



The Choir and Soloists of Cantata Dramatica
present the world premiere of

PERPETUA

The martyrdom of Vibia Perpetua
told in music, verse and her own words.

A new dramatic cantata by *Nick Bicât*

Libretto by *Nick Pitts-Tucker*

Conducted by *Andrew Parrott*

Directed by *Pete Champness*

Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford

Thursday 22 November 8.00pm

A collaboration between Cantata Dramatica,
Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
and
Christ Church Cathedral.

PROGRAMME

Perpetua

Nick Bicât

Act 1, Scene 1	Perpetua in her family
Act 1, Scene 2	Perpetua joins the Christians
Act 1, Scene 3	Death of Dinocrates and Lament
Act 1, Scene 4	Saturus challenges the state
Act 1, Scene 5	Prison / Dream of the Ladder
Act 1, Scene 6	Quintus and Perpetua / Dream of Dinocrates
Act 2, Scene 1	The Proconsul's Courtroom: <i>Mittantur ad Bestias</i>
Act 2, Scene 2	Pudens and Perpetua / Dream of the Gladiator
Act 2, Scene 3	Prison Riot / Dream of Paradise
Act 2 Scene 4	March to the Arena / The Crowd / Death of Perpetua
Act 2, Scene 5	Lament for Vibia Perpetua

The performance will last approximately 1 1/4 hours and there will be no interval

After the performance there will be a drinks reception in the Cathedral for Friends of Christ Church Cathedral, Friends of Cantata Dramatica and their guests.

CAST LIST

(In order of appearance)

Vibia Perpetua

Katie Slater

Dinocrates (*Perpetua's younger brother*)

Tom Wellesley

Vibia Secunda (*Perpetua's mother*)

Linda Hirst

Vibius Quintus (*Perpetua's father*)

Steven East

Vibius Sextus (*Perpetua's elder brother*)

Ashley Mercer

Felicitas (*a slave*)

Charli Baptie

Christians/Angels/Mob

Georgia Bishop

Charlotte Richardson

Saturus (*a slave*)

Thomas Drew

Pudens (*Tribune and prison governor*)

Guy Hayward

Hilarianus (*Proconsul of Africa*)

David Jones

Pastor (*apparently an old shepherd*)

Steven East

Piano

Robin Cohen

Percussion

Adam Bushell, Mikey Young

Double Bass

Laura Murphy

Guitar

Dave Malkin

Accordion

Angus Lyon

Wind

Jan Hendrickse

CANTATA DRAMATICA CHOIR

Soprano

Megan Hooper, Madelon Shaw, Miranda Whiteley

Alto

Judith Finch, Pippa Thynne, Fiona Winstone

Tenor

Hugh Griffith, Brian Todd

Bass

David Barrington, Pegram Harrison, Peter McMullin, John Taylor

PRODUCTION

Director

Peter Champness

Sound

Peter Hart

Lighting

Phil Shaw

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.”¹

¹ From *A Mother's Dreams* by 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”¹. 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 production is enhanced by some stunning graphic effects from Director, Peter Champness.

The style of the production is informal. The performers sing with their musical scores, as for a traditional oratorio, but they also move freely about the staging area and are encouraged to act their parts as much as possible. The colours of the singers' clothes invoke the palette of a Roman wall fresco or mosaic and the audience should feel as if they are participating in an experimental project at the height of the creative process.

The Perpetua Story

by Nick Pitts Tucker

If you were educated in a convent school, or if you are a keen rose grower, you will 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 Yusufzai.

The words are vital to understanding, 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 that is why we are grateful to the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church for permitting us to tell it in the wonderful space of the cathedral.

This tale has not been told in this way ever before and it is our hope that we do it justice.

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 gesture, 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.

Staging Perpetua: the Medium and the Message

by Peter Champness

Perpetua tells her own story with such simplicity, but her world is so far from our experience. It becomes an enormous challenge to stage the piece, to convey both the straightforward and the complex.

