



CANTATA
DRAMATICA

presents

BEOWULF

PREVIEW

Composer LOUIS MANDER

Librettist NICK PITTS-TUCKER

Wilton Community Centre, Salisbury SP2 0DG
Sunday 22 November, 6pm



ACT ONE

BEOWULF AND GRENDEL

ACT TWO

GRENDEL'S MOTHER

ACT THREE

BEOWULF'S LAST FIGHT

There is no interval, but there will be a brief pause between each Act.

Please turn your mobile phone off during the performance.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE MINSTREL

Baritone

BEOWULF

Baritone

KING HROTHGAR

Bass Baritone

QUEEN WEALTHOW

Soprano

UNSERTH

Bass

QUEEN FREAWARA

Soprano

QUEEN HYGD

Soprano

WIGLAF

Bass

LOUIS MANDER

Conductor

CASPAR JAMES

The Minstrel

STEVEN EAST

King Hrothgar

CAROLINE KENNEDY

Queen Freawara

ALEX JONES

Unserth / Wiglaf

DAVID DAVIES

Chorus Master

THOMAS COLWELL

Beowulf

IRIS KORFKER

Queen Wealthow

BECCA MARRIOTT

Queen Hygd

DOUGLAS STEVENS

Piano

INTRODUCTION

Cantata Dramatica's latest commission for 2015–16 is Beowulf, composed by Louis Mander, with libretto by Nick Pitts-Tucker. Nick Pitts-Tucker writes:

“The story of Beowulf is the Anglo Saxon version of the heroic deeds of a Swedish warrior who made his name in Denmark, fighting awesome trolls, and then, in old and distinguished age, rolling out for one last fight with a fire breathing Dragon.

Louis Mander first suggested the poem to me as a suitable subject for a dramatic cantata. My wife did Anglo Saxon at Cambridge and jumped at the chance to have “Beowulf” set to music so I set to, reading several translations simultaneously, and then making a verse précis of the story. I also introduced some extra female parts to balance the rather muscular content of the original.”

The purpose of today's event is threefold: firstly, to provide the composer and librettist with a unique opportunity to create a high quality realisation of the music they have written; secondly, to establish the ‘performability’ of the piece from the participants’ point of view; and thirdly, to discover how well it all works for the audience. The first objective focuses firmly on the vocal aspects of the piece because it has not been feasible to engage the full instrumental ensemble, but our select band of musicians will provide a tantalising glimpse into the full sound world envisaged by the composer.

If all goes well, the next stage of the project will be a much larger scale production in 2016. If you have enjoyed this performance and would like to help the next one come to fruition, we would love to hear from you.

COMPOSER LOUIS MANDER WRITES:

My inspiration for the composition of the score came immediately and was catalysed by Nick Pitts-Tucker's evocative and highly expressive libretto. I wanted to expose a number of key character motifs that I could vary and recall through the whole three act arc to provide a subconscious narrative coherence. Once I had composed and honed these leitmotifs, it was my intention to source a couple of traditional Danish folk melodies that I might weave into the score. There is one Danish folk melody used in the Act One Intermezzo, then two further Scandinavian folk songs are enjoyed in the Scene Five ‘Mead’ chorus. The other melodic material is my own, with Scandinavian inflected contours.

The drama is played out with through-composed aria, duet, ensemble and accompanied recitative, but also spoken word, sometimes with instrumental underscoring, and oftentimes purely spoken, without accompaniment. There are also a number of purely instrumental episodes which convey the presence of the supernatural characters in the story. It was decided early on that vocalising these otherworldly characters would be better evoked through shadow-play.

In spite of there being a number of characters set as baritone roles, the contrast between them is noticeable. The Minstrel displays a lighter (baryton-Martin) voice with agility and mercurial nimbleness, King Hrothgar, a darker bass-baritone and Beowulf himself a strong, lyric baritone. With the female roles (all Queens) I wanted to reveal their feminine strength and emotional support to Beowulf and Hrothgar in their arduous adventures. The Minstrel is both a diagetic and non-diagetic role, cleverly deployed by Nick to advance the exposure of the narrative to the audience and also to be an active part of the drama itself.

The scoring, richly textured and with a great deal of percussion includes the full battery of tuned and un-tuned instruments. The choice of the Paraguayan harp is an unusual one: a type of diatonic harp that is a diagetic conceit for the Minstrel in his ballads.

