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ADVANCE INFORMATION SHEET No 1

TITLE	THIRTY MEN & A GIRL
PRICE	A Singer's Memoirs of War, Mountains, Travel, and always Music £18.00 PB ISBN 978-0-9564538-0-8;j
AUTHOR	Elisabeth Parry
PUBLISHER	Allegra
PUBLICATION DATE:	November 18th 2010
CATEGORY	autobiography (classical music); CVC, CVF, HBBW2, WTL
SPECIFICATIONS	c 456 pages, 234 x 156mm, paperback sewn
WHO WILL BUY THIS BOOK?	Those who enjoy reading about the Second World War, music and opera, and travel and mountaineering.

Elisabeth Parry had just left school, planning to study French and German literature at Oxford, when war was declared on her eighteenth birthday, 3rd September 1939. She was already having singing lessons with Mark Raphael in London, and a chance audition with the Staff Band of the Royal Army Medical Corps led to her becoming soprano soloist with them and singing in hundreds of variety shows and classical concerts until the war ended. They toured Britain and the Middle East as "Thirty men and a Girl", and Elisabeth was voted Forces sweetheart for Paiforce (Persia and Iraq Force).

In 1947 she launched and ran the Wigmore Hall Lunch Hour Concerts for young musicians returning from the war. She also auditioned for Benjamin Britten's newly formed English Opera Group, was taken on as an understudy, and found herself unexpectedly singing a principal role, Lucia in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* when the Viennese soprano she was covering had a row and departed for Vienna in a cloud of dust. She found herself singing for a Glyndebourne First Night and Third Programme Broadcast, working with great artists like Kathleen Ferrier, Peter Pears, Joan Cross and Ottakar Kraus, and of course Britten himself, a wonderful if daunting experience.

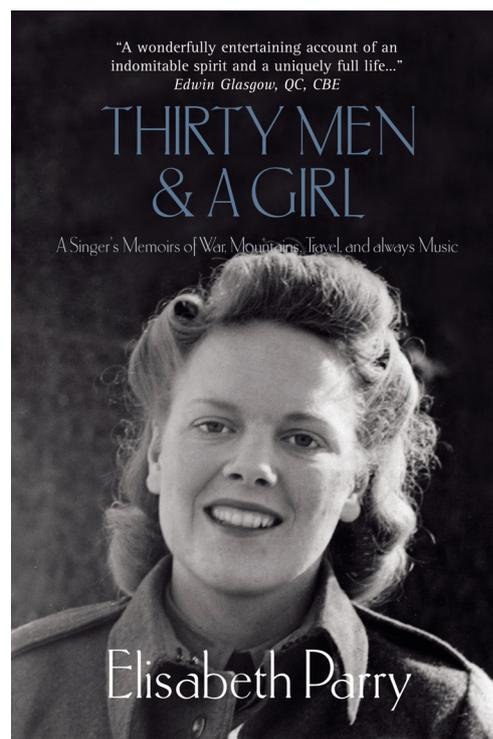
She left the EOG to start up her own small touring company along with a pianist friend in 1950. They survived a bitter struggle with the Arts Council to establish themselves successfully, and toured for fifty-six years, the first company in England to take classical opera on a reduced scale, fully costumed and produced and sung in English, all over Britain to audiences and schools who otherwise had no chance of hearing opera live.

She started to climb at the age of forty, and became a passionate mountaineer and traveller during her holidays, which led to a second career as a successful lecturer. In 1973 she was awarded a Diploma of Commendation for Distinguished Achievement in *The World Who's Who of Women!*

"A wonderfully entertaining account of an indomitable spirit and a uniquely full life..."

Edwin Glasgow, QC, CBE

"...very interesting book...can only add to the history of our country. May I wish you every success." *Dame Vera Lynn*



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