It begins with the languages. Nick Pitts Tucker's wonderful libretto gives us English for the sung dialogue, so that bit's relatively easy. But then we delve into the Greek of the third century, the language that everybody – then – used in common, not to mention the Latin of official business, and where do we start? I make no apology for settling upon a pronunciation of the Greek which many, more scholarly than I, may find fault with. What we have tried to do is make it sound like a language easily spoken, with a softness and a lilting quality that we can connect with. And Nick Bicât's magical score does it full justice, allowing the metrical and pitch-based cadences of the poetry and liturgy to come alive.

Projection is nothing new in the musical and theatrical arena, but Inviting the audience back into the Roman world allows us to use some extraordinary images. Think of tomb-paintings from Perpetua's time, and you see at once the people she knew, her family and friends, even the stern face of the Empire. And against our own understanding of the modern struggle against callous governments along half the Mediterranean shore, the passionate new Christians and the baying arena mob are on our television screens every night.

I hope we've risen to the challenge set by this luminous young woman from eighteen centuries ago. To tell her story simply, without pomposity or pretension, but with her own real passion, is what we've set out to do. And the message is far more important than the medium.

Synopsis

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: Perpetua in her family

Perpetua and Dinocrates are at home, singing a playful duet (which will be repeated later in a much more sombre situation). The words are Greek, the language of music, thought and culture throughout the Mediterranean world. 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. Musically the tension builds slowly and explodes at the end of the scene, triggering the suggestion of Felicitas that they explore the new thinking of the Christians.

SCENE TWO: Perpetua joins the Christians

Perpetua visits the Christians. Together with Felicitas she joins in 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.

SCENE THREE: Death of Dinocrates and Lament

In the house of the Vibius family, Dinocrates is dying, attended by Perpetua, her father, Quintus and her brother, Sextus. Prayers to the family gods, the city gods, and the deified Emperor himself are of no avail, and Dinocrates dies in Perpetua's arms. She sings an elegiac lament for a flower faded too early.

SCENE FOUR: Saturus challenges the state

Perpetua and Felicitas have moved out of her family house to join the Christians. Suddenly Saturus, 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.

SCENE FIVE: Prison / Dream of the Ladder

The scene opens with a dumbshow in which 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. Perpetua falls asleep and has her first dream in which she vanquishes a serpent demon and climbs a ladder to Elysium (heaven). There she sees pastures and sheep, and an old shepherd who welcomes her: "*Bene venisti, Teknon*".

SCENE SIX: Quintus and Perpetua / Dream of Dinocrates

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. 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 single Greek word "*Phôs*" (Light!).

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE: The Proconsul's Courtroom: *Mittantur ad Bestias*

The trial of the Christians takes place before the proconsul Hilarianus, who is very 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*".

SCENE TWO: Pudens and Perpetua / Dream of the Gladiator

Pudens, tribune and prison governor, tries 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. In the third dream, she finds herself turning into a man, and a gladiator too, 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).

SCENE THREE: Prison Riot / Dream of Paradise

The day nears for the Emperor's son's birthday games. In the prison the Christians sing their liturgy, but are shouted down by the other prisoners. A riot breaks out. Perpetua runs to Pudens and insists that he treats them with respect, as they are now "*the playthings of the Emperor*". 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).

SCENE FOUR: March to the Arena / The Crowd / Death of Perpetua

The prisoners are woken and 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 and gives the women one last chance, which they do not take. They 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. Under the law, the proconsul has no choice. They are driven back with the other surviving Christians to be despatched by the swords of gladiators. The crowd falls silent. Only Pudens remains.

SCENE FIVE: A moment of truth for Pudens and his Lament for Perpetua

The world has changed for ever. We hear the 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 roses² to grow on her tomb and Pudens' words are framed by the chorus as the story ends.

³Gardening enthusiasts will know that there is a rose called Felicité Perpetue!

