

AGAP THEATRE

AUDITIONS 2026

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please prepare ONE of the following Auditions pieces from the play “Passionate Voices” by Stephen Callaghan, and ONE piece of your own choice from any text (drama, poetry or prose).

Both pieces should be memorized wherever possible.

We are not looking for a finished, polished delivery but you should try to demonstrate your willingness to memorise lines and to try to apply emotion and characterisation to your delivery so as to showcase your skills. Feel free to include movement and to use basic items of furniture, which will be available at the audition, such as a chair or table. You do not need to follow the written stage instructions in the text verbatim. They are there for guidance.

You might also be asked to take part in a group exercise or dialogue with others at the audition.

Try to enjoy the process and remember that we aim to make the auditions experience as relaxed and pleasant as possible. If you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch: 0141 552 5527 or email info@agap.org.uk



www.agap.org.uk

AGAP is part of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, which is a charity registered in Scotland. SC018140

FEMALE ROLES

Claudia

The wife of the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. Daughter of the Emperor Tiberius. She has had a troublesome dream that has left her very disturbed and writes to her husband to warn him.

Veronica

A woman in Jerusalem during the time of the Passover festival. She has had an encounter with Jesus on his way to crucifixion and is deeply moved by the experience.

Martha

A woman living in Bethany who was a close friend of Jesus along with her brother, Lazarus, and her sister, Mary. She is an industrious person and a bit of fusspot by her own admission

"CLAUDIA"

The wife of the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. Daughter of the Emperor Tiberius. She has had a troublesome dream that has left her very disturbed and writes to her husband to warn him.

Don't get me wrong: I never knew the man. I'd heard his name..."Jesus"...but I'd never met him and yet...I saw his face as clear as if he was standing right in front of me. I saw it in my dream. He looked...helpless...a lonely man. A man scarred, beaten and bled as if he were an animal...as if he were one of those animals that they sacrifice in their temple...as if he were a lamb or something. They slaughtered him and I felt it deep inside me, like someone had just opened my eyes to a new world...a world I didn't understand...and I'm not sure that I want to. I knew in my heart that he was innocent and that his death had some significance...it would affect me...it would affect my husband. So...I sent him a note.

It sounds strange. Perhaps it was strange but that dream was so vivid and so real that I could not ignore it. I had to tell Pilate. [*She takes out a pen.*] My hand shook as I took up the pen to write. [*She beckons to an unseen servant, and then turns her head the other way when the servant speaks.*] When I asked for ink and parchment, the servant looked at me and said, "My lady, there are scribes who would gladly write down anything you have to say." But I insisted on doing it myself. [*She stops the servant with a wave her hand.*] This could not be described by any other person ... my own hand ... my own shaking hand had to be the one to write this message to my husband. For who can know the heart of a woman better than she herself? ...but trying to describe the content of a dream is difficult: how dark are the waters of the ponderous soul...! [*She stands up and wanders, deep in thought, towards another unseen figure.*] Then, in the midst of my recollection, something else came to mind...it was the face of another woman...a mother, weeping...her eyes red from many tears but in them a sense of expectation that shone through the darkness. She must have been the Galilean's mother. I thought of her as I penned my private plea to my husband... [*She calmly sits down again and puts pen to paper.*] God knows that it is not the place of a woman in this country, let alone the wife of a governor, to give her husband instruction but I thought of her and that vision of womanly strength gave me the courage to write the final line...an instruction... "Have nothing to do with the man from Galilee for he is innocent."

An excerpt from *Passionate Voices* by Stephen Callaghan

©Stephen Callaghan 2007. All rights reserved.

“VERONICA”

A woman in Jerusalem during the time of the Passover festival. She has had an encounter with Jesus on his way to crucifixion and is deeply moved by the experience.

Today was the first time that I had ever been face to face with him. Pilate had allowed the mob to take him and crucify him. I never saw a man look so alone amongst so many people. I was watching from the distance as he carried his cross up the hill. I watched him fall and get back up again. Those barbarians whipping him and spitting on him! As he got closer, I could see that they had put something on his head – thorns. They had twisted thorns round his head like some sort of crown and they were laughing at him. He was losing so much blood that he looked ready to collapse. I pushed my way through the crowd and stood at the front when he was coming near. His hair was damp with sweat and blood and it covered his face. *[Pause.]* His *face*...I’ve never seen a face like that before. So disfigured. He didn’t even look human. He had been beaten so badly. Then...something inside me said that I should do something. But what could I do? I had nothing. If I could only do *something*...some little thing to ease his suffering, what would it be? Then I saw him move his head as if to shake the hair away that was covering his eyes...and I had an idea. *[She takes out a white cloth towel , perhaps from the laundry or from a pocket.]* I broke away from the crowd and went to him.

