

# The Juniper Passion



# The Juniper Passion (2011)

A Libretto by John. G. Davies.

In memory of my father

Richard Ferguson Davies

1920–2003

Gunner 69436, 29 Battery, 6th Field Regiment

2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

— and all the fallen —

*As a boy I proudly carried the fact that my father had fought in the two great battles of the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Expeditionary Force; El Alamein, and Monte Cassino. Of North Africa he spoke of the burning desert by day and the freezing star bright nights. Of Italy he spoke of the mountains, the ruins, the Italians who welcomed them and whom he and his comrades in turn fed, treating the children with chocolate and small gifts. And always he spoke of the men, Snow from Auckland, Joe from Motueka, some of them alive, some having never come home. Even in the last months of his life I would see him turning over in his hands photographs of those long gone faces and places.*

*Michael Williams and I planned that the ultimate scene of the opera was to be a philosophical interrogation of the Nazi appropriation of Nietzsche, Catholic mysticism of the Benedictine kind, and Kiwi self reliance. To interrogate this difference might lead us to an understanding of sameness. To see ourselves in the light of what we share, rather than what we hold separate, is the purpose of this work.*

*John. G. Davies*

The action takes place in the Abbey of Monte Cassino, Italy, in a war cemetery, and in New Zealand.

## Act I

In the Abbey of Monte Cassino.

### Prologue

From **The Prologue to the Rules of St Benedict**

### PROLOGUS

[1] Obsculta, o fili, praecepta magistri, et inclina aurem cordis tui, et admonitionem pii patris libenter excipe et efficaciter comple, [2] ut ad eum per oboedientiae laborem redeas, a quo per inoboedientiae desidiā recesseras. [3] Ad te ergo nunc mihi sermo dirigitur, quisquis abrenuntians propriis voluntatibus, Domino Christo vero regi militaturus, oboedientiae fortissima atque praeclara arma sumis.

[4] In primis, ut quicquid agendum inchoas bonum, ab eo perfici instantissima oratione deprecas, [5] ut qui nos iam in filiorum dignatus est numero computare non debet aliquando de malis actibus nostris contristari. [6] Ita enim ei omni tempore de bonis suis in nobis parendum est ut non solum iratus pater suos non aliquando filios exheredet, [7] ut nequissimos servos perpetuam tradat ad poenam qui eum sequi noluerint ad gloriam. [8] nos scriptura ac dicente: Hora est iam nos de somno surgere.

English translation

### PROLOGUE

Listen, O my son, to the precepts of thy master,  
And incline the ear of thy heart,  
And cheerfully receive and faithfully execute the admonitions of thy loving Father,  
That by the toil of obedience thou mayest return to Him from whom by the sloth of disobedience thou hast gone away.  
To thee, therefore, my speech is now directed, who, giving up thine own will,  
Takest up the strong and most excellent arms of obedience, to do battle for Christ the Lord, the true King.  
In the first place, beg of Him by most earnest prayer,  
That He perfect whatever good thou dost begin,  
In order that He who hath been pleased to count us in the number of His children,  
Need never be grieved at our evil deeds.  
For we ought at all times so to serve Him with the good things which He hath given us,  
That He may not, like an angry father, disinherit his children,  
Nor, like a dread lord, enraged at our evil deeds, hand us over to everlasting punishment  
as most wicked servants, who would not follow Him to glory.  
Let us then rise at length, since the Scripture arouseth us, saying:  
"It is now the hour for us to rise from sleep".

## Act 1 Scene 1

Soldiers break out of a war monument,  
as found in so many towns and cities in  
New Zealand.

### Chorus

From **Dante's Inferno, Divine Comedy**  
**Canto 3 (1-7)**

Per mi si va ne la citta' dolente,  
Per mi si va ne l'eterno dolore,  
Per mi si va ne tra la perduta gente.  
Guistizia mosse il mio alto fattore;  
Fecemi la divina podestate,  
La soma sapienza e'l primo amore.  
Dinanzi a me non fuor cose create  
Se non eterne, e io eterno duro.  
Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate.

Through me the way into the grieving city,  
Through me the way into eternal sorrow,  
Through me the way among the lost people.  
Justice moved my high maker;  
Divine power made me,  
Highest wisdom, and primal love.  
Before me were no things created  
Except eternal ones, and I endure eternal. Abandon every hope, you  
who enter.