An Authentic Voice from Antiquity

Extract from the *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* by Thomas J. Heffernan³

I first came across the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* as a PhD student at Cambridge University working one afternoon in the University Library....I will never forget my astonishment as I came upon the story of Perpetua and her fellow martyrs. At first I did not know what to make of it. Such a rhetorically powerful and layered narrative, I thought, must be a fiction, since we had no evidence of other first-person narratives by women from this period. I assumed therefore that this early composition was a skilled effort of a rhetorically sophisticated hagiographer and that its appeal to

later Christian audiences was a foundational one. That is, these heroic figures were meant to function as the principal, albeit sacral, figures of a tradition's beginning – perhaps like Washington and Jefferson – and thus, at some level, they exist outside of time as paradigms of a noble but irretrievable past...

I remember pondering these matters and a host of other questions, but with the quick conviction of a young graduate student, I dismissed the autobiographical claims as a rhetorical device, and I settled comfortably on the presumption that, yes, the *Passion* was a fiction, likely composed sometime during the eighth or ninth century by a pious Christian hagiographer, as it surely did not represent what I had come to understand as “typical” hagiography. While I put it aside, I could never quite put the *Passion* out of my mind. It continued to inhabit a part of my consciousness, where it remained as a trace memory of behaviour only barely possible within a human frame. Yet I could not escape the intuition that the behaviour being celebrated could represent the very quintessence of human agency – integrity held so dear that life itself is worth sacrificing for it. Fifteen years were to pass before I decided to return to this unique representation of late antique Christian martyrdom.

I began my serious study of the text as a skeptic, believing the authenticity of the narrative a traditional pious fiction. Yet the more time I spent reading and pondering a host of issues concerning the narrative ...the more my scepticism waned. I began to consider that perhaps the historical record could include a unique record that violates what we have come to read as normative and received. The idea of a young Roman matron composing so skilful a document was unheard-of...Yet simply the fact that literacy rates for women were almost nonexistent cannot mean that all women were illiterate. Thankfully, modern scholarship is beginning to recover these lost voices. I became increasingly persuaded that the *Passion* was indeed a document that preserved the memory of an actual event, an event which had surely changed through transmission but whose core was a historically verifiable reality.

³ Thomas Heffernan's book *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* is published by Oxford University Press (2012) and is available to order at a 20% discount.

An Interview with Rev'd Canon Angela Tilby

Angela Tilby is Diocesan Canon at Christ Church Cathedral Oxford. She can often be heard on “Thought for the Day”, BBC Radio 4. She kindly agreed to talk to Sam Bromley from Cantata Dramatica about her view of the Perpetua story.

Who was Perpetua?

Vibia Perpetua was a young Roman-educated wife and mother who lived in Carthage, in Roman North Africa. She converted to Christianity during the reign of the emperor Septimus Severus at the beginning of the 3rd century. This brought about a rift with her family and eventually led to her arrest and condemnation along with her servant Felicity and other members of the Christian group she belonged to.

The Roman empire was reaching the height of its powers. Severus had a devotion to the Egyptian god Serapis, and in 202 passed an edict in 202 forbidding conversion to Christianity. This led to persecutions in Alexandria which spread Westwards to other parts of Roman North Africa. As new converts, Perpetua and her Christian friends were particularly vulnerable. They were particularly unfortunate in that the Roman governor, Hilarion, had his own reasons for wanting to make something of a spectacular out of the execution of these martyrs. He was something of a zealot and

was trying to ingratiate himself with the emperor and planned their death by wild beasts as an entertainment in honour of the emperor's son's birthday.

Why is the text / her diary important?

It is just an extraordinarily direct, personal, honest and moving prison diary. It gives a wonderful insight into the inner life of a new Christian convert and into the role of women in the early church.

What is your view on its authenticity?

If it is not authentic it is a work of genius. I have always thought it must be authentic. The visions and dreams have a peculiarly convincing quality about them; not least because they show how Perpetua's pagan past was still very much alive in the imagery of her unconscious mind. The diary is a snapshot of a Christian community under extreme pressure and responding in a very human way.

