THE LIMNER COMPANY



OZIAS HUMPHRY (1742 - 1810)

Portrait of the Actress Clara Hayward (fl. 1770-1772), as Clarista from The Fair Penitent (published 1703), seated and wearing a dark blue dress, white chemise and fichu, her powdered wig curled in rolls and upswept; dated 1772

Circa: 1772

Watercolour on ivory

Ivory licence number: KWC51QYV

Signed on the reverse and dated '*Ozias Humphry/ pinxt 1772/ Miss Clarissa Hayward*'

Gold frame with pearl border

Oval, 102 mm (4 in) high

The main source of information about Clara Hayward's life comes from an issue of Town and Country magazine (February 1776). This magazine was known for its exposés of the lives and affairs of members of society, and the February 1776 issue's 'History of the Tête-à-Tête' focuses on Miss Hayward's relationship with Philip Meadows, Ranger of Richmond Park. It appears that the two met at one of Clara's performances at the Drury Lane Theatre. She had taken part in performances there since early 1770, performing in roles including Monimia in *The Orphan*, Emmeline in *King Arthur*, and Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

It is from this 1776 issue that one of the only other known depictions of Miss Hayward comes. This is much less flattering than Humphry's, showing her with a square chin and satirically high hair. Given the nature of the publication [1], it is probable that these features were intended to disguise Miss Hayward. In the present miniature, the actress is depicted clasping her hands together, as Calista from *The Fair Penitent* by Nicholas Rowe (1703). Within the play, the character of Calista is entangled in an unhappy, arranged relationship with the character Lothario, when she is in fact in love with the character Altamont. At the end of the play, Lothario is killed. The play has traditionally been called a 'she-tradgedy', however, modern scholarship has questioned whether or not Calista is really a protagonist in the story [2].

The miniature has an interesting provenance and remained in the artist's collection until his death. It can be assumed that this miniature is the same portrait of Miss Clarina Hayward as The Fair Penitent listed in the 1810 sale of the artist's possessions and that the misspelled name comes from a misinterpretation at the time or since. If this is the only version of the miniature, then Humphry must have painted this for himself and not as a commission. The sketchy handling of the work, which only adds to the sense of intimacy and delicacy of the sitter, would be explained by this origin. This allows the viewer to feel that Calista's penitence is genuine and captures a snapshot of the skill for acting that Miss Hayward had.

Ozias Humphry was known as the 'Reynolds in Little' and was known for his copies of the great portraitist, who he was also well-acquainted with. Many of his portraits were painted on large pieces of ivory, like in this example [3]. Like his contemporary John Smart (1741-1811), Humphry was born to a peruke (wig) maker in Devon. Following a successful career, he was forced to stop painting as his eyesight began to fail him.

[1] Within the article on the couple in the February 1776 edition, their names are also half-disguised. It is likely that censoring the names and providing caricatures instead of likenesses were both tactics used by the magazine to avoid libel.

[2] For further discussion, see Charlie Macrowan, Sex and Society: Analytical Exercise The Fair Penitent, Act Four, Lines 117-266, Leading Undergraduate Work in English Studies, volume 3, 2010-11, pp.230-234.

[3]A portrait of Colonel Duff (after 1790), previously with the Limner Company, was also of a particularly large format, at 15 x 11 cm (5 7/8 x 4 3/8 inches).