### Maria, Jessie, Chorus

La soma sapienza e'l primo amore  
Highest wisdom and primal love

All strapping youth  
Clamour in panic  
What will strike a man  
The pits of hell are revealed  
Yielded into the brute vitality of air  
Well fed Death  
Clamours to devour all he can catch.  
Beneath the dull and blameless sky.

### Narrator

From **Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil**  
*Once one sacrificed human beings to one's god,  
perhaps precisely those whom one loved most*

### Maria, Jessie, Chorus

They stand detested;  
At the doorway of death.  
A man's life once crossed the teeth of death is gone  
All dear sons  
Bred in peace by Juniper and Pine  
Calling on hell

Who made man  
Domino Christo  
Kyrie eleison.

### Joe

The sun climbed into the sky  
From the deep and quiet stream of ocean  
The deepest chasm yawned beneath the world  
At the brazen threshold  
Where the iron gates stand.  
There in waiting  
My own death.

### **Soldiers One and Two**

We sang farewell songs  
And told them ' keep a cold beer for our return'

### **Jessie, Maria, Chorus**

The father forbade his sons  
But, beckoned by the black hand of death  
Disobeyed.

### **Soldier Three**

I cannot see for  
The grit that  
Cuts my eyes.

*The Lord is my shepherd*

The bullet

*I shall not want*

Just a small prick of heat

I saw my blood

This must be my death

*He maketh me to lie down in green pasture*

This stumbling slow release

Tripping into the black fire

Is this where god lives?

*He leadeth me beside still waters.*

### **Jessie, Helen**

From the pit sawn school room  
The message is read  
Missing in action.

### **Soldier Four**

I could hear my brother calling.  
His bold voice that once shouted  
And sang the unholy joy of rebellious youth now

Calling for our sweet mother.

### **Jessie**

Missing in action.

### **Soldier Four**

I crawled to him through the burning dust; I found  
his leg  
And then the rest of him.

### **Jessie**

Missing in action.

### **Soldier Four**

I tied the tourniquet and began to drag him.  
In the final rays of the dying sun the sniper  
Took the pair of us.  
Now we are both gone.

### **Jessie, Helen, Maria, Chorus**

The bullet ripped right through the vein that  
Runs up the back of the neck.  
He dropped backwards in the dust  
As he lay dying he saw  
The southern sky.  
Men of his youth  
Tossing golden bales  
Beneath the huffing juniper  
Soft eyes  
Look away and back again.  
All is memory  
Thin as mist on the river,  
He reaches out but  
The dance is done

Unlovely death blackens his eyes.  
He is gone.

The dead each settle into a grave making  
the New Zealand war-dead cemetery at Monte  
Cassino.

## Act 1 Scene 2

1960. Helen walks the lines of graves.  
She continues walking and finds the one she is looking  
for. It is the grave of her father.

### Helen

I have found you,  
Here where you fell.  
Have you waited for me to come?  
Well here I am Father  
I've heard birds singing  
From the Juniper grove  
Yet I never heard you speak my name

Your soldier's tongue is earth.  
I've made my own memories  
Riding your shoulders  
Through the valley  
Where you grew  
And left a shadow.  
You lift me against the sky  
My eyes thrilled and drenched with love  
Where a sighing wind searches still  
Among the Juniper.

She is joined by Jessie, her mother.

### Helen

I have found him.

### Jessie & Helen

You are the missing piece

That memory can't replace  
Our grainy photograph  
In your soldiers' uniform.  
To treasure only memories  
And fatherless children.  
Now we have found you,  
Lover, man-child, father, son  
Beloved fallen soldier  
Fallen, fallen soldier.

## Act I Scene 3

Jessie and Helen prepare to leave.  
A Benedictine Monk (Carlo) and a woman (Maria)  
appear and kneel at the grave.

**Carlo**

*Preghiera per L'Europa*

A Prayer for Europe

Benedetto, tu, che illuminato dall'Alto,  
Preferisti anteporre ad ogni ricchezza umana  
E ad ogni piu splendito avvenire la gioia di  
Servire a Cristo, Vero Re, e, per mezzo della tua  
Regola  
Trasformasti uomini e popoli, accendendo in essi  
la fiaccola  
Della Fede Cristiana, aiuta anche noi, figli della  
dignita

Umana, e very missionary di Cristo, per costruire  
insieme la vera civiltà dell'amore. Amen.