What is remarkable about this story?

It shows a young woman defying her society for her beliefs in an age when women were expected to fit in to the traditional roles of a highly patriarchal society. Her account begins quite abruptly with an argument with her father who is trying to stop her being baptized. She insists that she will never revoke her Christian faith and then goes ahead with the baptism. The account is full of this sense of courageous defiance. Perpetua is very much the leader of her group in spite of her youth and the fact that she was nursing a baby. She is the one who is expected to interpret God's will through her visions and dreams. There is no mention of a bishop or other male authority figure in this small Christian community, though a bishop and a presbyter are mentioned in one of the visions.

Perpetua shows great courage but she does not hide her vulnerability. She speaks movingly of her anxiety for her little son; she is frightened of the darkness of the prison, she is very aware of the horror of the ordeal that lies ahead of her. And then there are strangely comic touches. When she is facing her death in the arena she is charged by an enraged heifer who ripped her thigh. Having rearranged her tunic to protect her modesty she asked for a pin to tie up her hair. Dignity mattered! In the end the soldier charged with killing her with a sword made a mess of it and she had to guide the blade to her throat. Some critics have seen an echo of the great Dido in this detail; Dido who killed herself for love of Aeneas.

Do you think the dreams are important?

I think the dreams are very important. Perpetua knew instinctively how to simply record an experience as an experience and then reflect on it in order to interpret it. Particularly moving are the dreams about her little brother Dinocrates, who had died of a facial cancer. She sees him in the realm of the dead, suffering from terrible thirst and she is able to deliver him through her prayers. The imagery is entirely pagan, and yet, given her recent baptism, she will also have in her mind the image of the water of life, and this is what Dinocrates is able to drink from and relieve his agony. But the dreams about Dinocrates have another layer of meaning. They resolve her anxiety about her little son whom she was nursing and who has been taken away from her. So this is a very human blend of the clash between personal anxiety and vocation being resolved through the dreaming mind. The most extraordinary dream, though, is the one where she prepares for her martyrdom. She is stripped naked and oiled, like an athlete. For her final conflict she becomes virile;

she takes on the integrity which in the ancient world could only belong to male persons. It is quite extraordinary that the Church has this account in its memory of women acting as full human beings for the sake of Christ, and yet we are still worrying about women priests and bishops!


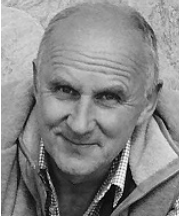



Why do you think Perpetua's story is suddenly receiving so much attention and how is it relevant today?

I think down the ages it was passed over for many reasons. Augustine disapproved of its theology, and that set the tone for others. The reliance on dreams and visions in the story suggested to some that the group were Montanists; Montanism was an early Christian charismatic movement which was eventually condemned as heretical. So it was assumed that Perpetua and her companions were not quite orthodox. Then there was, I suspect, a distaste for the fact that pregnancy and birth plays a part in the story; the church came to prefer its female martyrs to be virgins!

Even in more modern times many writings by religious women were simply regarded as second rate or hysterical and were often dismissed. One way in which this dismissal showed itself was in the widespread view that it was no more than a piece of pious fiction. It is only very recently that Perpetua's prison diary has been thought to be authentic.

It has come into prominence partly through the feminist movement in the Church and in wider culture and the recognition that some women have carried significant spiritual authority. I also think people hear an individual voice in it and they find the account moving and powerful. It chimes in well with the contemporary search for spiritual experience and authenticity.