The first act is impetuous and full of vitality. The second act is intrepid and athletic. The third and concluding act is bittersweet, elegiac and otherworldly. In itself it was an Olympian compositional undertaking to capture this epic and well loved tale in under 2 hours! My thanks to Julia Stutfield and Nick Pitts-Tucker for their belief in my vision for the opera.

My desire was to illuminate the camaraderie and tender friendship between Beowulf and his brethren which is so touchingly inlaid through the original poem. A unifying and unaffected male unity displayed in adversity.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: BEOWULF'S THEME (INSTRUMENTAL)

SCENE TWO: THE MINSTREL SETS THE SCENE

THE MINSTREL In the land of the Danes there lives a great king
Hrothgar by name,in his time first in fame,
But old now,though wise,and attended by sorrow.
For his hall is besieged by a fiend of great horror.
The fiend? Is named Grendel,ugly and fierce,
A troll that rips arms off and eats them...what's worse?
Foul of breath and foul of nature
Grendel's got Hrothgar's hall under torture.
Thralls flee, thanes die, and Queen Wealthow,
(Noble of birth and noble of bearing.)
Weeps at the fall of the old king's standing.
A hero we need,a hero indeed
To challenge the brute and tear out the root
Of evil in this green-golden land

SCENE THREE: THE SEAFARERS' SONG

CHORUS: Strong our sinews, hard our hands,
Swift our ship... Beowulf's band!
Taut our sail, high our prow,
Breasting the waves... Beowulf's crew!
Carving the ocean, slicing the sea,
Called to his mission... Beowulf he!
He the hero heard about Grendel.
Vicious troll... and compassed his end all
Covered in gore, sword out of its sheath,
Beowulf our hero, Beowulf our chief!
Strike hard, oars, bite the ocean's waves,
Shore is in sight, strand just ahead!
Smack through the breakers, strike the prow in the sand,
Swiftest of men... Beowulf's Band!

SCENE FOUR: BEOWULF'S ARRIVAL

MINSTREL Hail, warriors bold! Come ashore and tell your purpose untold.
BEOWULF Beowulf's band we, and a purpose in hand.
MINSTREL A purpose of peace or a purpose of war?
BEOWULF Our purpose? To drive Grendel the troll from your hall!
MINSTREL Then welcome brave warriors, step forth and step firm,
Your hands on your sword hilts, your hearts strong and true,
Grendel's our terror, Grendel's our foe,
Come see King Hrothgar and his good Queen Wealthow.

BEOWULF Our thanks to your office, good minstrel, we owe.
So tell the good King of our purpose and so
Peace in his hall and calm in his lands
Will come soon to Daneland from Beowulf's Band.

MINSTREL Brave warriors indeed , your courage is needed.
The troll's foul strength and fierce force be heeded.
Many's the hero been felled by his arm
Many a stout heart quelled by alarm.
So go for him, Beowulf. Let Grendel be ended!

SCENE FIVE: HROTHGAR'S WELCOME

HROTHGAR Welcome, Geats. Welcome, friends overdue long!
Beowulf... your Band of brave warriors strong!
Champions we need to kill our foul foe
And rid us from evil. Then home you can go.

WEALTHOW Welcome brave Geats! And Beowulf the Famous!
Word of your deeds and your battles has reached us.
All of your strength and courage is needed
The vice of the grip of that monster be heeded.
Bring peace to our hall and gold will be yours.
Drink from my cup from which sweet mead pours!

DRINKING SONG Mead! Mead! Mead! Mead!
Strong of spirit, sweet of savour!
Mead! Mead! Mead! Mead!
Drink of heroes, draught of swordsmen!
Mead! Mead! Mead! Mead!
Stirs the sinews, flames the heart!
Mead! Mead! Mead! Mead!
Drink! Drink! Drink! Drink!
Heroes! Champions! Foes, take heed!

SCENE SIX: UNSERTH'S CHALLENGE

UNSERTH Beowulf... Beowulf, tell me your tale, your bet with Breaca.
Your swim round the world!

BEOWULF Nay, Unserth, not so – my swim 'cross the sea.
But my bet with Breaca was won by me.

UNSERTH Not so, Beowulf! As I heard tell,
Your swim fell well short whilst Breaca's did not.
Are we to trust such a champion or what?

BEOWULF Unserth, be civil. The tale you were told
Was but half truth. Let me unfold
The whole of the story, what happened. After five days long
Breaca struck shore but I carried on
Through strong winds and waves till my strength had all gone.
Held up in the sea by whales of the deep
Some helped me, some pawed me, some pulled me down
Down, down to the depths of the ice black sea

But my sword saved me, a fierce blow struck,
Lungs bursting for air, I swam right back up.
No more sea monsters lurk now in the waves
The lives of many seafarers I've saved.
Enough, Unserth. Your questions were fair.
But the truth of my answers has left you bare!

