



*The Testament of
Cresseid*

*an opera
by Peter D Robinson
based on the poem by
Robert Henryson*

*Stockbridge Parish Church
29th August, 2009*

Characters

Cresseid - Charlotte Whittle, Soprano
Troilus - Bruce Davis, Tenor
Herald - David Mitchinson
Troilus' Mother - Daisy Henderson, Mezzo Soprano
Troilus' Father - John Dallas, Baritone
Diomede - Daniel Williamson, Baritone
Calchas, Cresseid's Father - Richard Brannan, Bass
The Gods -
 Jupiter - John Dallas
 Mars -
 Cupid - David Mitchinson
 Mercury - Iain Hughes
 Phoebus - Euan Fleming
 Cynthia - Daisy Henderson

Nobles and Citizens of Greece and of Troy and chorus of Lepers:

Campbell Keith, Rebecca Petford, Dorothy Woolley, Alan Woolley,

Piano: Alan Gibson

For Carpe Diem Productions

Director
Musical Director
Rehearsal Pianist
Administrators

Iain Hughes
Peter Robinson
Dorothy Moncrieff
Jan Stuart
David Mitchinson



Carpe Diem is affiliated to NODA

The National Operatic and Dramatic Association - NODA - was established in 1899 to bring together members of operatic and dramatic societies for their mutual assistance and benefit. It is the only organization of its kind devoted exclusively to the amateur stage and now has over 2300 affiliated societies and over 2400 individual members throughout Britain and overseas.

The Association - a registered charity with The Lord Lloyd Webber as its patron - has its headquarters in Peterborough and is run by a professional staff who co-ordinate the administration, provide an advantageous trading service for members and can lobby nationally on issues affecting all members. A council made up of 12 elected Councillors representing different areas of Britain governs the Association.

NODA Scottish Area has a committee representing all regions of Scotland and currently over 200 societies are affiliated to NODA Scotland. The Association organises training seminars and an annual conference as well as providing a network of contacts throughout Scotland which can give valuable assistance and information when required.



The NODA representative for Region 7 (Fife) is:
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The NODA representative for Region 6 (Edinburgh) is:
Dorothy Johnstone

The Testament of Cressid

based on the medieval Scots poem by Robert Henryson

The action takes place during the Trojan War

- Overture
- Grand Waltz
- Act I scene 1 - The Royal Palace of Troy, decked out for celebration
The assembled nobles sing a hymn of praise of their native land. Cresseid and Troylus, young lovers, sing a playful duet. Troylus' mother and father sing of the joy in their son's happiness, remembering the passion of their own youth.
A herald announces the cause of the celebration. The nobles sing of the Feast of Aphrodite, where a beautiful maiden is crowned the "A per Se" of beauty. Cresseid is chosen and crowned. The celebrations are interrupted by an announcement that the Trojan forces have been defeated on the battlefield; some of Troy's finest soldiers have been taken captive. They will be returned in exchange for Aphrodite's Maiden. All lament, but the newly crowned Cresseid has no choice. She had Troylus sing a parting duet, vowing their love for each other.
- Act I scene 2 - The Greek Encampment
The Trojan prisoners are dejected, preferring a soldier's death to capture. They can hardly believe the news that they are to be returned to their loved ones.
- Act I scene 3 - The prisoners are exchanged
Cresseid is reunited with her father, whom she had believed dead. He had, however, been a prisoner of the Greeks for many years. In this bittersweet moment, Troylus and Cresseid sing a final duet as the Greek captain leads her away to captivity.

- Act II - The Greek encampment

The Athenians celebrate their victory. One of the soldiers, Diomedes, is feted as a hero. He is humble, claiming that he was only doing his job and that many others are more worthy of praise. Cressida is brought in and admired and envied by the ladies. Diomedes offers Cressida protection and, should she wish it, his love. She is horrified and tells him so. Calchas, Cressida's father, advises her against too hasty a decision, reminding her that she must forget Troilus and make a new life for herself, as he has done. He tells her that "the tree that learns to bend can survive the fiercest storm."

Interval

- Act III scene 1 - Cressida's bed-chamber - seven years later

Calchas tries in vain to comfort his daughter who has been abandoned by Diomedes.