**Jessie**

I am not the only soul  
To remember this young soldier-boy.  
Who are you?  
And why do you  
Kneel at this grave?

**Maria**

I am Maria Cavisccioni and this  
My brother Carlo  
From the Abbey  
Of Monte Cassino  
Each year we come  
To offer prayers of gratitude and  
Kneel beside this grave.

**Jessie**

If he had lived I would have been  
His wife  
And this his child he never knew.  
Why should you pay him gratitude?  
What debt could he hold over you?

**Maria**

This is the woman of Joseph  
The young one is his daughter.

**Carlo**

His woman!  
His daughter!  
A miracle.  
Praise God.



### **Maria**

We are overjoyed that you are here.  
He believes it is a miracle  
That God has brought us together.

### **Chorus**

Deo gratias.

### **Jessie**

If God can do miracles  
Let him relieve the agony of a woman  
Robbed of a husband  
*He restoreth my soul*  
And left to raise a fatherless child.

### **Helen, Chorus**

Deo gratias  
*He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his  
namesake.*

### **Maria**

But you must understand  
*I am the man who hath seen affliction be the rod of  
his wrath*  
This Joseph gave his life for my brother.  
*He hath led me, and brought me into darkness but  
not into light.*

### **Carlo**

Joseph husband of Mary  
*Surely against me he has turned*  
Mary mother of Jesus  
*He turneth his hand against me all the day*  
Protected and served our Lord.

*My skin and my flesh hath he made old; he hath  
broken my bones.  
He hath builded against me and compassed me with  
gall and travail  
As your Joseph protected me.  
He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead  
of old.  
Pray with us.*

**As they kneel in prayer Jessie another group of tourists  
visiting appear. They are German veterans of the  
battle.**

### **Deutscher Chor** German Chorus

Hier ist das Schlachtfeld  
Auf dem wir Gewitter von Feuer und Stahl  
entfachten  
Das Fleisch zu zermartern  
Das Blut herauszuprügeln von  
Soldaten und Söhnen wie uns  
In hölzerne Wiegen gefüllt nun ihr stummes  
Gebein  
So liegen sie unter dem zärtlichen Gras  
Auf dem sie einst aufrecht standen, um zu kämpfen  
mit  
Soldaten und Söhnen wie uns.

### **German Chorus**

This is the killing ground  
Onto which we blasted fire and iron  
To savage the flesh  
And thrash the blood of  
Soldiers and sons like us.  
Now cradles of their silent bones

Lie sheltered beneath the tender grass  
Where once they stood erect to fight  
Soldiers and sons like us.

**The German Chorus moves off, but one man remains.  
This is Bruno. He approaches the group at Joe's grave.**

**Bruno**

I thought I'd never see you again  
But fate has lead me here.

**Carlo**

God will forgive you  
But I won't!  
And I pray He forgive me for that.

**Bruno**

And does God forgive you?  
Who lies buried here?  
Or can I guess?

**Carlo**

There is no prayer or penance  
That will erase the blood from my hands  
The everlasting mercy of and St Benedict Christ  
My only salvation.

**Bruno**

Well may you pray here Brother Carlo.

**Carlo**

What do you want?  
Why are you here?

**Bruno**

Like you,  
That long night haunts me still.  
His restless spirit  
Disturbs my dreams.  
I have come to ask a dead man  
To forgive me!

And you oh brother  
How do you rest?  
I heard the shot, I saw him fall.

**Helen**

Your war is over!  
Let this grave alone!  
Who are you anyway  
That you stand so  
At my fathers grave?

**Helen and Jessie**

Leave this now with us,  
This is not your time.

*Richard Davies, Gunner 69436, 29 Battery, 6th Field  
Regiment, 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force.*



## Act II

The year is 1944. It is winter The Germans have built fortifications around the Abbey. Two terrible armies are about to meet.

Carlo is at prayer in a small chapel within the monastery of Monte Cassino.

### Carlo

Holy Madonna  
Mother of Christ  
Who appeared in Juniper  
Save us in this our hour of need.

Benedict  
Who drank your doctrine most mildly  
In the fear of God  
And poured it forth in discretion  
Holy Saint who drove your nail into  
The middle of the wheel

So that strong, weak and sick could drink  
According to his capacity  
Watch over us.