She rushes forward and drops on her knees.

That moment that passed between us seemed like an eternity. It must have been only a matter of seconds but what transpired during those seconds as I looked upon his face made me feel like I was in another place...time didn’t matter...didn’t even exist. It was as if those events were all part of something more...that their meaning wasn’t quite clear yet...

I brushed back his hair with one hand and in the other, I held a towel. I pressed it to his face...

An excerpt from *Passionate Voices* by Stephen Callaghan

©Stephen Callaghan 2007. All rights reserved.

“MARTHA”

A woman living in Bethany who was a close friend of Jesus along with her brother, Lazarus, and her sister, Mary. She is an industrious person and a bit of fusspot by her own admission.

Are you comfy enough? The chairs are not the best. The floor could do with a right good clean. Maybe I should open a window. [*She rushes upstage, then as she lifts an arm to ‘open the window’, changes her mind.*] No, I’ll leave it. [*Suddenly, she looks at the arm and notices a mark on her sleeve.*] Oh, would you look at that! I wonder where that came from...that’ll need washed now! [*She spits on her sleeve and scrubs it, then looks at the audience.*] Sorry. I’m such a fusspot! It’s always been the same with me. I just like things to be, you know...proper. I can’t stand mess. If something needs done then you do it and that’s all there is to it. There’s no use sitting around and leaving somebody else to do it. If you want the thing done you just get on with it. That’s how I’ve always felt about things and that’s how it always was at home with my brother and sister: I was the one who held our house together. Well, you don’t expect a man to do anything around the house, do you? Not in our society, anyway! [*Pause.*] Oh, I shouldn’t be too hard on Lazarus. He’s been good to Mary and I...especially considering what he’s been through. I was always the worrier in the family; Mary was the dreamer. It was just like her to hang on Jesus’s every word. He fascinated her with his talk and his stories. I suppose he fascinated all of us, really. We knew him, you know, before he became famous. He was no stranger to our humble home in Bethany.

As she is talking, she walks upstage and picks up the chair. She sets it downstage, casually dusting it off with the tea towel.

We’ve never been rich, but what we have is never refused to a friend...and Jesus *was* a friend. He’d been a friend of my brother for some time and he would often come round to our house and they would kick off their sandals [*She slumps down on the chair, imitating Jesus and Lazarus and kicks off her shoes.*] and talk to one another for hours...just sit there, talking. Sometimes, I must admit, I got a bit tired of their talking and they would sit there while I was busy doing the housework or whatever.

An excerpt from *Passionate Voices* by Stephen Callaghan

©Stephen Callaghan 2007. All rights reserved.

MALE ROLES

Peter

A big fisherman who follows Jesus. Chief of the Apostles. A working man with a sincere faith but has a tendency sometimes to speak without thinking. The name “Cephas”, given to him by Jesus, means “Rock”. It is pronounced “Kay-fass”.

Barabbas

A violent religious and political activist, arrested and imprisoned but released by the Governor, Pontius Pilate, as part of an armistice offered on the religious festival of Passover. His fellow prisoner, Jesus, has been put to death by crucifixion.

Simon

A pilgrim from Cyrene in Northern Africa, travelling in the city of Jerusalem with his two sons, Rufus and Alexander, during the festival of Passover. He is forced by the Roman soldiers to help Jesus to carry his cross on the way to execution.

The Centurion

An embittered and world-weary Roman soldier of senior rank who has assisted with the crucifixion of Jesus and is burdened by questions and disillusionment with the establishment he serves.

Nicodemus

A religious leader in the Jewish faith community to which Jesus belonged. He is a seeker of the truth and argued amongst the religious leaders for Jesus to be given a fair trial.

"PETER"

A big fisherman who follows Jesus. Chief of the Apostles. A working man with a sincere faith but has a tendency sometimes to speak without thinking. The name "Cephas", given to him by Jesus, means "Rock". It is pronounced "Kay-fass".