- Act III scene 2 - Cressida's bed-chamber - immediately following

Cressida curses the Gods whom she feels have cruelly betrayed her. They have made her beautiful, admired and envied; they have torn her from one lover to be rejected by another. She feels that all Athens is laughing at her. The Gods are angered and berate her, claiming that she has been more fortunate than most. Her beauty is taken from her. Cynthia, Goddess of the Moon, thinks her brothers have treated Cressida too leniently and outlines a terrible fate for Cressida. She will become a leper, outcast from society, humiliated, dying alone and in pain.

When she awakens, the terrible truth of what has happened to her dawns on Cressida. Her father arranges for her to be secretly taken to a leper colony. To spare her further shame, he will tell everyone that she has died.

Act III scene 3 - Outside the walls of Troy

The lepers sing of how life used to be. Cressida, blinded and lame, joins them. They welcome her and together they lament what they have lost and turn to each other for support. Although the laws mean they can wander where they will and must be given food and alms by those they meet on the way, the lepers have lost their homes and loved ones; they have only each other.

A group of Trojan nobles pass by and give some money to the lepers. Troilus sees Cressida but does not recognize her. Nevertheless, he is stirred by pity for the disfigured woman and gives her money. Cressida, however, recognizes his voice and realizes her doom is complete. She sings a final aria warning all women to be careful to avoid her own fate. At the end of the aria, Cressida falls dead.

Composer Biography

Peter's involvement with music began very early: he learned to play the harmonium sitting on his Aunt Agnes' knee when his legs were too short to reach the pedals; his parents bought him a "real" piano for his eighth birthday (which meant he no-longer had to pick out tunes on his red toy-piano) - and, though he now owns a grand piano - he still sticks (most of the time) by the original rule of stopping playing at ten o'clock for the sake and sanity of the neighbours.

Peter is very grateful for the patience and support his parents showed him in those early years. Thanks also go to Miss Duff, Peter's primary school music teacher and Howard Duthie at The Royal High School who further developed his love of music, channelling both his energy and his ambition: "It's not enough to be nearly good."

Never one to sit doing nothing, Peter loves scuba-diving, horse-riding and skiing and is also a prolific writer. He has had short stories and poetry published as well as several plays performed on stage and broadcast on radio. His first musical "Limelight" was performed at the MacRobert Theatre, Stirling, in 1989. Choral works include, "Gloria", "Stabat Mater", "Magnificat", "Te Deum", "An AIDS Requiem" and "Carmina Gadelica". "Blood on the Stones" a musical about Edinburgh's notorious body-snatchers Burke and Hare was performed in the Fringe in 2001 and 2003 to considerable critical acclaim, with "Street of Sorrows", telling about the plague-struck citizens of Mary King's Close in Edinburgh following in 2004 and 2006. Peter was nominated for MTM:UK Best Composer on the Fringe 2007 for "Sailing to Tomorrow" , a musical about the Highland Clearances, which was also performed in 2008.

Peter studied English and Music at University and is Principal Teacher of Curriculum, English and Literacy at Glenwood High School in Glenrothes, Fife. As well as teaching, composing and performing, Peter fills his spare time working with a number of Amateur Musical companies, taking up the baton as Musical Director. His favourite pastime in the world is playing his Chappell & Co. grand piano (which may be the one from Craiglockhart War Hospital and thus would have been played by Seigfried Sassoon - anyone who can further his research on this, please do get in touch).

Carpe Diem Productions was formed specifically to perform the works of Scottish composer Peter D Robinson. It brings together singers and players from all over central Scotland, from all backgrounds and walks of life. The connecting factor is an enjoyment of Peter's music and a desire to have it experienced by a wider audience.

Previous Productions include:

"An AIDS Requiem" 1994, 1995, 1997, 1998

"Gloria" 1998

"Carmina Gadelica: Hymns, Chants and Incantations" (Fringe 1999)

"Colours in the Wine"

"If I Had Wings" (Fringe 2000)

"Stabat Mater" (Fringe 2000)

"Blood on the Stones" (Fringe 2001 & 2003)

"Street of Sorrows" (Fringe 2004 & 2006)

"Hymn to the Guardian Angels" (Fringe 2006)

"Sailing to Tomorrow" (Fringe 2007 & 2008)

"The Fire and The Thistle" (Fringe 2009)

For further information, including future events,
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picture by Iain Hughes