



CANTATA  
DRAMATICA

presents

# PERPETUA

*Composer* NICK BICÂT

*Librettist* NICK PITTS-TUCKER

PETER WRIGHT

*Conductor*

HELEN CHARLSTON

*Perpetua*

CANTATA DRAMATICA SOLOISTS

ST STEPHEN WALBROOK COMMUNITY  
CHOIR

DANCERS FROM MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

St Stephen Walbrook, London EC4

Wednesday 29 January 2020



# ABOUT CROSSLIGHT ADVICE



Crosslight advice is a community-focused charity which works to combat poverty and hardship caused by the burden of unmanageable debt and lack of financial capability.

People are our passion. Our aim is to restore dignity and hope to those in need, helping individuals and families lift themselves out of their current difficulties and get back on their feet.

We do this through open-ended, holistic debt advice coupled with money education and budgeting support to equip our clients for the future. We take a whole-person approach, walking with individuals and supporting them as they seek to address the causes of their financial difficulties as well as the immediate impact.

Crosslight Advice <http://crosslightadvice.org> is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (1163306) and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (715066). Crosslight is part of the Community Money Advice network of debt advice agencies and is a member of AdviceUK. Crosslight holds the Advice Quality Standard.

# ACT 1

SCENE 1	PERPETUA AND HER FAMILY
SCENE 2	PERPETUA JOINS THE CHRISTIANS
SCENE 3	DEATH OF DINOCRATES
SCENE 4	SATURUS CHALLENGES THE STATE
SCENE 5	SEXTUS' BETRAYAL PRISON / DREAM OF THE LADDER
SCENE 6	QUINTUS & PERPETUA DREAM OF DINOCRATES

# ACT 2

SCENE 1	THE PROCONSUL'S COURTROOM
SCENE 2	PUDENS & PERPETUA DREAM OF THE GLADIATOR
SCENE 3	FELICITAS' BABY CAUSES A RIOT DREAM OF PARADISE
SCENE 4	THE ARENA DEATH OF PERPETUA
SCENE 5	LAMENT FOR VIBIA PERPETUA

There will be an interval of c. 20 minutes between Act 1 and Act 2.  
Please turn off your mobile phone during the performance.

# DRAMATIS PERSONAE

VIBIA PERPETUA

*Widow of Primus, a Roman tribune*

HELEN CHARLSTON

DINOCRATES

*Perpetua's younger brother*

CAMERON TAYLOR

VIBIA SECUNDA

*Perpetua's mother*

HANNAH MURRAY

VIBIUS QUINTUS

*Perpetua's father*

STEVEN EAST

VIBIUS SEXTUS

*Perpetua's elder brother*

DAVID JONES

FELICITAS

*Perpetua's young slave attendant*

LUCINDA COX

SATURUS

*A slave, Felicitas' fiancé & leader of the Christians*

JAMES RHOADS

HILARIANUS

*Proconsul of Africa*

JACOB FELDMAN

PUDENS

*Tribune & governor of the prison in Carthage*

RICHARD ROBBINS

PASTOR

*An old shepherd*

TOM SHORTER

CHORUS

*Christians, Angels and the Mob in the prison and at the arena*

PETER WRIGHT

*Conductor*

RIHAB AZAR

*Oud*

ADAM BUSHELL

*Percussion*

ANDY FINDON

*Flutes*

NAO MASUDA

*Percussion*

KEITH MCGOWAN

*Shawm*

LEO NICHOLSON

*Piano and Rehearsal Pianist*

IAN WATSON

*Accordion*

STACEY WOTTON

*Double Bass*

TONY BICÂT

*Production Director*

PETER CHAMPNESS

*Technical Director and Language Coach*

PETER HART

*Sound Engineer*

CANTATA DRAMATICA  
CHORUS

HELENA THOMSON

GABRIELLA NOBLE

STEPHANIE FRANKLIN

JAMES MORLEY POTTER

WILLIAM ANDERSON

EDWARD WOODHOUSE

QUINTIN BEER

TOM LOWEN

DANCERS FROM MIDDLESEX  
UNIVERSITY

SIÂN HOPKINS

*Director of Choreography*

ST STEPHEN WALBROOK  
COMMUNITY CHOIR

TOM SHORTER

*Choir Director*

JULIA STUTFIELD

*Producer*

JULIA CIVE

*Costume Assistant*

# INTRODUCTION

*“One spring morning in AD 203, a young woman by the name of Vibia Perpetua, about twenty-two years old, well born, liberally educated, honourably married, went joyfully to her death before a great crowd in the amphitheatre at Carthage.”*

*Dr. Peter Thonemann  
Times Literary Supplement, 14 Sep 2012*

Nick Bicât was commissioned by Cantata Dramatica in 2011 to write a dramatic cantata to an original libretto by Nick Pitts-Tucker. The libretto is based very closely on a Latin text, ‘*Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*’, which is generally considered to be the sole surviving intimate diary by a woman from antiquity. It tells the story of Perpetua and Felicitas, her slave

who were the first Christian women to be martyred in the Roman arena because of their faith. In addition to translations (and some original quotations) from the Latin, the libretto includes contemporary Greek liturgical and elegiac texts.

The first full performance took place in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford in November 2012.

## THE PERPETUA STORY

*by Nick Pitts-Tucker*

If you were educated in a convent school, or if you are a keen rose grower, you may well be familiar with the story of this brave and articulate young woman, who died in the arena at Carthage in March 203 AD. The story is so strong because, uniquely in the classical world, it is told in her own words and in her own dreams, right up to the night before her death.

