very Young, and pretty … her Voice is exceedingly small, but exceedingly sweet … she has such a Warble, such a je ne scay quoy as tickles my very Soul’

[Aaron Hill?], See and Seem Blind ([1732])

Thomas Hudson, Susannah Maria Cibber (née Arne). Oil on canvas, 1749.
The Polly Row (Nov-Dec 1736)

Two Rivals in Theatrick Fame, Fell out in France – and fight; Two Nymphs in England did the same, But cooler, chose to write …

Our Courage oft to France we’ve shown; As oft our Folly in our Writing: But your Examples prove, we’re grown, In Wit superior, as in Fighting.
Clive’s Press War

‘It is a received Maxim … that no Actor or Actress shall be depriv’d of a Part in which they have been well receiv’d, until they are render’d incapable of performing it either by Age or Sickness; and for no other Reason whatsoever, have I endeavour’d to keep the Part of Polly’

-pro-Clive critic

‘The Injuries I have receiv’d at the Playhouse … I determin’d patiently to submit to, well knowing, that by the Tenour of the Articles which I have unfortunately sign’d with Mr Fleetwood … that it is not in my Power to refuse that [the part of Lucy] or any other Part’

-Catherine Clive
There was a prodigious uproar, with Clapping, Hissing, Catcalls &c. Mrs. Clive, who play'd the part of Polly, when she came forward, address'd herself to the House, saying Gentlemen, I am very sorry it should be thought I have in any Manner been the Occasion of the least Disturbance; and then cry'd in so moving Manner, that even Butchers wept.

--London Evening Post (1 January 1737)
Euphrosyne, Goddess of Mirth 1738-43

**Thomas Arne, Comus (1738)**

**Handel, L’Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato (1740)**

L'ALLEGRO (SOPRANO)

Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasures free.
At the Desire of several Ladies of Quality.
For the Benefit of Mrs. C.L.I.V.E.

At the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane,
Monday, March 17, will be presented a Comedy, call'd
The WAY of the WORLD.

Written by the late Mr. Congreve.

The Part of Millamant, to be perform'd by Mrs. C.L.I.V.E.;
In which Character will be introduc'd the Original Song, the Words by
Mr. Congreve, and new set to Musick by Mr. Handel.

Minbel, by Mr. Millward; Fainall, Mr. Mils; Sir Wilful, Mr.
Turbitt; Witwou'd, Mr. Chapman; Perulat, Mr. Macklin; Wait-
well, Mr. Shapard; Marwood, Mrs. Butler; Lady Wiffor't, Mrs.
Macklin; Mrs. Fainall, Mrs. Pritchard; Foible, Mrs. Bennet.

To which will be added a Ballad-Face of one Acl, call'd
The DEVIL TO PAY;

The Part of Sir John Loverule, by Mr. Stoppelaer,
(Who has not appear'd on the Stage these three Years;)
Nell, Mrs. C.L.I.V.E.

With ENTERTAINMENTS.

** To prevent Mistakes, it is desired that those Gentlemen and
Ladies, who have already taken Places, will please to send for Tickets.
Tickets and Places to be had at Mrs. Clive's House in Cecil-street
in the Strand. And at Mrs. Moor's in the Playhouse Passage.

Printed by C. and G. Vandyke.
SAMSON:
I know thy warbling charms
Thy trains, thy wiles, and fair enchanted cup

DALILA

To fleeting pleasures make your court,
No moment lose, for life is short!
The present now’s our only time,
The missing that our only crime.
perils of celebrity

1740s puts on weight

Drury Lane rebellion 1744-45

manager Charles Fleetwood publishes her earnings; outrage; detractors attack

with David Garrick’s help, stages come-back – at the cost of her dignity, but with huge success

turns playwright: ‘swan song’ *The Rehearsal, or Bays in Petticoats*, with music by William Boyce
Charles Burney in 1789

‘Her singing ... was intolerable when she meant it to be fine’.

Handel, ‘Love’s but the Frailty of the mind’ HWV 218

Audio 8.
Kitty Clive launch
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzNYyF5Wqe4
Handel, ‘Love’s but the Frailty of the Mind’
HWV 218 (1740) in The Way of the World.
Words by William Congreve.

MILLAMANT

Then I alone the conquest prize,
When I insult a rival's eyes.
If there's delight in love 'tis when I see,
That heart which others bleed for bleed for me.
Handel, ‘Love’s but the Frailty of the mind’ HWV 218

Audio 8. Kitty Clive launch
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzNYyF5Wqe4
To get a copy signed by the author for £35 (discounted price) please email fairsongster@gmail.com