

**U3A talk in Bath, Thursday 3rd September 2026.**

**Elizabeth Linley: The Nightingale of Bath.**

**Thomas Messel, designer and author.**

Born in Bath, on 23 October 1754, Elizabeth Linley was famed for her voice and beauty, painted by Gainsborough, Reynolds and other leading artists of her day. At the age of 17 she scandalised society by disappearing from her parents home, No.11 Royal Crescent, and marrying the playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan, with whom she was the unacknowledged genius behind two of his most famous plays; *The Rivals* and *La Duenna*. Later, as a beacon of the Whig party, she navigated her way through the perils of political intrigue, manipulated by the rivalries between Charles James Fox, William Pitt and the Prince of Wales. She endured a tumultuous marriage, ultimately finding love with Irish revolutionary, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, but was a victim of tuberculosis, her life came to an early end, dying in Hotwells, at the age of 38.

Thomas Messel is well known as the designer of beautiful furniture. He is also the co-author and editor of the study of his uncle's work, *Oliver Messel in the Theatre of Design*, (Speares Book Award 2012) and of this historical novel, *The Nightingale of Bath*.