He called us friends – not servants – friends. Because, he said, that he shared things with us – he made everything known to us, no matter how stupid we were. We maybe didn't understand everything but he never gave up on us. He didn't give up on anyone. Last night, in the upper room, he called us friends. I was serving the food for the Passover meal. It was the last time we would all be there, together, the twelve of us with Jesus as the host. Then he did something really strange. He asked me to get a basin of water. [*Peter mimes the actions of Jesus, telling the story slowly.*] He rolled up his sleeves, wrapped a towel round his waist and crouched down...and started to wash our feet...one by one. That was more than I could take! [*He jumps up in defiance.*] "Oh no you don't! You'll never wash my feet!" I was there, you see! I was there with James and John when Jesus went up that mountain and we saw his glory – only for a few seconds, mind – but we saw it! Saw him talking with Moses and Elijah! This man was God incarnate! How could I let him wash my feet? There's me doing my best to serve the food and make sure that he was treated right, and he offers to wash my feet! I'm wearing sandals – my feet are all covered in sand! I'm not having my Master washing my smelly feet! No. No. No. No. No!! [*Pause. He gives the audience a penetrating look.*] Then he looked at me and said: "Unless you let me wash your feet, you can have nothing in common with me." [*Pause.*] That stopped me in my tracks. Suddenly, it all made sense to me. Everything that he had said before about the one who makes himself least will be made the greatest in the Kingdom. That we must be like little children. It made sense: Jesus came to serve, to give everything! "Not only my feet, Lord, but my hands and my head as well!" I know...it sounds daft...but I just blurted it out. I wanted to please him so much. I wanted to do the right thing so much! It was the same on the mountain – "Why don't I build tents for you and Moses and Elijah, Lord?" [*With bitter irony.*] Oh, that's a great idea, Cephas! [*Sighs.*] What an idiot I am sometimes! I just wanted to do what was right.

An excerpt from *Passionate Voices* by Stephen Callaghan

©Stephen Callaghan 2007. All rights reserved.

“BARABBAS”

A violent religious and political activist, arrested and imprisoned but released by the Governor, Pontius Pilate, as part of an armistice offered on the religious festival of Passover. His fellow prisoner, Jesus, has been put to death by crucifixion.

What are you looking at? [*Laughs.*] Well, here I am. Take a good look. Go on. Have a look at the man who got away. Have a look at Barabbas, the one they let go. Well, I'll tell you this, I didn't ask for it! Right. Let me just get that straight. I was ready to die. I didn't choose to be here. I don't need Rome's charity. Pompous Pilate, the purple-clad peacock strutting about! [*Imitating Pilate:*] "And which of these two prisoners would you have me release? This man, Barabbas, or Jesus, the king of the Jews?" [*Pause.*] King of the Jews? What does an infidel like him know about Jewish customs? Roman swines march out and in our sacred temple every day, waving their filthy standards about, flashing Rome's pagan insignia about in a place where graven images are not permitted. What a cheek to talk about the "king of the Jews". And who gave him the right to make a decision like that? I don't think we were in agreement about whether that carpenter was the "king of the Jews" otherwise, he wouldn't be standing trial, now would he? Idiot! Let's face it, that man couldn't run a raffle!

Aye, well...some Messiah, anyway. Four hundred years of faithful expectation down the pan, eh? All that waiting for a Messiah who would come and spill the blood of our oppressors and reign over Israel in peace and what do we get? A carpenter from Nazareth who wouldn't even lift a finger against the Romans! [*With deep sarcasm he launches into an evangelical tone.*] "Love one another", he said. "Love your enemies." Fat lot of good it did him – loving them!

An excerpt from *Passionate Voices* by Stephen Callaghan

©Stephen Callaghan 2007. All rights reserved.

"SIMON"

A pilgrim from Cyrene in Northern Africa, travelling in the city of Jerusalem with his two sons, Rufus and Alexander, during the festival of Passover. He is forced by the Roman soldiers to help Jesus to carry his cross on the way to execution.

I saw the man's head tossed back in pain, I heard the crack of a whip and saw the Roman soldiers who were forcing him to move along. His knees buckled, he tottered and fell. I lunged forward and grabbed Rufus. [*He races to the corner of the stage where Rufus is 'standing' with the prisoner.*]

"Take your brother's hand!" I said and forced Alexander's hand into his. Then I felt the touch of another hand...a grip on my shoulder. I turned around and met a sunken pair of eyes staring at me from beneath a Roman helmet.

"Help him", he said, gruffly.

"What?"

"Help him, Jew", he said.