It is about being a woman in a traditional world, about the struggle between individual freedom and state

repression and about the psychology of courage. This is the uncomfortable world of the Arab Spring or the awkward bravery of Malala Yousafzai.

Comprehension of the words is vital to the story, and the music of Nick Bicât complements and amplifies the emotional range of the story, without ever compromising the words.

It is a thought-provoking story, and we are grateful to St Stephen Walbrook for permitting us to tell it in this wonderful space.

# THE MUSIC

*by Nick Bicât*

In writing the music, my aim throughout has been to preserve the conversational immediacy of Perpetua's account, to illustrate the depth of her conviction and how it propels her onwards.

Musically, the English, Latin and Greek each required a different approach, as I want the listener to be able to experience Perpetua's story from different angles: at once documentary, mystical and theatrical. Most of all, I try to set the words to music in a way which allows the singers to behave exactly as if they were speaking, so that we don't have to enter an operatic world with its own rhetoric and vocal

and dramatic credibility is preserved.

The Greek ritual of the Christians has the vivid optimism you can see in the grave inscriptions of the catacombs; these tell of hope, love and joy, and they must have thrilled to the experience of their ritual singing in a way we can hardly imagine after centuries of hearing what are now familiar references; I've tried to depict some of that primary experience as I feel it must have been in the Mediterranean light two thousand years ago for Perpetua and her friends —her new family.

## TEXTS AND SYNOPSES: A NOTE

The following section presents the English (and some Latin) words of the script with a corresponding synopsis in large print on the right hand page. The Ancient Greek texts and translations are not reproduced here, with the exception of the final lament.

It is hoped that this approach will enable the audience to follow the story as it unfolds, without being too distracted from the visual aspects of the performance.

## TEXT

### ACT 1, SCENE 1: PERPETUA AND HER FAMILY

*The family home. PERPETUA is prays to the household gods, with her young brother DINOCRATES . Then they sing a duet together. They are interrupted by Perpetua's mother.*

MOTHER Perpetua, that's enough. Dino, I need to talk to your sister. Run along now!

PERPETUA Mother?

MOTHER Daughter, Listen to me. I have made all the arrangements. Tomorrow we will meet the family of your new husband Cornelius.

PERPETUA Mother, you know that I will NOT marry again!

MOTHER Perpetua, you will do what is best for our family. Cornelius comes from good stock. The marriage will bring good land. And you can have more children. What more could you want?

PERPETUA Mother, let me tell you again! I won't marry any man, unless I want to.

MOTHER Child, you will do what your father tells you to! We are sick of your clever-clever posturing. Philosophy! Sophist! Teacher! Hush! Your father's coming. Be prepared. Be respectful.

PERPETUA Mother, much as I love you and our family, I have made up my mind. I will not remarry. Primus left me an income. I'm a free woman, a free woman!

MOTHER With a young son to bring up!

MOTHER Perpetua, stop this nonsense! How I wish we hadn't sent you to study with those ridiculous men! Philosophers! Sophists! Gasbags filling your head with silly ideas; look where it's got you!

PERPETUA This is the best thing that ever happened to me. I can think, decide for myself, I can make my own way. And there is nothing you can do to stop me!

SEXTUS Sister, come on! Cornelius isn't a bad chap. He will look after you and your son, and before too long you will have more children to bring up.

PERPETUA Gods! Why did you make the world this way? If you talk about Cornelius one more time I will hit you! Mother, go away! Leave me in peace! Stop tormenting me! Leave me with my grief!



## ACT 1, SC. 1: VIBIUS FAMILY HOME

Perpetua and her brother Dinocrates are at home, performing a familiar ritual of sacrificing to the household gods.

They sing a playful duet. The words are Greek, the language of music, thought and culture throughout the Mediterranean world.

Perpetua's mother breaks in to announce arrangements for Perpetua's impending marriage.

Perpetua says that she does not want to re-marry.

Her brother Sextus arrives and tries to persuade her.

## TEXT

### ACT 1, SCENE 1 (CONT.)

QUINTUS What is all this shouting and wailing? Are you upsetting your sister again? Ah! All that again. The Cornelius Question. Sextus, leave us.

QUINTUS Daughter, calm your fears; we must all do what is for the best. Your family is your fortune, no one can live on their own.

PERPETUA Father...

QUINTUS How can you bring up a son without a husband? You will bring shame on our family. Cornelius is a good man. We must all do our duty.

PERPETUA I will never, never, never marry again. I will never, never, never marry again. I will leave this family if I have to! O Gods, give me strength, give me strength, why did you make the world this way?

SEXTUS There's no point in arguing when she's like this. Better wait till she's calmed down.

PERPETUA I hate my family! I hate them!

FELICITAS Domina, what have you done now?

PERPETUA Oh Felicitas, they want me to marry again. That friend of Sextus... Cornelius...

FELICITAS Well he is handsome...

PERPETUA But I don't want to remarry at all. I am rich in my own right. I want to enjoy my freedom!

FELICITAS Domina, there are many freedoms... even for a slave...

PERPETUA Oh Felicitas, I did not mean to upset you...

FELICITAS Domina, you didn't, and you cannot now.

PERPETUA What freedom is this that you have found?

FELICITAS The greatest freedom in all the world! I have a new family - yes, we are mostly slaves, but we are free in our hearts. We meet in a house and feast together and sing the praises of the Mother of God.

PERPETUA You mean those Christians?