BIOGRAPHIES

	<p>Nick Bicât (Composer) Nick Bicât has composed extensively for film, television, and live performance, and has been twice nominated for BAFTA and Ivor Novello Awards. In the theatre he has worked many times at the RSC and the National Theatre. His opera <i>The Knife</i>, was nominated for best musical score in the 1989 New York Drama Desk Awards. As a songwriter, he has written for singers as diverse as Emma Kirkby, Deniece Williams & P.J. Harvey, whose recording of his song <i>Who Will Love Me Now?</i> was voted BBC Radio 1 top film song for 1998.</p>
	<p>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. This is the second to be told. Each telling requires a collaboration, in this case with the compelling music of Nick Bicât and the production skill of Pete Champness. The next two of the series are ready for collaboration, <i>Red Dragon</i>, <i>White Dragon</i> and <i>Cantata Eliensis</i>.</p>
	<p>Pete Champness (Director) Pete has been part of the broadcast and entertainment world for over thirty years. After twelve years on the BBC staff, working as Director and Producer across a variety of television programmes, ranging from social documentary to historical drama, he went freelance in order to avoid becoming an Executive Producer, which would have meant wearing a suit and going to meetings. He now divides his time between the commercial world, making films for companies which some would regard as household names, and developing projects which stretch the creative elastic. <i>Perpetua</i> is one of the latter, and how.</p>
 <p>Photo: Dan Porges</p>	<p>Andrew Parrott (Conductor) Andrew has kept Baroque and earlier music at the centre of his musical activities (both as performer and researcher) and is perhaps best known for over 50 groundbreaking recordings with his Taverner Consort, Choir & Players. Last year saw the release of his own première reconstruction of Bach's lost <i>Trauer-Music</i> (Music to mourn Prince Leopold) and next year he will release a new recording of Monteverdi's <i>Orfeo</i>. In addition he works widely in later repertoire with modern-instrument orchestras, choirs and opera companies. Recent recordings include 19th-century and contemporary Slovak music and Beethoven's complete piano concertos. Besides co-editing the <i>New Oxford Book of Carols</i> (1992), he is the author of various scholarly articles and <i>The Essential Bach Choir</i> (2000).</p>
	<p>Katie Slater (Perpetua) Katie read English and French at the University of Nottingham before starting at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, studying singing with Ameral Gunson. She has recently gained a Masters with Distinction, and was the recipient of the Cordelia Moses Scholarship. Operatic highlights include <i>Dorabella (Cosi Fan Tutte)</i> with Hampstead Garden Opera, <i>Olga (Eugene Onegin)</i> with Blackheath Opera, <i>Hansel (Hansel and Gretel)</i> at the Kings Head Theatre, <i>Mad Margaret (Ruddigore)</i> at Buxton Opera House, and this summer she enjoyed playing a Sprite in Opera Holland Park's <i>Fantastic Mr Fox</i>. Forthcoming engagements include <i>The Messenger (Cover)</i> in <i>Orfeo</i> with Silent Opera.</p>

**Charli Baptie (Felicitas)**

Charli is a TCL Scholar studying for her Master of Music in Vocal Performance at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, under the tuition of Wendy Eathorne and Rianka Bouwmeester. She is currently on the mentor scheme at English National Opera run by chorus master Simone Williams. Experienced in a wide variety of repertoire from the genres of opera, operetta, musical theatre and oratorio, Charli has performed principal roles in venues across the UK and abroad.

**Steven East (Quintus)**

After graduating in history and teaching in Albania, Steven worked in publishing before moving to music full time. He is now a Linda Pilgrim Charitable Trust scholar in the final year of a postgraduate Advanced Diploma at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, studying with Lynton Atkinson. In August he appeared for Opéra de Baugé, France as Gregorio in *Roméo et Juliette* and the Jailer in *Tosca*. In November he will play Angelotti, Sacristan AND Spoletta for Opera Up Close in London in their reworking of *Tosca*, set in the final days of Soviet East Germany.

**Guy Hayward (Pudens)**

Guy Hayward started singing as a boy chorister at Bath Abbey and later became a choral scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge. He is a performer of Early Music, Lieder and English Song, as well as the repertoire of Frank Sinatra (bounderandcad.tumblr.com). Guy is currently completing a PhD at Cambridge, exploring how and why groups synchronise their singing all around the world.