The sister of Carlo, Maria enters

### Maria

I have come to beg you Carlo  
leave this Monastery  
Yesterday the Polish came  
I am frightened of so many soldiers  
What can I do?

You must help me Carlo!

### Carlo

I am not free to come and go as I please  
I am a servant of God  
And vassal of St Benedict  
Destruction surrounds us  
I fear the worst.

Enter a lay brother of the monastery

### Lay Brother

Brother Carlo  
Our Father calls for you.

### Abbott

Carlo my loyal and devoted son.  
The storms of war are crashing at the gates  
There is concern that the  
Holy Relics of Saint Benedict and Scholastica  
The treasures of our Abbey are not safe.  
This is Lieutenant Scheffler  
He has trucks and men and can arrange  
Transportation of all that can be moved.

### Bruno

There is an agreement that the great and  
important works of art  
Contained within these walls  
Be moved before the savage American  
Destroys them; as he did in Napoli.  
At this time with  
A mutual enemy plundering  
Our heritage and culture

We must protect the genius of  
European Catholic art  
And make safe these treasures  
From the rampant barbarian.

**Jessie, Maria**

*(while Carlo and Bruno discuss the artworks)*

Domine Jesu  
Domine Christe  
Filius die  
Miserere me  
Peccatorum Miserere  
Lavabo inter.

**Carlo**

Some of our people see the American as liberator  
And you did not answer my question.

**Bruno**

We plan to move the art to the North.

**Abbott**

Do you mean Germany?

**Bruno**

It will be transported to Spoleto  
Field Marshal Kesselring has given his assurance  
This Abbey will not be occupied by German  
military.  
But no one can give such an assurance for  
The treacherous American.

**Bruno**

My commander is Reichmarshal Hermann Goering.

**Carlo**

Vicious and complex are the motives of  
Those engaged in war.  
I trust only God.

**Abbott**

I also feel God and Benedict will protect our sacred  
home.

**Bruno**

This is not the first time the Anglo horde has  
Plundered the storehouse of culture  
Their disregard for the sacred foundations  
Of our noble heritage is plain to see.  
God would have us take action, not trust.

**Abbott**

Carlo will show you  
The many works of art  
allow me to withdraw.

We hear evening vespers being sung as the scene  
shifts

**Helen, Maria, Jessie, Chorus**

*(while Carlo shows Bruno around the Abbey and  
thought to the end of Act 2)*

Corpus tuum, Domine, quod sumpsi, et Sanguis,  
quem potavi, adhaereat visceribus meis : et  
praesta, ut in me non remaneat scelerum macula,  
quem pura et sancta refecerunt Sacramenta:  
Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:  
Miserere nobis  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:  
Dona nobis pacem.

Ego Alpha et Omega primus et novissimus  
principium et finis  
Domine Jesu Christe, Filius Dei, Miserere, me a  
peccatorem.

**Narrator**

From **Lamentations**

*He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out:  
He hath made my chain heavy.*

*Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my  
prayer.*

*He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone,  
He hath made my paths crooked.*

*He was unto me as a bear lying in wait,  
And as a lion in secret places.*

*He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in  
pieces:*

*He hath made me desolate.*

**Carlo**

Now you have seen much of the Abbey  
Do you think you can transport these fragile  
objects?  
There are works here over 500 years old,  
Is it wise to risk damage in such a hasty manner?

**Bruno**

Do you think it wise to risk their destruction?

**Carlo**

I am concerned that these treasures should be in  
anyone's possession  
Other than here where they have been protected  
for centuries.

What does an enemy gain by destroying the  
Abbey?

The American is now an ally of Italy.

**Bruno**

Please don't be naive.

The American is in control of airways up to and  
beyond the Gustav line,  
If they suspect an advantage by bombing this  
Abbey,  
They will do it.

**Carlo**

Why would it be to their advantage?

**Bruno**

Because they might think it is occupied by  
German troops.

**Carlo**

But clearly it is not.

**Bruno**

But if they should think it was...

**Carlo**

You would deliberately have them think so?

**Bruno**

It is not for military gain that we wish to save the treasures of Monte Cassino.

Who owns art owns the past,  
Riechmarshal Goering has a fine sensibility  
Of art and its peculiar powers.

**Carlo**

Already there are stories of his burgeoning collection stolen from the museums of France.