(continued on page 12)

## SYNOPSIS

ACT 1, SC. 1 (CONT.)

Perpetua's father Quintus joins the discussion. The scene establishes the severe tensions in the Vibius family and the special position that Perpetua finds herself in as a young widow with independent means. She has choice and the spirit to use it.

Perpetua's relations finally storm out in exasperation.

Felicitas, Perpetua's slave, but also her friend and confidante, comes to sympathise.

She points out that there are many forms of freedom and confides that she has a new family: they meet together secretly and sing hymns.

Perpetua realises with surprise that Felicitas is referring to the Christians.

(continued on page 13)

## TEXT

FELICITAS Domina, you would like her - the Mother of God, I mean. She was called Maria, and we sing to her: (*sings*)

There, that's what we sing. It's not clever but we love it.

PERPETUA Well, perhaps I should come along with you one day...

FELICITAS Oh Domina, please do. Then you can see the man I shall marry! Satorus is the leader of our family... and... I'm going to have his baby.

PERPETUA Felicitas! That's marvellous. Take me there and let me hear your songs.

## ACT 1, SCENE 2: PERPETUA JOINS THE CHRISTIANS

*PERPETUA and FELICITAS are joined by the CHORUS, some of whom sing the more masculine liturgy of Christos, some a hymn to the Theotokos, Mary, the Mother of God.*

## ACT 1, SCENE 3: DEATH OF DINO CRATES AND LAMENT

*In the house of the Vibius family, DINO CRATES is dying.*

MOTHER He cannot drink! He cannot drink! He cannot drink!

QUINTUS Keep calm, keep calm!

MOTHER He cannot drink!

QUINTUS The doctor's coming. Sextus, go – hurry him along – go, go!

SEXTUS Don't fret. He's only just by the temple. I'll make a sacrifice for Dino while I'm there.

PERPETUA Then make prayers for him too, pray to Jupiter and Juno and Neptune and pray to Augustus Caesar, but pray quickly for there's little time left!

QUINTUS The little gods of our house can help. I will go into our shrine and beg their help.

PERPETUA Poor Dino, he can barely breathe now. Little brother, lie still.... drink if you can, try hard, for me.... just a little....

## SYNOPSIS

Felicitas sings a hymn to Mary, Mother of God. She tells Perpetua that she is to marry Saturus, the leader of the Christians, and that she is expecting his baby.

### ACT 1, SC. 2: THE CATACOMBS

Perpetua visits the Christians, who are singing contemporary Greek hymns to Christ and to Mary. Much of this music will be recalled in later scenes as the Christians draw strength from it in their adversity.

### ACT 1, SC. 3: VIBIUS FAMILY HOME

In the house of the Vibius family, Dinocrates is dying, attended by Perpetua and the rest of her family. Prayers to all the gods, and the deified Emperor himself are of no avail; Dinocrates dies in Perpetua's arms.

Perpetua sings an elegiac lament for a flower faded too early.

## TEXT

### ACT 1, SCENE 4: SATURUS CHALLENGES THE STATE

*PERPETUA and FELICITAS have moved out to join the Christians.*

SATURUS Listen! The Augustus has published a new decree. Everyone must make a public sacrifice at the altar of the City Gods and the Divine Augustus. On pain of death!

PERPETUA Everyone?

SATURUS Yes, everyone.

PERPETUA Surely not slaves and freedmen?

SATURUS Yes. Yes! Every citizen, every freedman, every slave, every man, every woman.

PERPETUA Then why are you so excited, Saturus?

SATURUS Don't you see? This is our big chance! This is where we show everyone else that we will NOT sacrifice! We must show everyone that there's another way. Another path, another light to lighten our darkness.

PERPETUA This is so dangerous...

SATURUS Brothers, sisters, we can show them the Light of the World.

Lord, you broke the darkness and gave us all light, etc.

PERPETUA But this is treason! The law will destroy us! The law will not break, the law will not bend!

SATURUS Sister, this is our time. This is what we stand for.

PERPETUA So it comes to this... a time to stand; or a time to run back home; So this is what freedom means! Where do we stand? Where do we stand?

FELICITAS In a house built on rock!

PERPETUA Or a house built on sand?

FELICITAS Maria Madonna, who gave God birth And a ladder to heaven for your slaves on earth Stun the angels with your beauty, Fox the devils and the demons!

PERPETUA I have left my old life to seek a new. If I give my life will you light my way? Oh mother of God, receive my sacrifice to you. Scatter the darkness!

SATURUS and CHORUS

Lord, you broke the darkness and gave us all light etc. Phôs, Phôs, Phôs!

## ACT 1, SC. 4: THE CATACOMBS

Perpetua and Felicitas have moved out of her family house to join the Christians. Suddenly Satorius, the leader of the Christians, bursts in to announce that he has decided to challenge the Roman state by refusing to sacrifice to the city gods and the Emperor.

Perpetua is initially appalled but together with Felicitas decides to stick with their Christian family.

They sing a hymn to Mary seeking help with the terrible consequences of their decision.

Satorius renews his challenge and rouses the chorus to join him again.

The scene ends with everyone, apart from Perpetua and Felicitas, repeatedly singing the Greek word for light [Phôs].

## TEXT

### ACT 1, SCENE 5: SEXTUS' BETRAYAL

SEXTUS What must I do? Which is the greater duty? Do I betray my sister, or Rome? She will bring down our family, drown us in dishonour, bury us in shame with her stupid pride! *De hostibus non curat lex.* [The law cares nothing for its enemies] Perpetua has done wrong, so now it is I who must do what is right. I cannot betray my country. For the law of Rome is the only law, yes the law of Rome is the only law.