**Linda Hirst (Mother)**







Linda Hirst's 40 year career began with Monteverdi, Schutz and John Alldis Choirs in the early 70s. She was a Swingle Singer, then co-founded Electric Phoenix in 79. Both groups toured the world leading to a hugely varied solo career – Beethoven 9 and Berio Recital in the Proms, premieres by Osborne, Weir, Holt, Muldowney, Grange etc, recordings with Pink Floyd, Ivor Cutler, Ligeti, Henze, Cage and Lachenmann and a long love affair with *Pierrot Lunaire*, which she will perform for Nuria Schoenberg's 80th birthday at La Fenice in November.

**David Jones (Hilarianus)**

David studies with Ameral Gunson on the MMus course at Trinity Laban Conservatoire and read Chemistry at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Recent performances have included the title role in Eugene Onegin with St. Andrews Opera and creating the role of Jamie in *The Sleeper* with Welsh National Youth Opera.

**Thomas Drew (Saturus)**

Thomas Drew is a former head chorister at Grimsby Minster. He studied at the Junior Royal Academy of Music obtaining his ABRSM piano diploma. He studies singing with John Wakefield at Trinity Laban Conservatoire and is a TCM Trust Scholar at the Old Royal Naval College Chapel. Thomas also studies violin with Mayumi Fujikawa. Last year he sang the role Nemorino, in *L'elisir D'amore* with Puzzle Piece Opera. He has toured with the Rodolfus Choir and successfully auditioned for Genesis 16.

	<p>Ashley Mercer (Sextus) Ashley is a TCM Trust Scholar at Trinity Laban Conservatoire, where he studies with David Thomas. He started singing at school and went on to join the National Youth Choir. He temporarily deviated into the world of sciences, completing a Master's degree in Physics in 2006 at King's College, London. Whilst there he was a choral scholar under David Trendell and he performed, directed and conducted for the Gilbert & Sullivan and musical theatre societies. A brief stint in the City followed, before he returned to his first love - singing - and he has never looked back.</p>
	<p>Tom Wellesley (Dinocrates) Tom is 12 years old. He has been at Christ Church Cathedral School since the age of 5 and is a chorister in Worcester College Chapel Choir. He has actually just been made Head Chorister this year. He enjoys acting and singing and also plays the piano. His first acting appearance was as the Wolf in Roald Dahl's <i>Red Riding Hood</i> when he was in year three at CCCS. He has been in a number of school productions since.</p>
	<p>Georgia Bishop (Understudy for Perpetua/Mother) Georgia Mae Bishop is currently in her 3rd year as an undergraduate, studying voice with Dr Linda Hirst at Trinity Laban Conservatoire. She is passionate about new works, and recently performed in the premier of Simone Spagnolo's opera <i>It Makes no Difference</i> at the Tête à Tête opera festival in Riverside Studios.</p>
	<p>Charlotte Richardson (Understudy for Felicitas) Charlotte is currently on the International Programme of Study at Trinity Laban, having previously studied opera on an academic scholarship to Birkbeck (UL), attended the London School of Film Media and Performance, been a choral scholar at King's College London, and held a choral scholarship at Christchurch Cathedral Dublin. She has worked on staged student projects at The Royal Opera House, the National Theatre and the ENO as well as touring worldwide as a soloist with Irish Riverdance choir Anúna.</p>
	<p>Adam Bushell (Percussion) Adam Bushell started playing percussion at the age of 10 in his parent's village band in the West Country, and hasn't looked back since. He is versatile and eclectic player who is at home on a range of instruments and in a range of styles. Currently he can be heard playing traditional English folk music with Duck Soup and The Elle Osborne Trio, experimental improvisation with ViV and Baby, and contemporary classical music with the Tacet Ensemble. He is also an experienced teacher, and has taught in schools, at festivals and in prisons around the country.</p>
	<p>Robin Cohen (keyboard / piano) Robin Cohen is a freelance musician and staff accompanist at Trinity Laban. Born into a musical family in Cape Town, he attended the University of Cape Town, studying the piano with Francois du Toit. In 2008, after being awarded various bursaries and grants, he enrolled on the MMus course at Trinity, studying under Martino Tirimo. In 2009 he reached the final of the Alfred Kitchin Competition for Chopin playing and he won the Lieder competition on two occasions. Robin has performed in many prestigious venues in London including St. Johns Smiths Square and Kings Place.</p>