**Bruno**

He sees a wooden statue

Germany is aware of the need to protect... what is this?

You did not include this in your tour of artifacts... it is exquisite...

Where does this come from?

**Carlo**

Prayer has power beyond human understanding.

**Bruno**

Who was the artist?

**Carlo**

My great grandfather  
Carved this from Juniper and  
Here it belongs.

**Bruno**

The Juniper Madonna.

**Carlo**

I ask that you do not remove this statue.

**Bruno**

I would not prevail upon you in conflict of your wishes

Goodnight Brother Carlo.

**Carlo**

Goodnight Lieutenant.

Bruno leaves.

Carlo remains in order to pray.

In a courtyard of Monte Cassino art treasures, ancient books, paintings and statues are being packed and carried out to waiting trucks. Bruno, Carlo are there, also German Military Police, monks, and civilian refugees. Bruno supervises the packing of the Juniper Madonna. He is well pleased to have secured it and moves off to do the same with other artifacts. Carlo and two of the refugees surreptitiously remove the Juniper Madonna and replace it with a log of wood. Refixing the lid firmly they then carry the crate to be transported with the other artifacts. The convoy leaves. The remaining refugees and monks gaze skyward as leaflets warning them of the planned aerial bombardment flutter into the courtyards and cloisters of Monte Cassino.







## **ACT III**

**Rural New Zealand 1940**

**Jessie, Chorus**

In the arms of these young hills  
Thunder struck the billowed cloud and  
Emerald green the swath  
Frosty crisp the dawning light.

In the arms of these young hills  
The silver green and bellowed trees  
We rose at dawn to break the land  
Fell to sleep in shaded beds  
In the arms of these young hills.

**Joe**

Will you wait for me?

**Helen, Maria, Chorus**

Soft eyes  
All is memory  
Thin as mist on a river.

**Jessie**

Wait for you?  
What does it mean?  
What does it mean?

**Joe**

Jessie please!

**Jessie/Joe**

Lets go to the river Joe

**Joe**

Foolish man child

**Joe**

Its our first time  
Barely children

**Jessie**

You and I

**Jessie/Joe**

The Juniper our haven

**Jessie**

Lets go to the river Joe

**Joe**

Foolish man child

**Joe**

The summer wind across my skin  
An angel in a dream

**Jessie/Joe**

Secrecy the sweetest taste  
As we hide from the eyes of the world  
From the eyes of the world

**Joe**

In the blue behind my eyes

**Narrator**

*Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow  
of death I fear no evil,*

**Jessie/ Joe**

Lets go to the river  
Lets go to the river  
Lets go to the river

*For thou are with me.  
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of  
mine enemies.*

**Voice of Churchill**

To outlive the menace of tyranny.  
If necessary for years;  
if necessary alone.

**Act 3 Scene 2**

1960 The War Cemetery.

**Jessie**

The pain of his leaving  
Has never gone  
He died fighting your war  
And the loneliness is mine.

**Maria**

We know the measure of your sacrifice  
Of your sacrifice.

**Bruno**

This Joseph of yours was a brave man but a fool  
He was in a fight that was not his...

**Carlo**

He acted from loyalty  
And paid the ultimate price  
evil defeated  
His tribute is eternal  
He won.

**Chorus**

Deo gratias  
Deo gratias

**Helen**

You stand here with the sun on your back  
My father lies in a grave at 23 of age.

**Carlo**

His is the honour

**Jessie/ Helen**

Honour is a caustic salve to a widows'/ daughters' wound

**Bruno**

Sentimental trash

**Carlo**

You live with no honour  
Just cruelty  
No honour  
No honour

**Maria, Jessie, Helen**

Woman create life and men destroy it  
Born of humility  
True sacrifice is not of life  
But of the self that destroys.  
What man could know this?  
What man?

**Bruno & Carlo**

What makes a man  
Not compromise nor give in?  
But risking it all  
To the very end  
Just soldiers and sons  
Like us

**Jessie**

What did you risk?  
Huddled in your tradition  
And you?  
How can you show your face to a world  
That knows the extent  
Of your cruelty.

**Bruno**

The tide of events will sweep men up  
And take them beyond themselves  
I am guilty, but I am here.  
I saw Joseph fall.