HILARIANUS Sextus, why have you come to me with this? Have you suddenly risen in rank, that you can talk to me, your Proconsul, bringing me gossip to betray your sister?

Guards! Throw this scum out!

SEXTUS Proconsul Illustris, Proconsul Preclare, Proconsul Eximie! [Proconsul, you're the greatest!] The Christians are plotting heresy, treason, in the forum, in the temple, They will not sacrifice. They will refuse. I heard them! And you are in danger, if the Emperor hears.

HILARIANUS Christians! Insolent, insubordinate, damned Christians. Throw them in gaol!

*The Christians are thrown into the prison.*

PERPETUA and FELICITAS *O diem asperum* [O bitter day] etc.

### DREAM OF THE LADDER

*(from Perpetua's own words)*

"I dreamed of a golden ladder of wonderful height, reaching right to heaven, and on the sides of the ladder were fixed every kind of iron weapon – swords, lances, hooks and slashers – so that if any one went up carelessly, they would be torn to pieces. Under the ladder lay an enormous dragon, just waiting to ambush those who started to climb.

And I said, 'It won't hurt me, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.' The dragon slowly lifted up its head; and as I stepped up to the first rung, I trod upon its head, and climbed up.

And I saw a huge expanse of garden, and in the middle there was a white-haired man sitting dressed as a shepherd, a tall man, milking his sheep, and standing around him were thousands of white-robed figures."



## ACT 1, SC. 5: PRISON

Sextus informs on the Christians to the proconsul Hilarianus, who orders the guards to arrest them and throw them into prison.

Perpetua and Felicitas sing a Latin lament (*O diem asperum*), which is echoed by the Chorus.

## DREAM OF THE LADDER

Perpetua falls asleep and has her first dream, in which she vanquishes a serpent demon and climbs a ladder to Elysium.

There she sees pastures and sheep, and an old shepherd who welcomes her with the words: 'Bene venisti, teknon'.

## TEXT

### ACT 1, SCENE 6: QUINTUS AND PERPETUA

QUINTUS Perpetua, Felicitas, what are you doing here? This is a hellish place... no place for women – no place for you!

PERPETUA Father, we are fine.

QUINTUS Fine!

PERPETUA Yes, I know, I know. But we must...

QUINTUS Must do what? What must you do? What should you do? What is this all for? You bring shame on your family, bring me to my grave, and all for nothing!

PERPETUA Father, do you see that sort of jar thing over there in the corner?

QUINTUS Of course I do. What of it?

PERPETUA Just as that jar is a jar, so I am a Christian. That jar cannot be anything other than a jar and I cannot be anything other than what I am.

QUINTUS My child, you're not in the playground any more. You are playing with fire. Destruction will rain down on our heads if you persist in this madness. Stop it now! Stop it at once!

PERPETUA Christiana sum. [I am a Christian]

QUINTUS You know what will happen to you if you persist and refuse to sacrifice to the Emperor?

PERPETUA I know but I cannot change what I am.

QUINTUS This is not a game for women to play. This is not a game for our family to play. Your husband will rise from his grave to call you to your senses. For the last time I beg you to desist!

PERPETUA What must be must be.

### DREAM OF DINOCRATES

FELICITAS, MOTHER, SEXTUS and QUINTUS He cannot drink! He cannot drink!

## END OF ACT 1

## ACT 1, SC. 6: PRISON

Back in the prison cell, Perpetua's father Quintus comes to beg her to desist. She stubbornly refuses, using an idiosyncratic existential analogy.

Her father leaves in despair and disgust.

## DREAM OF DINOCRATES

Perpetua dreams that she sees her dead brother Dinocrates unable to drink from a cool fountain, but when he catches sight of her, the water no longer recedes and he drinks his fill.

They sing a poignant lament celebrating their life together.

The scene ends with the chorus rising to a glorious crescendo on the Greek word 'Phôs' [Light].

END OF ACT 1

## TEXT

### ACT 2, SCENE 1: THE PROCONSUL'S COURTROOM

HILARIANUS Who brings the charges?

SEXTUS I do. Out of loyalty to our Republic and to our Emperor.

HILARIANUS There are women here. Why?

PUDENS It's very unfortunate. Perpetua the accused and her servant, caught up in this gang of misguided slaves.

HILARIANUS Whatever happens next, you must do something about this. I don't want Roman citizens tied up in this sort of mess.(to the prisoners) Do you know why you are in this court? (to PUDENS) Read the charges.

PUDENS The prisoners repeatedly refused to sacrifice to the gods and to the Augustus, thus insulting the majesty of the Republic and acting as enemies of the state.

HILARIANUS (to SEXTUS) You brought this charge, against your own sister. What evidence do you present?

SEXTUS At the request of my sister I attended the ceremonies of the Christians. I was deeply shocked to hear of their refusal to worship any other gods than their own. This is treason and must be punished with the full weight of the law.

HILARIANUS You are a Roman citizen?

SEXTUS Yes.

PERPETUA I am a Roman too. Married to a Roman tribune, who died for Rome. But what my brother says is true. I am a Christian, as are we all.

HILARIANUS You can not be a Roman and a Christian too.

PERPETUA Christiana sum [I am a Christian]. Not all the power vested in you can change what I am.

HILARIANUS Woman, the power I wield is mighty and terrible.