SCENE SEVEN: FREAWARA'S DANCE

WEALTHOW Look, Beowulf, on all that is fair.
A golden girl with golden hair!
A golden cup in her golden hands
A golden bride for a golden man.....
Ingeld, her husband, of the Heathobard clan,
Enemies once; now fast friends to a man!

BEOWULF Such beauty, such grace brings renown to your hall.
For such a bride I would give my all!
Come, Freawara, fill my cup full,
With mead, with joy, with life, with love!

MINSTREL Golden she is, golden she was
When she went with Ingeld of the Heathobards.
But old wounds were opened and old blood spilled.
By sour old blood the gold was spoiled.
Kinsmen were slain and clansmen killed.
Ingeld's bright love was tarnished with rust
Freawara's bright dreams were turned into dust.

BEOWULF Hush, Minstrel. Let us live in the present! The future's afar.
Come Freawara, beautiful child,
Come, Freawara, sit by my side.

FREAWARA Lord Beowulf, the honour is mine indeed
So let me fill your cup with mead.
By your side I will sit... but your time's not come!
I'll take Ingeld the Heathobard to my bed and my home.

BEOWULF Hail Grace! Hail Beauty! Hail Fair Freawara!

SCENE EIGHT: AND SO TO BED

WEALTHOW My lord, let us sleep now.

HROTHGAR Thanes, new friends, Thralls and all.
Rest now. Rest your heads in my hall!

SCENE NINE: GRENDEL'S ATTACK (INSTRUMENTAL)

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE: AFTER THE ATTACK

CHORUS Beowulf won! Grendel's claw,
Ripped from his body, hangs in the hall!
Whoop...whoop...whoop.whoop...

WEALTHOW Calm now thanes, calm now Thralls,
Our sorrows are ended. Our mead hall defended
By Beowulf who came from the Geats shore.
Grendel the monster has lost his claw
His arm, his shoulder and now slinks away
To die in his lair, his very last day.
So flagons be filled! Let the mead flow!
Here is my cup filled full for the hero.
Take it, Beowulf, drink deep and be glad
The terror is over. All before was sad
But now we can live and our mead hall will ring
To the sound of the harp and our warriors song!

SCENE TWO: GRENDEL ATTACKS

MINSTREL Heorot was in uproar. Grendel's dam
Seized her man. Aeschere it was,
Hrothgar's oldest companion.
Off the wall she snatched dead Grendel's hand,
And scuttled off over moorland and fen
To the dark dark pool that was her den.

HROTHGAR No peace. Just grief. Aeschere is dead.
Wise in council. My oldest comrade.
A noble man, all a warrior should be.
Now taken by that second troll
Who lives on moorland, wolf slopes, windswept
Cliffs and misty bogs, somewhere out there
In her dark, dark pool. Beowulf... will you go?

UNSERTH Here, Beowulf! Take Hrunting with you!
My sword, my famous sword. Iron bladed
Patterned, pitted, spattered with battle blood.

BEOWULF Hrothgar, I am ready. But if I die
Look after my band. Send them and my treasure
To the Geat's Lord Hygelac, on my behalf.
Then he will know me for what I really am.
Unserth, be thanked for your good sword Hrunting
With this in my hand there'll be good hunting!

SCENE THREE: THE HUNT

CHORUS Run, run, run! The trail is hot! Fresh blood I see.

Stop, stop! Look! Listen! There, through the trees!
Run, run, run! Faster now, the path is clear. We'll catch her yet!
Quick, quick, quick! Run, run, run now!

MINSTREL Run fast as they can, they cannot catch
The troll. She reaches first the darkm dark pool
And plunges in. Aeschere's head she throws aside.
Grendel's arm she takes with her. Down, down,
The dark water churns. The black waves heave.
Boiling with blood. Red on black. Straightway
Beowulf mailed in steel plunges after, Hrunting
In his hand. Down, down all the day. Serpents
Hiss and strike in vain at his coat of mail.
Down, down to their underwater hall.