**Chorus**

Who made man?  
Domine Christe

**Bruno & Carlo**

Some wounds heal  
Some never close  
It's time we told you  
Of his misfortune  
Our night with him  
Was strange  
Men in war will sometimes fix  
A loving eye on the enemy  
And see each other clear  
In the empty light of death.

## Act 3 Scene 3

Late February 1944. Carlo is huddled beneath a blanket in a bombed out crypt of Monte Cassino Abbey. He has with him the Juniper Madonna. Bruno enters.

### Chorus

From **Dante, Canto 3 (1-7)**

Per mi si va ne la citta' dolente,  
Per mi si va ne l'eterno dolore,  
Per mi si va ne tra la perduta gente.

### Bruno

Wake up you treacherous Italian  
On your feet  
On your feet

### Carlo

What are you doing here?

### Bruno

What do you think?  
What do you think?  
You sent me off with a piece of firewood in a box.

### Carlo

You opened it?

### Bruno

Of course.

### Carlo

But it was not meant for you.  
You were adamant in telling us those crates would be transported to Spoleto.

### Bruno

This Madonna is a prize, not intended to slip through my fingers.

### Carlo

So you took the crate for yourself?

### Bruno

I was invited to the birthday of  
Reischmarshal Herman Goering.  
The 12th of January at Karin Hall.  
The intelligentsia of the 3rd Reich were there  
To celebrate the triumph of our glorious march  
into history.  
I knew of his exquisite taste,  
His penchant for the image of Christ's Mother  
So yes I took the box containing the Juniper  
Madonna of Monte Cassino  
And before the assembled guests I opened it.  
There inside, my gift to the great commander  
Was a piece of firewood!

### Carlo

You wanted to gift my Juniper Madonna to  
Reischmarshal Herman Goering?

### Bruno

Yes

Yes you dog,  
And before the assembled guests  
I swore to return and destroy you.

**Carlo**

This is absurd.

You have lost all sense.  
We are caught in a whirlpool larger than we can  
control.  
What can this little statue mean?  
Your enemies are creeping into these ruins.  
How can you possibly escape?

**Bruno**

Cowardly Italian scum.  
We could have built an empire  
A Reich that would last for a 1000 years  
But when the game changed  
You ran to the coat tails of the British.  
Your cowardly nation now suffers for your  
disloyalty  
And you, you dog  
For your treachery  
I will kill you.

Carlo is kneeling. Bruno holds a pistol to his head, the  
Juniper Madonna under his other arm. Joe is seen to  
enter behind him and approaches stealthily. Neither  
Bruno nor Carlo see him.

**Joe**

Drop it.  
Lie down.

**Bruno**

What? Who are you?

**Joe**

Lie on the floor.

**Carlo**

Thank god you are here.

**Joe**

Just keep quiet  
Sit down against the wall.

**Carlo**

You have water?

Joe gives them each a drink.

I give thanks to God for you.

**Bruno**

It's not over yet, who knows who this man is,  
Creeping alone through the ruins  
He's not Polish or American.  
Who are you?

**Carlo**

He is New Zealand.

**Bruno**

New Zealand?  
What are you doing here?  
You have no quarrel with me.

This battle is over.  
Close your eyes and I'll just disappear.

**Joe**

You are my prisoner.  
Nobody goes anywhere

**Carlo**

It would be foolish  
To move through the ruins after dark. There are  
troops  
Polish  
German.  
You have been sent by God.  
Thank you.

**Joe**

What were you doing  
Holding a pistol to the head of an  
Unarmed monk?

**Bruno**

Brother Carlo and I have  
Unfinished business.

**Joe**

The night will be long  
We have time.

**Carlo**

Lieutenant Scheffler attempted to steal this statue  
of the Madonna.

**Bruno**

I attempted to protect the statue  
That is all.

**Carlo**

It was carved by my great grandfather  
And belongs here in the Abbey

**Bruno**

Your ally the American destroyed this place  
If I had not taken action and removed the treasures  
Very little would have survived.

Perhaps I steal  
But you destroy  
It was a barbarous act to bomb Monte Cassino.  
The past is not a relic to be plundered and  
destroyed.  
My effort was to limit your destruction.