PERPETUA I tremble before it...

HILARIANUS Then sacrifice!

QUINTUS I am her father. She is mad with grief...not only for her husband but her brother who died a child.

QUINTUS AND SEXTUS Stop this now, forget this nonsense! Come home to your child...and your family.

## SYNOPSIS

### ACT 2, SC. 1: THE COURTROOM

The trial of the Christians takes place before the proconsul Hilarianus, who is rattled by the awkward presence of the women.

He gives them every chance to recant, but they stand firm.

The consequences are remorseless and inevitable. They are declared enemies of the state, for which the punishment is death in the arena: 'mittantur ad bestias'.

HILARIANUS Silence.

QUINTUS Sir, this is no place for a woman. Have mercy.

HILARIANUS Silence. The law must take its course. Take him down and beat him.  
(to prisoners) You know you will be thrown to the beasts in the arena?

PRISONERS We know and rejoice

HILARIANUS Then the case is closed. Hostes rei publicae mittantur ad bestias.  
[Enemies of the State are put to the beasts]

PERPETUA Father! Father! look after my child!

QUINTUS What have we done to deserve this? Have mercy!

PERPETUA (to SEXTUS) Nescitis quid fecisti. [You know not what you have done]

## TEXT

### ACT 2, SCENE 2: PUDENS AND PERPETUA

PUDENS Perpetua, why do you persist? You are from a good Roman family. Your husband fought for Rome and in my legion too. Your father is distraught. Your child will grow up an orphan.

PERPETUA Even if my husband were alive I would still do this.

PUDENS Why? For some god from the Jews?

PERPETUA For a ladder to heaven. For a bridge from earth. For the freedom of woman. For the freedom of my soul!

PUDENS You lie with slaves, you sweat with slaves. You will die with slaves in the dust and the blood! The day of your penalty is coming all too soon.

PERPETUA I know and I tremble...

PUDENS "Feminae corpus habet, Romana virtute refulgens". [She has the body of a woman, but the heart of a Roman too]

PERPETUA Tribune, a greater power than Rome will sustain us.

PUDENS Then let me use what power I have to dissuade you. You will await the final solution in your stinking cell until Felicitas has borne her child. I am a Roman citizen and I cannot allow a pregnant woman to be executed. Perhaps the months will change your mind, even though I cannot.

### DREAM OF THE GLADIATOR

"In my dream I was led into the middle of the arena, and told, 'Don't be afraid, I'm here with you, and I am in the fight beside you'. And then there was no one there...

My clothes were stripped off me, and I became a man. Then my helpers began to rub me with oil, as is normal for a fight, and I saw a huge Egyptian gladiator – my opponent – rolling himself in the dust...

We drew close to each other, and began to trade blows. He tried to get hold of my feet, while I kicked out at his face. And I was lifted up in the air, and went on hitting him as if I paid no heed to being off the ground. But when I saw that the fight was becoming slow I joined my hands together, intertwining my fingers, and wrenched at his head. He fell on his face, and I snapped his neck."

## SCENE 2: PRISON

Pudens, the tribune and prison governor, does his best to dissuade Perpetua from this disastrous course, but all to no avail.

Perpetua now starts to come to terms with the seriousness of her situation.

## DREAM OF THE GLADIATOR

In the third dream, Perpetua finds herself turning into a man, a gladiator, preparing for a fight to the death with a huge Egyptian foe.

She wins the fight by breaking his neck. Now she knows that she is mentally strong enough to go through with the ordeal.

The Chorus sings the Latin words 'Lux perpetua'.  
[light everlasting]

## TEXT

### ACT 2, SCENE 3: FELICITAS' BABY CAUSES A RIOT

*PERPETUA, joined by SATURUS and FELICITAS sing a hymn. This provokes shouts of abuse from the other PRISONERS.*

PUDENS What's this all about? Losing control?

PERPETUA You're the one losing control. You should be ashamed. Remember, we are the Emperor's toys now. He needs us to amuse the crowd by spilling our blood on the sand. You should look after us until that glorious day! Today we have washed in the blood of birth, Tomorrow we shall wash in the blood of death.

FELICITAS and SATURUS Today we have washed in the blood of birth, Tomorrow we shall wash in the blood of death. Well washed!

### DREAM OF PARADISE

"We had suffered and died, and left our bodies, and we were carried into the east by angels. Free at last, we saw the brightest light; and I said, 'This is what the Lord promised us; we have received his promise.'

Then a vast space appeared, like a garden, with roses and every sort of flower. There were trees as tall as cypresses, and their leaves seemed to flutter incessantly... And the angels said to us, 'First you should come and greet the Lord.'

And so we came to a place with walls built from light, it seemed; and in front of the gate stood angels, who put white robes on us. We went in and saw that boundless light, and heard voices saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' and there in the middle we saw a man sitting, a man with white hair but young features... "

CHORUS In paradisum deducant te angeli. [Into Paradise shall angels lead you]

PASTOR Ite et ludite. [Go and enjoy]

SATURUS Habes quod vis, Perpetua. [You have what you want, Perpetua]

PERPETUA Deo gratias, quomodo in carne hilaris fui, hilarior sim in hoc modo. [Thanks be to God, whatever joy I had in life, here I have so much more]



## SCENE 3: PRISON

The day nears for the Emperor's son's birthday games. In the prison the Christians begin to sing their liturgy, but they are shouted down by the other prisoners.

A riot breaks out. Perpetua reminds Pudens that the Christians should be treated with respect, as they are now 'the playthings of the Emperor'.

