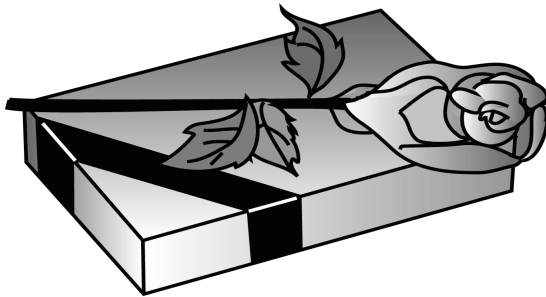


# PANDORA'S CHOCOLATE BOX



*An enticing selection of bite-sized dramatic monologues,  
flavoured with a variety of human foibles and enrobed with  
the light and dark tones of music for violin, voice and guitar.*

**Yvonne Bloor – guitar**

**Eleanor Graff-Baker – violin and soprano**

**Christopher Whitby – words**

In Greek myth, Pandora was the first mortal woman, fashioned from clay by Vulcan. Once she had been given life, she also received presents from all the gods – lucky girl! Venus gave her beauty and the power of pleasing; the Graces gave her the ability to captivate; Apollo taught her to sing. Who gave her a fascination with shoes does not appear to be recorded.

Jupiter gave her a beautiful box – now always known as *Pandora's Box* – which she was ordered to present to the man she married. This was Epimetheus, less well known brother of Prometheus. When he opened the box, there escaped from it a multitude of evils which spread all over the world. One thing remained in the bottom of the box, to be cherished by all who find it – *hope*.

*Pandora's Chocolate Box* is not quite the same thing, but it has some similarities. The little dramatic monologues that are about to be passed round encapsulate a number of less than perfect human characteristics and situations. The intervening music may reflect what you have just heard, or change the mood as we progress through the layers. When we get to the end, we will see what is left in the bottom – the wretched and unloved *coconut surprise*, or something more uplifting?

Because these monologues are very short, they sometimes assume a little prior knowledge which, if need be, you could easily acquire from the internet or some standard works of reference – unless you were sitting here of course. For this live performance, therefore, the programme notes offer a little advance guidance.

## Selfishness

Words: *Scafell Pike*

### *Breaking Silence*

Notes: Goretex is a waterproof 'breathable' material used in some of the best mountain jackets and overtrousers.

Generally it is considered unsafe to climb hills or mountains before dawn or arrive at summits so late as to mean the descent will be in the dark.

Music: *English Suite, Prelude*

John Duarte

## Fear

Words: *Divining Water*

Notes: 'By the pricking of my thumbs  
Something wicked this way comes.' *Macbeth*

Words: *Lunacy*

Music: *What if a Day*

Anon

## War

Words: *WW1 Casualty Clearing Station, Equancourt*  
*Reading the Leaves, 1916*

Notes: *Palgrave's Golden Treasury* was a very popular poetry anthology at the time of the First World War and several soldiers record packing a copy as they embarked for France.

In the trenches, whistles would give the signal to 'go over the top'.

Music: *Niel Gow's Lament for his Second Wife*

Gow

## Frustration

Words: *Osric's Tale*

Notes: *Hamlet V ii*: Osric is the flamboyant and rather fey courtier who on behalf of King Claudius delivers the challenge to Hamlet for the fencing match with Laertes, which as a result of treachery, involving a poisoned sword and a poisoned drink, will leave the dead bodies of Hamlet, Laertes, Claudius and Queen Gertrude on the stage at the end of the play. When delivering the challenge, Osric is mocked by Hamlet and his friend Horatio for excessive use of ultra-fashionable words and for flourishing his hat when he speaks. Early on in the encounter, Hamlet turns to Horatio and asks 'Dost know this waterfly?'

Music: *The Sinkapace Galliarde*

William Ballet's Lute Book

Words: *Cinders*

Music: *Sonata Concertata, Allegro spiritoso*

Paganini

## Doubt

Words: *Through a Glass Darkly – 3 voices in search of reason:*

### 1. *The 4th Magus*

Notes: The Bethlehem star was not first new star ever recorded – that was in 1200 BC, recorded by Chinese astronomers.