**Maria and Jessie up to the end of scene 3**

et cum vidissem eum cecidi ad pedes eius  
tamquam mortuus et posuit dexteram  
suam super me dicens noli timere ego sum primus  
et novissimus

*And when I had seen him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right  
hand upon me, saying: Fear not. I am the First and the Last,*

Domine Jesu Christe, filius Dei, Miserere me  
peccatorem  
lavabo inter innocentes manus meas et  
circumdabo altare tuum Domine ut audiam vocem  
laudis et enarrem universa mirabilia tua

Lord Jesus Christ son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.  
Remember your compassion and love, O Lord; for they are ages old.  
Remember no more the sins of my youth; remember me only in the light of your love.

### **Joe**

On a cold and dirty afternoon my mate Stan  
Took some shrapnel in his belly.  
I held him for five long hours  
Telling stories of when we were children  
Riding horses by the river.  
Shall I tell his mother how I tried  
To stuff his guts back in?  
And all the while  
You picking us off  
Like ducks on a pond  
When darkness fell I dragged his body back to the line.  
We cheered loud and long  
When the yanks dropped their bundle  
On this bloody place.

You're lucky you have friends  
To sort this mess out  
If bombing this church is part of that job  
Then so be it  
It's just a building.

### **Carlo**

Perhaps you are right  
God see's everything.

### **Bruno**

God see's nothing  
Because God is dead.  
You treacherous Monk I despise  
But you my brother in war, I love from the very heart,  
I am your best enemy, your counterpart.

### **Carlo**

God is mindful of all your actions  
Even if you refute him  
He maintains his vigilance.  
All that we do for Christ we have already received from him.  
His incarnate presence is not limited  
But is in all men  
The sick must be served as Christ,  
The guest is welcomed as Christ.

### **Joe**

The Nazi thief, Christ in him to?

### **Carlo**

Lord of the universe pervades all,  
The divine presence is everywhere  
Humility is the true character of Christ  
The Christ in all I meet.

### **Joe**

I saw our Chaplain  
Asking for forgiveness  
With the German prisoners.  
Praying that we all go to Heaven.



It makes no sense.

### **Bruno**

When aspiration is placed in nothingness,  
This so called heaven,  
Natural human life loses all meaning.  
There is no sense in religion  
The idea of immortality destroys all reason  
To achieve greatness of will and being,  
Is the ultimate goal of human existence.

### **Carlo**

Your self centered life  
Makes you a slave of desire and preference  
Your philosophy has lead to this destruction  
The false self of self exalted.

### **Joe**

We stand here in the midst of this destruction and  
death  
And you argue about God?  
There's more blood in your bible  
Than in this whole war  
How will religion change anything?  
People needed God  
When the world was full of unknowing,  
unknowable things  
In the last four years I've seen more  
Than a man should ever see  
Brave men cry out for his mercy  
I've not seen him  
I've not seen god anywhere.  
I long for the soft sound of

Of a girl as she runs  
And turns with arms outstretched.  
The quiet wind  
Shifting her hair  
The quiet wind  
The quiet wind

### **Jessie**

Go to the Juniper  
Foolish man-boy.

### **Joe/ Bruno/ Carlo**

Above the infinite black  
On all sides the abyss  
Beneath the shattered rock  
I wait for dawn.  
Every nerve wound to snapping point  
Yet I exist  
Life lived in panic and fright  
Yet I carry on.  
Death hovering at my heels  
Yet I urge to live.  
There is no wind  
Each of us alone  
Like stars with infinite space between.

During this section voices intermingle during the chaos.

### **Chorus**

remaneat scelerum macula, quem pura et sancta refecerunt Sacramenta:  
Qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:  
Miserere nobis  
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi:  
Dona nobis pacem.

### **Jessie**

Foolish man boy;  
Go to the river, Joe  
The quiet wind.

### **Narrator**

*Thou shalt not know.*

### **From Lamentations**

*He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood.  
He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes  
And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace. I forgot prosperity.  
And I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord:  
Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.  
My soul hath them still in remembrance and is humbled in me.  
This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.*

Silence settles on the three. Carlo pulls his blanket over him. Joe throws a dusty sack to Bruno who huddles beneath it. Joe sits, his rifle leveled at Bruno. Bruno and Carlo appear to sleep. Joe paces trying to stay warm and awake. He sits again. The barrel of his rifle dips — he jerks awake. Once again he falls asleep. Bruno stands silently, takes the Madonna and makes his exit. Joe jerks awake and in a panic leaps in pursuit of Bruno. He catches him and they struggle. Bruno beats him to his knees. Carlo retrieves Bruno's pistol and levels it at Bruno who stands above Joe. Suddenly Joe stands (is he pulled upright by Bruno?) just as Carlo fires the pistol. The two men stand

in a ghastly embrace and Joe slips free grasping the Madonna. Bruno attempts to free the statue from his grasp. Joe staggers toward Carlo and fall at his feet. Bruno disappears. Carlo kneels and holds the dying Joe.