## DREAM OF PARADISE

Perpetua's fourth and last dream takes her and Saturus to Elysium. The old shepherd tells them to go and enjoy themselves.

Perpetua tells Saturus that whatever happiness she may have had in the past, she now has found true peace. The Chorus sing the Latin words 'In paradisum deducant te angeli'. [May angels lead you to paradise]

## TEXT

Act 2, Scene 4: The Arena

The PRISONERS are marched to the arena., Singing hymns as they go. The noise from the arena grows louder.

HILARIANUS the proconsul arrives to start the games, accompanied by PUDENS, SEXTUS and a reluctant QUINTUS. The prisoners stand before the tribunal.

PUDENS You lie with slaves, you sweat with slaves.

with SEXTUS You will die with slaves in the dust and the blood!

and QUINTUS The day of your penalty is coming all too soon.

MOB Lupae ad lustrum! [Whores to the brothel...wolves to sacrifice]

PERPETUA, FELICITAS and SATURUS Christiani sumus! [We are Christians]

HILARIANUS Ad bestias! [To the wild beasts]

*The yelling of the CROWD builds up, hurling insults and obscenities at the arena.*

CROWD Lupae! [Whores!] Stercora! [Shit-heaps!] Lupae ad lustrum! [Whores to the brothel...wolves to sacrifice!] Occide illas! [Kill them!] Aah! Salvum lotum! Salvae lotae! [Well washed!]

*Perpetua and Felicitas are thrust out to face a mad heifer and tossed and trampled. Felicitas' back is broken but Perpetua is able to help her back to the Gate of Life at the arena's edge, where they await the final decision of the proconsul. Half the crowd wants them to be spared, the other half demands their deaths.*

LONE VOICES FROM THE CROWD Pudor! Nudae! Hic non licet! [For shame... they're naked... that's not right] Puellae, non lupae! Matronae, non lupae sunt! [They're girls, not whores, they're women]

CHORUS Tege illas statim! [Cover them at once]

SOME OF THE CROWD Libera eas! [Free them!]

REST OF THE CROWD Occide illas! [Kill them!]

*Under the law, the proconsul has no choice. HILARIANUS raises his hand and turns down his thumb. Offstage, PERPETUA AND FELICITAS have their throats cut by a gladiator's sword.*

## SCENE 4: THE ARENA

The prisoners are marched to the arena. Perpetua and Saturus sing a hymn and are gradually joined by others. The Christians sing their liturgy of light and Perpetua and Felicitas their hymn to the Virgin.

The proconsul arrives, along with Pudens and Perpetua's family.

The yelling of the mob builds up, hurling insults and obscenities at the arena. Not all are seduced by bloodlust and some begin to call for the release of two women so young and beautiful but they are outnumbered by the calls for death.

The proconsul raises his hand and turns down his thumb.

Offstage, Perpetua and Felicitas have their throats cut by a gladiator's sword.

TEXT

ACT 2, SCENE 5: LAMENT FOR VIBIA PERPETUA

PUDENS (in Greek)

Go, tell the king his great hall, so finely wrought, has fallen  
No longer does Phoebus have a shrine, nor power of prophecy.  
His spring bubbles no more, the chattering water has run away.

Ἄνθεα πολλα γενοιτο νεδμητω ἐπι τυμβῳ,  
May a thousand flowers grow on your new grave,  
μη βατος ἀύχημηρη, μη κακον αἰγιπυρον,  
Not brambles nor thistles nor thorns,  
ἀλλ' ια και σαμφουχα και ὑδατινη ναρκισσον,  
But violets, marjoram and water-loving narcissi,  
Οὐειβιε και περι σου παντα γενοιτο ῥοδα.  
And roses, Vibia, may roses round you grow.

THE END

## SCENE 5: LAMENT FOR PERPETUA

The world has changed forever. Pudens recites a famous prophecy foretelling the end of the old religion.

Moved by Perpetua's courage, Pudens sings her lament. This was actually written in the third century for a woman called Vibia. This authentic elegy asks for roses to grow on her tomb, and Pudens' words are framed by the Chorus as the story ends.

THE END



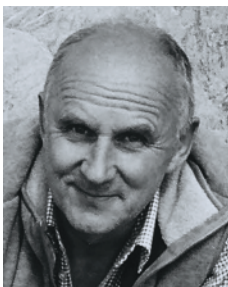
## NICK BICÂT

### *Composer*

Since his first professional commission as a schoolboy in 1968, Nick Bicât has written over 150 scores and soundtracks for film, television, theatre, festival events and concert performance. Winner of a BAFTA award and twice nominated, his film and television scores include *A Christmas Carol* (George C Scott), *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (Anthony Andrews/Sir Ian McKellen/Jane Seymour), *Wetherby* (by Sir David Hare), and *The Reflecting Skin* (by Philip Ridley). He has composed for the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre, written eleven musicals and an opera *The Knife*, with Sir David Hare. Other collaborators include Tony Bicât, Edward Bond, Adrian Mitchell, Howard Brenton and Ted Hughes.

His orchestral work *Under the Eye of Heaven* was performed at the Barbican and London Arena. Other concert performances include *When Will There Be Peace?*, an open air concert for the International Red Cross in Geneva, and *Symphony in Morris Minor*, commissioned to mark the millennium, and performed in Oxford to an audience of 50,000.

