

Fringe theatre veteran releases fundraising poetry album



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Published: 1:23 PM November 15, 2021



Leonie Scott-Matthews. Picture: Nigel Sutton - Credit: Archant

Hampstead thespian Leonie Scott-Matthews has released a CD of poetry and music to raise funds for her fringe theatre.

Give Me More is a lockdown project that started when pub venue Pentameters was forced to close. One half is of Matthews reading out her poetry, while the other sees 10 different musicians set her work to song.

"When Covid started I had to cancel my shows and at last had time to do other things, so I formed a publishing company and put out an autobiography, a play and a volume of poetry Excelsior," said Scott-Matthews, who founded Pentameters in 1968.

A fan, David Nevin, set one of the poems to music and offered to fund a recording company to get the rest "out there".

With titles like Rosslyn Arms and Locked Ward, the album features Scott-Matthews' partner Godfrey Old playing harmonica and a beautiful cover design. Each musician chose a poem to score with themes of "fragility, addiction, depression, mental illness, death and metaphysical journeys to redemption."



Give Me More by Leonie Scott-Matthews is a double album of poetry and music priced £10 - Credit: Courtesy of Leonie Scott-Matthews

"All my life I had been writing poetry but I've been so busy promoting other people, that I didn't send them off to be published. It's exciting that it's all happening now and an honour and a privilege to hear your words expressed in music by other voices and given different interpretations."

Scott-Matthews has also written about the fascinating people she's met. "I've worked in theatre all my life and got to know very interesting people from psychiatrists to addicts and poets - I've rubbed shoulders with everyone from Harold Pinter to RD Laing to Stephen Spender."

Now she's planning another book and a second album Stay or Go; "about journeys and people who like to stay in one place and people who like to travel." And she's currently rehearsing plays for Pentameters while continuing the venue's Sunday night music, comedy and poetry open mic event Moon At Night.



Artwork for Give Me More by Leonie's partner Godfrey Old, her daughter Alice also sings one of the tracks on the CD - Credit: Courtesy of Leonie Scott-Matthews

She added: "Everything has had to be postponed and recast but we are rehearsing and will reopen very early next year."

[Give Me More](#) is £10 with funds going to Pentameters Theatre above the Horseshoe pub, Hampstead High Street.