SCENE FOUR: BEOWULF FIGHTS GRENDEL'S MOTHER

FOLLOWERS He's gone for good!
He surely drowned!
Nay nay, forget not... he is a fearless swimmer. He'll survive.
He swam the sea for seven days, slew serpents then.
Then let us pray for his return triumphant.
O Freia, steer our champion's course
Strengthen his arm
Keep him from harm
Grant him invincible force!
O Woden!
Mighty Thor!
Lord Jesus!

MINSTREL Still, silent, black, the waters stood.
No sound. No movement. Nothing could
Be told about the struggles down below.
Then bubbles burst upon the surface first.
The waters heaved. The serpents hissed and
Hurried to the side. A mighty shout –
And Beowulf the hero leapt right out!

BEOWULF It's done! It's done! The troll is dead!
The fight is won. Here is Grendel's head!

BAND What happened? Are you hurt? Where's Hrunting?

BEOWULF A fearful fight it was that fiend did fight.
My life she nearly took. Hrunting my sword
Bounced off her. Broke in thousand pieces!
All looked lost. But then my rage took flight,
My battle fury gave me berserker's might.
Round round I threw her, twisting, twisting down.
Seized from her wall an old, old sword
And stabbed her. Boiling blood burst
From her body. Burnt up the sword!
I lived. I swam with Grendel's head
Up through the waters. All is said!

BAND So gods be praised! Freia! Woden! Lord Jesus! Mighty Thor!
Beowulf lives, he's back! The world will be in awe!

SCENE FIVE: MARCHING SONG OF THE BAND

CHORUS To Hrothgar's hall we come
Our hero's duty done.
The monster's ruddy gore
Is spattered on the floor.
The trolls have been defeated
Their evil's been deleted.
March! March! March! March!
March, warriors, to the mead hall,
Where women sing your praises
And Queens give gold to all!
March! March! March! March!

SCENE SIX: CELEBRATION OF THE HERO AND SAD FAREWELLS

MINSTREL Beowulf swung Grendel's head by the hair.
All those in the mead hall stopped and stared.

BEOWULF See Grendel's head. His mother is dead.
How we fought in the lake for Heorot's sake!
Hrunting was broken, shivered in shards,
This old sword's my token, to be sung by bards,
Of a story of valour and swordplay fast.
Here, Hrothgar. Please, take it! Peace now at last!

HROTHGAR Old I may be and grizzled with age
But hark when I speak. My words are sage.
This man is our hero, befriended by fate,
Came here to save us and by the weight
Of his sword arm, the might of his brain.
Welcome, great hero! And when your time comes
Take your place 'mongst the Geats, be shield of their homes.
Give gifts. Gain glory. Grant God the power.
No pride. No prancing! Your prime too will pass.
Death takes us all in his own time at last,
In bed or in battle. By fire or sword.

WEALTHOW Beowulf, we thank you from our bottom-most hearts.
My sons will remember you down the long years.
Hrothgar my lord is now moved to tears.
And I, the Queen of this mead hall, start
To weep for your going, our brave visitor.
So take these gold armlets, gold collars, gold rings,
And load your ship up with these golden things.
Mountains of treasure. Wealth. Glory. But is it all?
No. Honour is brighter than gold can be.
Wisdom far truer than riches. Let me
Wish you all happiness, love and a bride
To await you when home you ride!

FREAWARA
Brave warrior, Beowulf, bold as brass,
Strong as iron, but gentle as grass.
Your image I'll hold in my heart when I wed
My own Lord Ingeld and take him to bed.
A heart that's true and a mind that's firm.
An arm that's strong as iron!

BEOWULF
My Lord, my Queen, my Princess fair,
Thanes, thralls, and good folk here!
The time has come for me to take home
My band of warriors, our task is done!
Farewell my Lord, farewell my Queen,
This high mead hall no more be seen.
Bend to the shore! To our swift keeled ship!

MINSTREL
Loaded with gold and the praises of all
The warriors marched to their ship on the shore.
The watchman watched as he did before.
But Beowulf stopped and from his store
Of gold and armour picked out a sword.

BEOWULF
Here, watchman, take it as good memory
Of Beowulf's band from across the sea!

MINSTREL
Ship's keel was heaved through the foaming brine.
Her mast was stepped. The sail stretched fine.
Prow surged forward, cutting the waves.
Seafarers rested their oars on the staves.
Home from adventures, home from the sea
Heroes at last for all to see.