As a songwriter, he has written for Emma Kirkby, Deniece Williams and PJ Harvey. His song *Who Will Love Me Now?*, sung by P.J. Harvey, was BBC Radio 1 top film song for 1998. Albums include *Under the Eye of Heaven* (Virgin Classics), *Beslan/Requiem*, a choral work with text by Tony Bicât, and *Songs from Grimm*, a song cycle with lyrics by Philip Ridley.



## 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 was *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. Since then, there have been several more, including the *Life of Cuthbert*, performed in Durham Cathedral in 2019.

Cantata Dramatica has emerged from this series of accidents as a musical force in its own right.



## PETER WRIGHT

### *Conductor*

Peter retired as Organist and Director of Music at Southwark Cathedral in 2019, a position he had held since 1989. In March 2014 the Bishop of Southwark awarded him an Honorary Lay Canonry to mark his 25 years in the post.

Under his direction the Choir recorded many CDs and undertook tours to the USA and Europe. They sang at the Proms, broadcast regularly on television and radio and, in December 2011, took part in John Rutter's annual Christmas Concert at the Royal Albert Hall.

In May 2011, Peter was awarded the prestigious FRSCM, in recognition of his work at Southwark and for church music in general, and he is also an Honorary Fellow of the Guild of Church Musicians. Now a Vice-President of the Royal College of Organists, Peter became a member of the Council in 1990 and was Chief Examiner from 1997 before becoming President (2005-2008).



## TONY BICÂT

### *Director*

Tony Bicat has been writing lyrics for his brother's music since they were teenagers. They have maintained and refreshed their creative partnership over four decades. His collaborations with Nick include Class (BBC Radio), Teeth 'n' Smiles (Ivor Novello Award) and Symphony in Morris Minor.

Tony has written and directed many original TV films, all scored by Nick, including A Cotswold Death, The Laughter of God, An Exchange of Fire and two ground breaking TV

musicals Glitter and Facelift. Co-opting the great arias of Mozart, Verdi, Wagner and others, Tony wrote the libretto for Flashmob the Opera, BBC3's live TV opera from Paddington Station, which won numerous awards.

Tony was runner up in the Oxford heat of the Hammer and Tongue Poetry Slam and will be performing in the two day National Final at The Albert Hall later in the year. He is an external tutor at The National Film and Television School.



## SIÂN HOPKINS

### *Director of Choreography*

Siân Hopkins trained at Legat School of Dance from a young age, later gaining a place at Rambert School. Since graduating, she has had the pleasure of working with a variety of companies, independent artists and projects near and far. In 2011, her focus became further training and research gaining an MA in Dance Performance with Specialisation in Ritual. This led to pursuing a career in dance education and becoming Research Assistant to Dr Ross McKim as well as Principal Artist and Rehearsal

Director for his company Moving Visions Dance Theatre, a cathedral based research project.

Siân has taught at dance institutions around the UK as well as guest teaching in Japan, Singapore, Vietnam and Canada. Currently teaching at Rambert School and Middlesex University, she has restaged iconic works and choreographed graduation showcases. Choreographic commissions include various sitespecific and cathedral based projects, Cantata Dramatica's choral dramatisations and collaborative screendance productions.



## HELEN CHARLSTON

### *Perpetua*

Acclaimed for her musical interpretation, presence and "warmly distinctive tone" (The Telegraph), Mezzo-soprano Helen Charlston is quickly cementing herself as a key performer in the next generation of British singers. Helen won first prize in the 2018 Handel Singing Competition and was a finalist in the Hurn Court Opera Competition. She was a 'Rising Star' of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 2017-2019 and is a 2018 City Music Foundation Artist.

This season Helen makes debuts with the Academy of Ancient Music, Cambridge Handel Opera Company, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and the Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra, as well as joining Fretwork for a solo recital programme at Wigmore Hall and York Early Music Christmas Festival. Helen premieres the full role of Anna in the newly completed opera *Blue Electric* by Tom Smail, and will continue her commissioning project of lute songs with duo partner Toby Carr.

*Photo: Ben McKee*





## CAMERON TAYLOR

### *Dinocrates*

Cameron Taylor is 12 years old and attends The Charter School North Dulwich, in London. He started his singing career with Libera in 2015,

before joining the choir at Southwark Cathedral, where he is one of the Head Choristers.



## HANNAH MURRAY

### *Vibia Secunda (Mother)*

Hannah has just completed a degree in History at Southampton University. She started her singing studies at the age of 15, with Andrea Hazell and continued at university under Juliet Brown. Whilst at Southampton she was involved with the University's opera society, 'Arias' being the president in her final year. She has sung the role of Amore in

Gluck's Orfeo et Eurydice, Zurga in Bizet's The Pearl Fishers, the Constable in the Premiere of Jack the Ripper by Jamie Kimathi Milburn) in which she also made her Directorial debut) and, most recently, Cassiopoeia in a revival of Cyril Bradley Rootham's *Andromeda*. She has taken part in Masterclasses with Roderick Williams and Ben Johnson.



## LUCINDA COX

### *Felicitas*

Lucinda Cox read Music at Oxford University, before completing a Masters at the Schola Cantorum in Basel, Switzerland, where she studied with Anthony Rooley and Evelyn Tubb. In recent months, Lucy has given recitals at St Olave's Hart Street, St Columba's Church of Scotland, and Winchester Cathedral.

