

## CORA

Around 40 Cora's past is the most eclectic. Her horizons broadened when she went to college. This caused a tectonic shift with her more parochial parents. She came back to them pregnant and tail-between-the-legs, but Cora has too much native resilience to be downtrodden. She is the joker in the pack, but never plays the fool. Her wit is deadpan. It raises laughter in others, but rarely in herself. Her relationship with her daughter is more akin to that between Chris and Annie. Cora doesn't need to sing like a diva, but must be able to sing well enough to start the show with Jerusalem and sing the snatches of other songs required. The piano keyboard can be marked up to enable her to play basic chords should she not be a pianist.

**Cora** "Can we just stand by?"! This must be what it feels like to be Kylie. (She claps) D'you think they'll want a bit of Jerusalem in the background? I could jazz it up a bit.

**Ruth** Cora, don't mess round with it. It's a religious song.

**Cora** It's not "messing around", Ruth. It's bloody jazz. It's the blues. That's where it was all born, spiritual music. That's why it's all – *(she gestures "linked")* – related. God, our band at college, me and Ruby's dad, all the time we'd be in and out – rock to the blues, bit of classical, hymns... He said when it comes to music, there should never be any rules.

**Jessie** Absolutely. That's why at my leaving service, I scrapped all hymns and taught the kids to sing "The End" by the Doors.

**Cora** Eh, it's sodding dangerous though, Jess, if you end up a church organist. I tell u' one time, someone's funeral, Dad's in the pulpit, I'm playing on grief autopilot. *(She starts plonking out "Dear Lord And Father Of Mankind" on the piano like a steamhammer. Singing)* "Dear Lord and Father Of Mankind – *(Speaking)* Suddenly I look down at Ruby in her carry-cot and honest to God, next thing I know I'm playing – *(She starts playing "Stormy Weather" and sings the first two lines; then, speaking)* Looked round, the congregation are going, "What the HELL - ?"