	<p>Jan Hendrickse (Wind)</p> <p>Jan Hendrickse is a composer, improviser and sound artist. As a performer he specialises in a range of wind instruments. Jan has performed or collaborated with a diverse range of artists including Ornette Coleman, Howard Shore, Nitin Sawhney, David Toop, and many leading orchestras and ensembles. His playing also features on a large number of film scores including <i>The Lord of The Rings</i>, <i>The Passion of the Christ</i>, <i>Narnia</i>, <i>The Hunger Games</i>, <i>Apocalypto</i> and many others. He teaches at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. www.janhendrickse.com</p>
	<p>Angus Lyon (Accordion)</p> <p>One of Scotland most innovative accordionists, he is perhaps best known for his work with Fiddler player Ruaridh Campbell, The Halton Quartet & Blazin' Fiddles. Angus has also recorded and performed with some of the biggest names in the music world including Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens), Paul McCartney, Bobby McFerrin, Scott Mathews, Eliza Carthy & Bella Hardy. In addition to playing Angus runs his own recording studio Grans House in Lanarkshire Scotland producing albums for Findlay Napier and the Bar Room Mountaineers & Maeve Mackinnon.</p>
	<p>Dave Malkin (Guitar)</p> <p>Dave Malkin studies with Graham Devine at Trinity College of Music. He has worked with the LPO, Bellowhead, the National Youth Guitar Ensemble, <i>Phantom of the Opera</i> lyricist Charles Hart, the Duke Quartet and the Eden/Stell Duo. His performances have been broadcast on BBC television. He is also a talented cellist and he has taken part in masterclasses with Steven Isserlis and Guy Johnston. He is also one half of contemporary folk duo Tandem.</p>
	<p>Laura Murphy (Double Bass)</p> <p>Laura grew up in North Wales, playing violin and piano from the age of six. Ten years later she picked up the double bass. Proceeding to join the National Youth Orchestra of Wales, she became Principal in her final year. Laura studied music at Nottingham University and Birmingham Conservatoire. She went on to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama to study for a Masters with Kevin Rundell. Laura freelances for various orchestras including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia Cymru and Welsh Sinfonia.</p>
	<p>Mikey Young (Percussion)</p> <p>14-year-old Mikey is a pupil at King Alfred's Academy in Wantage, who plans to take science A'Levels with a view to studying medicine. He plays percussion with Oxfordshire Schools Symphony Orchestra (OSSO), Wantage Silver Band and the Wantage Big Band. He is taught drum kit by Richard Ashton and percussion by Lorne Pearcey. He has a long-term project to upgrade his drum kit, and has been saving hard with the aid of a paper round. He is also a keen table tennis player.</p>

Cantata Dramatica is established under the Charities Aid Foundation, Registered Charity Number 268369. It is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to promote new music, especially staged dramatic cantatas, in large churches and cathedrals, schools, colleges and other appropriate spaces. Future plans include the commissioning of new and unusual choral and instrumental music for performance in thought provoking spaces. On the horizon are:

- Cantata Eliensis, celebrating the founding, struggle for survival, and triumphant building of Ely Cathedral
- Gustav Holst's Rigveda Song Cycle and excerpts from his Cantata Savitri, with Indian Temple Dance performed by Ash Mukkerjee

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, Angels and enthusiasts. To all of whom we are immensely grateful for bringing Perpetua to the point of a first complete performance.