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE: HYGD, QUEEN OF THE GEATS

HYGD
The years pass. Time passes. Time passed.
Time was when my lord was Hygelac, Hrethel's son.
Time was when he ruled the Geats till
In blood battle with the Frisians he fell.
Struck down by swords, one by one,
Beowulf alone escaped by swimming,
By strength, by stamina, knowledge of the sea
Home he came. I offered him the throne.
My sons were strong but not as strong as he.
For thirty years he's been my lord,
Defending our people, my hall, with sword.
Now old, the years dim his strength
Yet he still stretches his hero life's length.

MINSTREL
My lady, a serf comes here with a sorry tale!
Grovels, casts about him and flails!
Trying to hide his act of gross folly!
He has stirred the old enemy. All he
Did was to steal a cup, a golden cup
From a lair, but he woke the dragon up!

HYGD
What dragon? Some snake perhaps! Some serpent maybe!
But no threat to our kingdom surely? Say he
Is not dangerous! Not a dragon to me!

MINSTREL
Lady, it rages, spews fire too
Flies round the fields burning a few
Here and there. Flame-throwing jaws
And smoking snout should give us cause
To curse this snivelling serf
Who stole a cup from its hoard and, worse,
Woke it up from a sleep of ages.
Furious, frenzied, fire-spewing it rages.
Our hall is in cinders, the people's hall,
Our land laid waste. Our kingdom falls!

BEOWULF
Minstrel, your tale fills my heart with foreboding.
Some law has been broken. Our God is avoiding
His people. We've erred. Strong cause for reflection...
But this dragon is on us. Time now for action!
Smith! Here, come, make me a shield
Forged out of iron to ward off the fire!
Hygd! Bring me my sword, sharp to the touch!
Wiglaf! Stand with me, though you haven't fought much!
Warriors twelve, from old fight, with me!
This dragon we'll slay and come home safely!

SCENE TWO: THE DRAGON AWAKES (INSTRUMENTAL)

SCENE THREE: BEOWULF DEPARTS FOR THE FIGHT

HYGD Beowulf, my lord. Farewell. Take heed!
Your strength's not what it was. You need
The help of Wiglaf here and your warriors twelve
To get close to the cave and then delve
Deep into that cavernous barrow
With its twisting tunnels and fire blackened walls.
Take heed! Get close! Avoid the harrow
Of its flesh tearing teeth! Oh, I'm so afraid!

BEOWULF Hygd, calm your fears. My sword is long.
My shield made of iron. My arm is still strong!
Maybe I'll kill it with the edge of my blade
Sharp as a razor, cunningly inlaid...
Or shatter his bones? This dragon's end'll
Be crushed in my battle grip just like Grendel!
Warriors, just watch me! My spirit is bold.
I'll either die or fetch out its gold!

SCENE FOUR: BEOWULF FIGHTS THE DRAGON

MINSTREL So Beowulf came to the dragon's barrow
Our hero snorted and let forth a bellow.
The dragon soon heard and stirred in wrath
Stoked up his fires and cleared his path.
Sprang out upon Beowulf standing alone
Spewed fire, spouted flames, sweeping its tail,
Swatting the shield, spurning the sword.

BEOWULF Wiglaf! Warriors! Come help me now!
The flames of this brute are burning me how!

WARRIORS Watch out! Run, run! I'm burnt, on fire! O gods! Save us!

MINSTREL So his warriors fled, running away
In fear to the forest. But Wiglaf did stay.
Young, fearless, strong, a true warrior's son.

WIGLAF Cowards! Conies! Your duty's not done!
God knows a man from a man.
This is the time for a true man to stand
By his lord. Face the flames. Kill the foe.
Beowulf, my Lord, you are not alone!

SCENE FIVE: BEOWULF'S SWORD BREAKS

MINSTREL Naegling snapped! The old sword failed him.
Beowulf's great strength betrayed him.

SCENE SIX: BEOWULF'S DEATH

MINSTREL A third time charged the furious dragon!
Beowulf, swordless, shield-burned, huddled.
Wiglaf, scorched but standing by him, struggled.
Lunged the monster, teeth like harrows –
Beowulf's neck crunched right to the marrow.
Poison flowed in. The pain was intense.
Beowulf had no more defence.
But Wiglaf plunged his sword in its belly
Up to the hilt in that foe most hated.
Stricken now, the dragon sank slowly
While the flames from his throat abated.
Beowulf, still living, drew out his small knife
And took from the brute his fire-breathing life.
Two kinsmen, two heroes, in death's dark vale
Stood firm together and so prevailed.
But the poison still dripped from the dragon's jaws,
Dripped into his veins. Beowulf's cause
Was lost from then. The harshest of laws
Spell doom for the victim of poisoned blood.
Beowulf tottered forward, slumped back. The Lord
Of the Geats had reached the end of his road.
As Wiglaf washed the blood-caked hands,
Drew off the helm and sponged the wounds,
Beowulf slid his body down to the ground.