### **After Joe's death**

### **Jessie and Maria**

et cum vidissem eum cecidi ad pedes eius  
tamquam mortuus et posuit dexteram  
suam super me dicens noli timere ego sum  
primus et novissimus

### **Narrator**

From **Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra**  
*Now I am light,  
Now do I fly,  
Now do I see myself under myself,  
Now there danceth a god in me.*

## **EPILOGUE**

### **Jessie and the ghost of Joe**

### **Jessie**

Upon soft grass brave soldier  
Rest your weary head  
Abide a while to take your rest  
And honour comrades dead.

### **Joe**

I saw through pain's red mist my home  
The folded hills, the gentle stream

Beyond my reach

### **Jessie**

Life's a brief candle  
Then all is darkness  
Let's go to the Juniper  
Joe  
Foolish man child

### **Joe**

You waited in vain  
For a fallen soldier  
Remember me  
The summer wind across my skin  
The folded hills beyond my reach  
The gentle stream beyond my reach

### **Jessie/ Joe**

We'll go to the Juniper  
Go to the Juniper  
Go to the Juniper.

## **FINI**



## Michael F. Williams

Michael F. Williams is a well known figure in composition in New Zealand and his works cover a wide range of genres including chamber music, orchestral, concerti and opera. He will often use digital manipulation of acoustic instruments in his compositions. Polystylistic in his approach to composition, many influences can be heard in his music from Gregorian chant to the use of pitch class sets. He is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Waikato's Conservatorium of Music.

[www.michaelfwilliams.co.nz](http://www.michaelfwilliams.co.nz)



## John Davies

John's first professional appearance was for the Court Theatre in Christchurch Square in 1974. He then trained at the New Zealand Drama School and went on to perform with Red Mole Enterprises in New Zealand, Mexico, U.S.A. and the United Kingdom. In 1984 he made the first of four study trips to the Kongo Noh Theatre in Kyoto and as director of the New Zealand Noh Theatre Co has presented four original Noh plays. At the University of Waikato he enjoyed partnerships in opera production, writing libretto and directing, with composers Michael Williams and David Griffiths. In 2010 he was appointed Curriculum Leader of Live Performance at Unitec. He lives with his wife and three children in Auckland.



# Cast and Musicians

*Carlo, a Benedictine monk*

Pene Pati

Baritones in order of appearance

*Joe, a NZ soldier*

Matthew Landreth

*Bruno, a German officer*

James Ioelu

Sopranos in order of appearance

*Maria, Carlo's sister*

Lilia Carpinelli

*Helen, Joe and Jessie's daughter*

Julia Booth

*Jessie, Joe's wife*

Stephanie Acraman

## Chorus

Stephanie Acraman

Julia Booth

Lilia Carpinelli

Amitai Pati (a monk)

Ian Campbell (the Abbott)

David Griffiths (a soldier)

## Orchestra

conductor

Rachael Griffiths-Hughes

violin 1

Lara Hall

violin 2

Elena Abramova

viola

Susan Bierre

cello

James Tennant

bass

Gordon Hill

flute

Adrianna Lis

clarinet

Gordon Richards

trumpet

Brent Grapes

trombone

Douglas Cross

piano

Katherine Austin

percussion

Vadim Simongauz,

Eric Renick

narrator

Paul Gittins

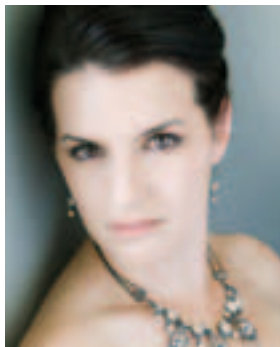
sound effects Michael F Williams

## The Auckland Town Hall organ

Indra Hughes



*Stephanie Acraman*



*Julia Booth*



*Lilia Carpinelli*



*Pene Pati*



*Matt Landreth*



*James Ioelu*