"But...he is...a prisoner", I said.

"Do you want him to die on the way? Where's the fun in that?"

"I have two sons", I said.

"And if you ever want to see them again, you'll help him carry that cross, won't you."

My eyes flashed at him. I don't need this right now! Then I looked at my two boys and their eyes were filled with tears. "It's all right", I went to say, "just stay together and wait for me at..."

Then I realised – they weren't crying for me – they were crying for the prisoner. "Help him, father", they said.

A woman in the crowd, who also had tears in her eyes, said, "Sir, leave your children with me and I will look after them until your return. You have a much greater obligation to fulfil." She placed her hands around the boys' shoulders and stared past me toward the prisoner.

An excerpt from *Passionate Voices* by Stephen Callaghan

©Stephen Callaghan 2007. All rights reserved.

“THE CENTURION”

An embittered and world-weary Roman soldier of senior rank who has assisted with the crucifixion of Jesus and is burdened by questions and disillusionment with the establishment he serves.

I’ve seen it all, you know. I’ve been in this game for a while. It’s a great game.

He walks upstage and grabs a chair, which he slumps down on but he is too restless to sit for long.

When you receive your brand new uniform, it’s a great game; when you put on your helmet for the first time, it’s a great game; [*He stands.*] when you pledge your allegiance to Rome and the Emperor and march into battle....it’s a great game. And when they make you a centurion, it’s a great game. So tell me why so many years of service end in this sick spectacle of a circus, watching the cruel exhibition of men being crucified? [*He is visibly angry now.*] This is not what I signed up for! This is not why I serve Rome!

In his fury, he grabs the chair, as if to throw it upstage but composes himself. He does not let go of the chair, however, but carries it in one hand by its leg as he patrols the audience.

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not squeamish. I’ve seen plenty of men die. I’ve seen them die on the battlefields. I’ve seen them die for sport in the Colosseum in Rome. Death becomes a sport. Crucifixion – now that’s a horrible death!

He stands on the chair and mimes the action of death by crucifixion. This should be done with sincerity and emotion. If possible, a red light should highlight the sequence.

A man is tied or nailed to a wooden cross. His hands are fixed to the wooden crossbar – the patibulum, as it’s called – and the feet are fixed above a block of wood positioned so that the guy can’t put his weight down...so he holds himself up for as long as he can...breathing...gasping for breath...until his legs are too weak to hold him up any longer and then...his body sags and it gets heavier...and heavier...the lungs start to fill up with fluid...his collar bone becomes a noose to choke him with....and when he can’t hold on any longer...he dies. [*He cries out and his head drops forward. Lowering his arms.*] Normally...after hours in agony.

An excerpt from *Passionate Voices* by Stephen Callaghan

©Stephen Callaghan 2007. All rights reserved.

“NICODEMUS”

A religious leader in the Jewish faith community to which Jesus belonged. He is a seeker of the truth and argued amongst the religious leaders for Jesus to be given a fair trial.

Jesus was an eloquent speaker when he spoke in public but he also knew how to listen. This astounded me. That a man of his social standing would spend time, quietly, patiently, humbly listening to what other people had to say.

I walked up and addressed him when he was alone with his disciples: [*speaking towards the chair*] “Rabbi,” I said – for I have no problem with learning from others and he from whom I learn is my teacher – “we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless God were with him.” [*He sits on the chair to impersonate Jesus.*]

Jesus stopped and looked beyond the present situation...as if to consult with someone silently...perhaps in prayer. Then he turned to me with a warm, welcoming confidence and said: “I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again.” [*He pauses and, with an almost comical puzzled look, stands and begins to address the audience.*] Now, when someone says something to you that you do not understand, you have a choice: you can ask a question or you can nod your head and pretend to understand. I thought for a moment.

I came here earnestly seeking answers – what was there to be profited by pretending to understand and walking away from the situation with even more questions? So I looked at him and smiled for I imagined that by Jesus’ charisma he must have a great sense of humour: [*towards the chair*] “How can a grown man be born again? He certainly cannot enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time.”

Again there was a patient pause. Jesus was not condescending. He did not shrug me off or laugh at me. He paused to give the question time and then answered it, beginning with the same statement: [*easing himself into the chair*] “I am telling you the truth. No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. A person is born spiritually by the Spirit.”

An excerpt from *Passionate Voices* by Stephen Callaghan

©Stephen Callaghan 2007. All rights reserved.