Music: *Coventry Carol* 15th century

### 2. *Joseph*

Notes: Mary's cousin Elizabeth was also visited by an angel who promised she would give birth – to the boy we know as John the Baptist. The miracle here is that Elizabeth was past child-bearing age.

Music: *The Road to Bethlehem* Michael Head

### 3. *The Shepherd*

Music: *Depth of Mercy* Charles Wesley (words),  
Koonce, Wells and Murphy

## Despair

Words: *Rex Quondam et Futurus – 'the once and future king'*  
*[The evening before the battle].*

Notes: Few legends have the tragic power of the last days of King Arthur and the final battle against his rebellious son Mordred, who was conceived through an unwitting incestuous encounter between Arthur and his half-sister Morgause, Queen of Orkney. The final battle here is no Narnia or 'Lord of the Rings' climax; in the Arthurian legend, all is lost. As evening falls barely any of the hundred thousand involved is left standing. Arthur sees Mordred and runs him through with his spear; but Mordred, even as he knows he is dying, hauls himself hand over hand up the shaft of Arthur's spear to strike the king a mortal blow on his head – such is his hatred.

Music: *El Testamen d'Amelia* Llobet

Music: *Sonata Concertata, Rondeau* Paganini

## The bottom of the box

What remains? Hard centre or soft centre? Pleasant surprise or something nobody wants?

**Yvonne Bloor** fell in love the guitar at the age of twelve when she heard John Williams play 'Cavatina'. She sold her bike to buy her first guitar! Yvonne has given many recitals throughout the Midlands and played on Radio Leicester on several occasions. She currently teaches in schools across the county and at the University of Leicester. She studied with Michael Lewin, Professor of guitar at the Royal Academy of Music, and Nicola Hall, and has taken part in master classes given by many celebrated guitarists including Simon Dinnigan, John Mills and Carlos Bonnell. She has worked for some years as a guitar examiner for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has given a series of lectures on guitar teaching at Trinity College London. Yvonne has also contributed a regular monthly column to 'Guitar' magazine. [www.yvonnebloor.com](http://www.yvonnebloor.com)

**Eleanor Graff-Baker** read Music at The Queen's College, Oxford, where she was a Choral Bursar and a member of Schola Cantorum. Her subsequent career has combined performance as a violinist and singer with composition and musical direction. As a violinist she has worked with many orchestras including the Royal Ballet, the London Film Orchestra and the Melachrino Strings, and with smaller ensembles, as well as playing in a wide range of musicals, such as *The Pajama Game*, *Cabaret* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* (national tour). She has worked for Central TV and the BBC. Her soprano singing engagements have included concert performances of mainstream classical works (Bach, Britten, Handel, Vaughan Williams). Original compositions include choral and orchestral works and range from a suite for marimba and strings to works for both string and full orchestras. [www.graff-baker.co.uk](http://www.graff-baker.co.uk)

**Christopher Whitby** read English at Cambridge and then undertook doctoral postgraduate work at the Shakespeare Institute on the Renaissance luminary John Dee (1527-1608). After some years spent in teaching, he joined the world of commercial advertising and publication and for the last 12 years has owned and managed a graphic design studio. Described by Don Paterson as 'inventive, well-made and witty', his poetry has appeared in a variety of internet and printed publications and in 2007 he founded Open Poetry Ltd, inaugurating and administering the Open Poetry International Sonnet Competition. This competition gathered nearly 2000 entries and the prizewinners hailed from the USA, Australia and the UK. The competition anthology *Hand Luggage Only* appeared in May 2008 and is available for purchase from the Open Poetry website. [www.openpoetry.org.uk](http://www.openpoetry.org.uk), [www.chriswhitby.org.uk](http://www.chriswhitby.org.uk), [www.dragonflypg.co.uk](http://www.dragonflypg.co.uk)