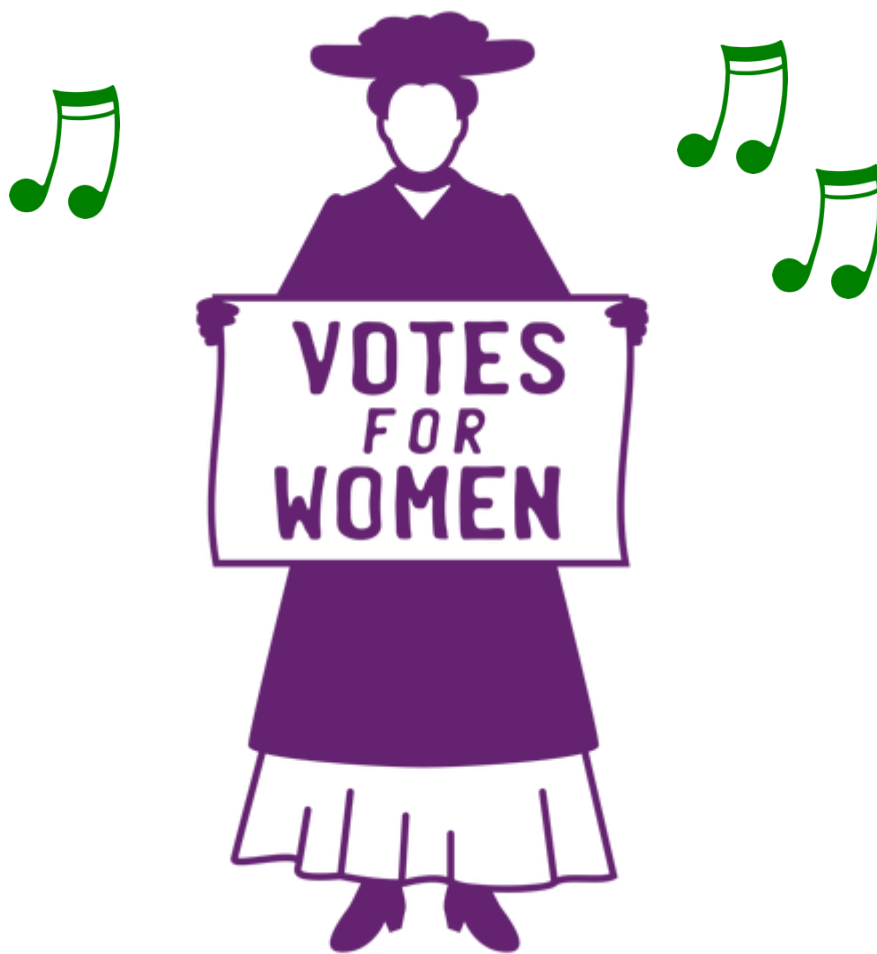




ROYAL
COLLEGE
OF MUSIC
London

Ethel Smyth the Musical Suffragette



Royal College of Music Museum
Museum Poem



There was a time in England when only men could vote
Only men in government could write the laws we wrote
Only men in politics could govern our society
But women said, "Enough with that, it's time for more variety!"



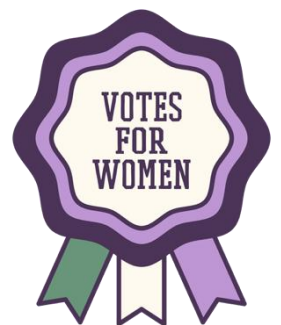
Around the same time, Ethel Smyth was born in Sidcup, Kent
Her father was a rather stiff and stuffy army gent
"Can I study piano please and be a great musician?"
But Ethel's pompous father would not give her his permission.

This made young Ethel very cross, why should he be so stern?
She was determined, so instead she went abroad to learn
Her parents disapproved, but Ethel wrote to them to say
Why should being a women mean I cannot sing and play?

A few years later, homeward bound to London she returned
While walking down a narrow street she soon grew quite concerned
Ahead a few policeman were disrupting an event
Arresting crowds of women shouting loudly as they went



March, ladies, march!
Purple, green and white
March of the women
Voting is our right!



I quite agree, thought Ethel Smyth, who stood and watched the fray

Why should being a woman mean I cannot have a say?

With that she joined the mayhem, picking up a coloured banner

Votes for women! Ethel cried in just the same loud manner



Join the cause! she told her friends, it's truly quite
unfair



That women want to vote and men don't really seem
to care!

Ethel wrote a special song that all the ladies chanted

They all agreed to march and sing until their wish was granted.

Her suffragette friend, Emmeline, cooked up a radical plan

She told her friends to find the house of every government man

Who didn't think that votes for women was an important matter

And throw a large brick through their window causing it to shatter!

It sounds unlawful, Ethel thought, but we're out of good ideas

Everywhere we march they just put fingers in their ears

So Ethel crept out late at night as quiet as a mouse

And with great force she threw her brick at a politicians' house!



A policeman nearby heard the crash and from his post had risen
He caught our Ethel Smyth and threw her into Holloway Prison
It wasn't very nice in jail, but Ethel didn't mind
She felt what she was fighting for was good for humankind.

Outside her prison window as she went to brush her teeth
She saw her fellow comrades in the prison yard beneath
"Courage ladies! We'll be out of here before too long!"
And waving her white toothbrush she conducted them in song

As time went on, eventually the government relented
They passed the law – women could vote! Ethel was
contented.

Her music compositions helped her to achieve great fame
The first female composer to receive the title, 'Dame'.