BEOWULF It's over, Wiglaf! Life's glittering treasures
Are fading. For now I must measure
My life in my deeds, not just my pleasures.
No son to succeed me, but my kingdom unsullied
By wars or defeats. Yet, Wiglaf, go hurry!
Bring me some gold, shimmering stones.
Bright, priceless... cheer my burned bones.
Ease my leaving this land that was mine.
Ease my dying . For now it's time.

MINSTREL Wiglaf ran to the cave, heart bursting
With sadness, still hot and still cursing
The coils of the dragon whose hoard
He now plundered, turned with his sword
Old helmets, gold cups, a wonderful banner,
The playthings of giants. He loaded his pannier
And hurried back to his dying Lord.

SCENE SEVEN: BEOWULF'S LAST WORDS

BEOWULF Thank God for these treasures you've brought me just now.
Wiglaf, I've given my life to bring gold to the Geats. See how
You too must serve my people instead,
Protect them all and my good Queen Hygd!
I'm not long for this life. When I'm done, take command.
Lead the Queen and the thanes... set the Thralls in hand.

Build tall the pyre for my funeral fires
 Let smoke o'er the sea tower higher and higher,
 Bright flames scorch up these old bones of mine
 And burn in men's minds the end of my line!
 A barrow set up o'er looking the sea
 On that headland. Let that my memorial be!
 Here take this gold collar, gold helm, gold ring.
 They are all that is left of your dying king.
 Warriors, seafarers, thanes and Thralls
 When their time comes... I must follow them all.

CHORUS Beowulf! Beowulf! O shame, shame on us! Cowards that we are!
 WIGLAF Wasted! Wasted the gold that he gave you! Your Lord lies dead and you ran away!
 So ease your disgrace by lifting the burden
 Of your dead king's body to the funeral pyre.
 CHORUS Raise him ! Raise him! Raise him high!
 Carry our Lord to the funeral pyre “

SCENE EIGHT: BEOWULF'S PASSING

MINSTREL High on the headland his pyre was piled
 High on the pyre the hero was laid.
 High round the hero helmets and shields.
 High round the body his shining mail.
 HYGD I weep for my Lord, now turning to ashes.
 I mourn for my hall, soon turning to ashes.
 I keen for renown and his daring deeds.
 Fame, gold, honour, now turning to ashes.
 CHORUS Farewell, great hero!
 Swimmer of the salty seas,
 Slayer of the great troll Grendel,
 Killer of the Geats' dragon!
 Gold getter, gold giver,
 Hall builder, mead drinker,
 The kindest,
 The most just,
 The most generous,
 The most famous hero of our time!
 Farewell, great hero. Farewell!

BIOGRAPHIES



NICK PITTS-TUCKER

Librettist

During a long and successful career in banking, Nick found the time to develop an interest in powerful stories from each century of our era. The first was the story of William Carey, self taught educator of early Raj India, which emerged as a community play. The second was put to music and became the dramatic cantata

Perpetua. The third is *Cantata Eliensis*, the story of Ely Cathedral in three acts, each put to music by a different young composer. The fourth, *Memoirs of a Snub Nosed Cat*, is being written for radio. Cantata Dramatica has emerged from this series of accidents as a musical force in its own right.



LOUIS MANDER

Composer

Composer and Clairvoyant Louis Mander trained at The Royal College of Music and Birmingham University. He actively works as a composer of opera, for film and ballet. Future works include a full length opera *Beowulf* commissioned by Cantata Dramatica and his large scale opera *The Life to Come* with libretto by Stephen Fry will be performed in 2016. He recently provided the soundtrack for Jan Hendrik

Verstraten's film *I am Henry* (Flying Dutchman Films) which will be released later this year. His chamber opera *Oh, Whistle!* (Tête à Tête 2015) with libretto by Jack Cherry was premiered in August to great acclaim at RADA Studios. Future performances include *Cantata Eliensis* which will be performed in Ely Cathedral in June 2016 in collaboration with Cantata Dramatica who commissioned it.