Opera roles have included Drusilla, Fortuna and Verone in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* for Faded Ink Productions, as well as Giuditta in Scarlatti's *La Giuditta* and Calisto in Cavalli's *La Calisto* for New Chamber Opera and the title role in Cyril

Bradley Rootham's *Andromeda*. Recent ensemble work has included performances with the Tallis Scholars, the Marian Consort and the BBC Singers; earlier this year Lucy toured Singapore and Australia with The Sixteen.

Future projects include performances with the Marian Consort of concert-drama 'Breaking the Rules'; singing the soprano solos in Monteverdi's *Vespers* and Vivaldi's *Gloria* and *Beatus Vir*; and concerts in Spain, Germany and France with the Gabrieli Consort. Lucy currently studies with Gary Coward.



## STEVEN EAST

### *Vibius Quintus*

Steven has recently appeared in top hat and tails as Mephistopheles in *Faust* for Brent Opera, in a sparkly suit as Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* for King's Head Theatre, in tatters as Leporello in *Don Giovanni* for Winslow Hall Opera, in Brillcreem as Basilio for Pop-up Opera in *Il Barbiere*

*di Siviglia* and in a sackcloth as King Hrothgar in Louis Mander's *Beowulf* for Opera at Chilmark. He has also sung chorus in seven ENO productions. 2020 includes Nourobad in *The Pearl Fishers* for Kent Opera and soloist in Handel's *Messiah* and Verdi's *Requiem*. [Steveneast.rocks](http://Steveneast.rocks).



## DAVID JONES

### *Vibius Sextus*

A prizewinner in the 2015 AESS Patricia Routledge English Song Competition, David Jones is equally at home in song, oratorio and opera. He has given premieres of works by Nick Bicât, Stephen Deazley, Louis Mander and Josh Spear. Recent highlights have included Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* for the Lyric Opera Studio Weimar and Perseus in Rootham's *Andromeda*. He toured the

UK as part of Joshua Sofaer's innovative Opera Helps project and is a soloist on Yehudi Menuhin's Live Music Now scheme. His recitals have included explorations of major song cycles by Finzi, Vaughan Williams and Schumann, alongside lesser-known works by Bliss and Sullivan, and he enjoys a fruitful ongoing collaboration with Cantata Dramatica, with whom he has given the first performances of four substantial works.

Photo: Alejandro Tamagno



## JAMES RHOADS

### *Saturus*

Australian born tenor, James recently graduated from the Royal Academy of Music where he worked with Ryland Davies and Iain Ledingham. While studying, he received 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in Joan Chissell Schumann Lieder Prize and sang for the prestigious Academy/Kohn Foundation Bach Cantata series. Recent engagements include Priest and Augur in Eccle's

*Semele* with Cambridge Handel Opera Company, Daphnis in James Harris's pastiche *The Spring* for the Salisbury International Arts Festival and Emilio in Handel's *Partenope*. Prior to commencing his studies at the Royal Academy of Music, he read Music at King's College, London where he studied with Alex Ashworth.



## JACOB FELDMAN

### *Hilarianus*

Canadian-German baritone, Jacob Feldman is in his second year of the MA in Performance course at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studies with Raymond Connell and Marek Ruszczyński. A graduate of the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, Jacob was a member of the Opera Undergraduate Program and was the winner of the University of

Toronto Luciano Pavarotti Award, amongst others. Jacob's roles include: Truffaldin, in Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Moralès in Bizet's *Carmen* and Mars in Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers*. Jacob is currently preparing the role of Schaunard for Hampstead Garden Opera's 2019 autumn production of Puccini's *La Bohème*.



## RICHARD ROBBINS

### *Pudens*

Richard Robbins is fast becoming one of London's busiest and in demand tenors. He recently won plaudits for his portrayal of the Madwoman in Britten's *Curlew River*, with Classical Source describing his voice as possessing 'irresistible baritone softness' and his acting to be 'expertly judged.'

Currently, Richard is preparing for solo performances of Dove's *An Unknown Soldier*, Mozart's *C Minor*

*Mass* and of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and is a young artist for Handel House, Brighton Early Music, Leeds Lieder and Oxford Lieder. With Handel House, he has benefitted from the knowledge of Mark Padmore and Laurence Cummings, through masterclasses and coaching. For the Oxford Lieder Mastercourse, Richard learnt from soprano Ann Murray and accompanist Roger Vignoles, who continues to coach him.



## TOM SHORTER

### *Conductor, St Stephen Walbrook Community Choir*

Tom Shorter is the music and events administrator at St Stephen Walbrook, overseeing the music needs of the church covering regular services, special events, weddings and livery company services. He is the key organiser of St Stephen Organ

recital series and is helping to develop the new community choir, whilst on occasion also playing the organ, singing with and conducting St Stephen Voices.

# ABOUT CANTATA DRAMATICA

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

Our first commission, *Perpetua*, was premiered at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford in November 2012. Since then we have commissioned at least one work per year, all of which have had at least at least one public performance. Most of our commissions tell a story and are designed to be understood by the listener at first hearing.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### THE DOWAGER'S OYSTER

A new production of Louis Mander's two act comedy *The Dowager's Oyster* starring George Logan.

Cheltenham Playhouse, 23rd - 26th September 2020

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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 followers, to all of whom we are immensely grateful.

Our thanks to St Stephen Walbrook for allowing us to perform in their beautiful church and for welcoming us so warmly. Special thanks to Tom Shorter and the St Stephen Walbrook Community Choir for embracing the challenges of preparing and performing a new work in a very short space of time.

We are grateful to Crosslight Advice for collaborating with us to promote this performance. Proceeds from ticket sales are to be shared between Crosslight and St Stephen Walbrook.