THOMAS COLWELL

Beowulf

Thomas began singing as a chorister at St. Paul's Cathedral. He then went on to train with Ann Lampard, head of voice at the Jnr Royal Academy of Music, before completing his training under Robert Alderson at the Royal Northern College of Music. Roles include Capulet (Gounod, *Romeo and Juliet*) with Riverside Opera, Don Alfonso (Mozart, *Così fan tutte*) and Escamillo (Bizet, *Carmen*), Dr Bartolo (Rossini, *Barber of Seville*) with Opera'r Ddraig. Marcello (Puccini, *La bohème*) Opera

Up Close, in the Ravenna Festival, Italy. This year has seen Thomas' debut with Longborough Festival Opera singing the role of Steuermann and chorus in Wagner's *Tristan Und Isolde*, and a return to the role of Escamillo with Wedmore Opera, also Dancairo in Opera Up Close' *Carmen* in the Soho Theatre. He is currently covering the role of Marcello with ENO in their new production of *La bohème*.



STEVEN EAST

King Hrothgar

Steven was a Robinson Hearn Scholar at Trinity Laban Conservatoire. Recent roles include Capellio in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, Don Giovanni and Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Dr Bartolo in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Dr Grenvil in *La Traviata*, Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Gregorio in *Roméo et Juliette*, Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Sacristan in

Tosca, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Publio in *La Clemenza di Tito*, The Hackney Coachman in *The Lottery* and Zaretski in *Eugene Onegin*. Other current work includes Grange Park and English National Opera chorus, oratorios, recitals and a concert of Russian arias at Pushkin House in London. Steven studies with Neil Baker.



CASPAR JAMES

The Minstrel

Caspar Lloyd James is a Kathleen Roberts Vocal Scholar at Trinity-Laban Conservatoire and studies with Alison Wells. He previously studied with David Lowe and also with Omar Ebrahim.

Highlights of his performances at Trinity include the title role in Handel's *Imeneo* and Starveling in the June 2015 performance of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In December 2015 he is performing the role of Don Giovanni for the autumn opera scenes. He has performed the role of the Sergeant in *La*

bohème for Dulwich Opera Company and recently in the Celebrate Voice festival in Salisbury. For Opera Dinamica he performed the role of Lord Dunmow in Lennox Berkley's *A Dinner Engagement*.

In addition Caspar has over 10 years of eclectic performing experience: from European to African folk traditions, including a year studying and performing in the Caribbean. With the group Orkestra del Sol he has performed to large crowds at Glastonbury Festival.



ALEX JONES

Unserth / Wiglaf

Alex is currently a Lay Clerk at Gloucester Cathedral. He spent a gap year as a choral scholar at Wells Cathedral, and then spent three years as a choral scholar at King's College, London. When in London he sang at various churches in the City, including St. Bride's Fleet street, Marylebone Parish church, St. George's Hanover Square and The Chapel Royal at Hampton Court Palace. He also has experience as a soloist for various choral societies, doing works including, Bach's *St. John Passion*, *Matthew*

Passion and *Magnificat*, Mendellsohn's *Elijah*, Beethoven's *9th Symphony*, Orf's *Carmina Burana*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Brahms' *Requiem*, Jenkins' *The Armed Man*. Alex also enjoys performing on the stage, and has been involved with various opera companies, including Hampstead Garden Opera, The Co-Opera Company and British Youth Opera, performing such roles as Papageno from Mozart's *Magic Flute* and Krushina in Smetana's *Bartered Bride*.



CAROLINE KENNEDY

Queen Freawara

Soprano, Caroline Kennedy was awarded a BA Hons. in French and Drama from The University of Kent and in July 2011, she graduated from the RSAMD Opera School.

Caroline's most notable roles include Young Vixen/ Frantik *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Grange Park Opera), Il Paggio *Rigoletto* (Opera Holland Park), Peep Bo *Mikado* (Charles Court Opera), Cecchina in Marcos Portugal's *Marriage of Figaro* and Ninetta *La Finta Semplice* (Bampton Classical Opera).

This summer she sang the role of Rose Maybud in *Ruddigore* (Opera della Luna), Barbarina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Regent's Opera), Valencienne in *The Merry Widow* (Wilton's Music Hall), Boy in *Oh Whistle and I'll come to you* (Tête à Tête) and Nannetta in *Falstaff* (Fulham Opera/ Grimeborn Festival Opera.)

Future engagements include Veronica in *Miracle! An Opera for Sunderland* and a role in Born Mad's *Sister* which will be presented at the Spitalfields Winter Festival.



IRIS KORFKER

Queen Wealthow

Soprano Iris Korfker is studying privately with Arwel Treharne Morgan and Nicholas Powell. She studied MA Preparatory Opera at the Royal Academy of Music where she was awarded the third prize in The Joan Chissel Prize for Singers and was Very Highly Commended during the Isabel Jay and Bluth-Buesst Opera Prizes and was supported by the Josephene Baker trust. She completed a BMus and PGDip at Trinity College of Music achieving distinction for her final recital and received the Eva Malpass Scholarship and the Paul Simm Opera Prize.

Operatic roles include Violetta, Roselinda, Michaela, Queen of the Night, Pamina, Madame Herz, Konstanze, Marcellina, Fiordiligi and Blanche. Companies she has sung with include Opera a la Carte, BYO, White Horse Opera, Co-Opera-Co.

Solo highlights include Beethoven *Mass in C* (Surrey Voices, St James Picadilly) Britten's *Les Illuminations* (Orchestra of St John's, Kings Place) *Una Poenitentium* (Mahler's 8th Symphony) and the *Four Last Songs* by Strauss (EMGS Orchestra) and Mozart's *Requiem* (St Martin in the Fields).



BECCA MARRIOTT

Queen Hygd

Becca read English at Oxford, subsequently completing her Masters of Music at Trinity Laban where she was the Morag Noble Scholar and won the Roy Pleasance Prize for voice and orchestra.

Professional operatic roles include: Floria Tosca (*Tosca*), Dido (*Dido & Aeneas*), Amelia (*Un Ballo in Maschera*) for OperaUpClose,

Serpina (*La Serva Padrona*), Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*), Countess Almavira (*Le Nozze di Figaro*) and Gala Dali in Ergo Phizmiz's *Gala* for Tête à Tête. Becca also enjoys concert and oratorio singing. Highlights include Verdi's *Requiem* with Brighton Orpheus Choir and Finzi's *In Terra Pax* with Corsley Festival Choir.



DAVID DAVIES
Chorus Master

David Davies, successively a research scientist, Editor of Nature and Director of the Open College of the Arts, became a full-time musician on retirement. He is musical director of Opera at Chilmark, conductor of Cross Keys Orchestra and Salisbury U3A Choir and harpsichordist with Salisbury Baroque.

DOUGLAS STEVENS
Piano

Dr Douglas Stevens studied music at the University of Bristol and remained there after graduating to complete a PhD thesis focusing on the music of Lennox Berkeley. He is active as a pianist and accompanist, and has a wide repertory as a solo pianist. He has accompanied many different choirs including Bristol University

Singers, the Athenaeum Singers and the Erebus Ensemble. As a composer Douglas has completed a large variety of works including a Violin Sonata, several song cycles and works for solo piano. He is the official organist at Wardour Chapel in Wiltshire and regularly plays for weddings, funerals and other events.

ABOUT CANTATA DRAMATICA

Cantata Dramatica is a not-for-profit organisation (charity registration number 1158027) whose objective is to commission and promote new music.

Our first commission, *Perpetua*, was premièred at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, in November 2012. In 2013 we commissioned two works: *Missa Aedes Christi* with music by Francis Grier and *Cantata Eliensis*, a collaboration with three different composers. In September and October 2014 we performed two London premières, as well as the first public performance of *Cantata Eliensis* in Grantham.

We work with a mix of professional and amateur performers at many different levels and we aim to provide a rewarding creative experience for all.

| | |
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| Chairman | Nick Pitts-Tucker |
| Treasurer | Julia Stutfield |
| Secretary | Virginia Goode |

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Performances of new and unusual works call for a high degree of creative collaboration between composer, conductor, singers, instrumentalists and our production team. We would not be able to embark on such projects without the generous support (financial and otherwise) of our Sponsors, Friends, and enthusiasts, including our amateur performers, to all of whom we are immensely grateful. We would particularly like to acknowledge our major sponsors:

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Cantata Dramatica would also like to acknowledge the continuing support of Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance.

Graphic designer: Miranda Latham-Jackson

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Our goal is not just to commission accessible, performable new music dramas, but to get them performed more widely in front of diverse audiences.

Cantata Dramatica welcomes your support in achieving this, whether by making introductions, building our contacts with venues, performers and Directors of Music, by fundraising, or by enthusiastic attendance at our performances and spreading the word. For more information have a look at the Supporters section of our website, www.cantatadramatica.com, or contact us at cantatadramatica@gmail.com.



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The story of the building of Ely Cathedral, performed in the Lady Chapel at Ely as part of a weekend of celebrations in honour of St Etheldreda.

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