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## Tempus are the classic act for the Pope

By Sharyn Marchant

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They are performing for Pope Benedict and a crowd of hundreds of thousands at the Opening Mass. They are "in talks" with two major record labels. And they are all under 22.

Meet Tempus, the next big thing in classical crossover music in Australia.

At 17, Michael Vaiasinni is the youngest member of the Catholic group, followed by

18-year-old Phoebe Humphreys, 19-year-old Lauren Zolezzi, Lauren Fagan and Ben Marshall, both 20, and Claudio Sgaramella, 21.

Created by producer and artistic director, Nicole Alexander, the group combines classical with contemporary, with forays into Queen and Creed, and hope to introduce their generation to the world of classical music.

"This genre appeals to everyone," Nicole said.

"We're taking rock and pop and 'classifying' it. We obviously sing a lot of opera, but we're trying to move into a contemporary feel with a classical slant.



Tempus tunes up for the Pope ... from left, Michael, Claudio, Phoebe, Lauren Fagan, Ben and at front Lauren Zolezzi.

"Whether it's the classical or the pop that draws them in, audiences love this style of music."

As well as being the only unknown act to headline at WYD08, Tempus will also be the first musical act to take the stage at the Opening Mass.

"The atmosphere will be amazing; there will be so many people in Sydney, who are here for the same reason and who are willing to be uplifted by our music," said Phoebe.

"There is a niche market for this style in Australia, because there isn't really anyone else like us for our age group.

"We do a lot of harmony work, and we do all our own arrangements of really old classical music as well as more contemporary rock."

According to Ben, "We would love to introduce people our age to classical music and show them what you can do with it."

The group will perform their own arrangements of four songs at the Opening Mass: Era's Ameno, Who Wants to Live Forever by Queen, Your Raise Me Up, and Creed's Higher.

Members of Tempus will also make individual performances at WYD08, with Lauren Zolezzi, an arts/languages student at Sydney Uni, performing a solo at the evening vigil. She will also join the WYD08 choir for several pieces including the WYD08 Marian hymn Our Lady of the Southern Cross, composed by Rev Geoffrey Abdallah.

Lauren Fagan, who is studying business at Macquarie, will perform a solo soprano in the Domain with the Sydney Youth Orchestra and Sydney Chamber Choir on July 16

Phoebe will perform a solo at the Opening Mass, while Claudio is the understudy for the tenor cantor at the Papal Mass.

Lauren Fagan said the support of the group has kept nerves at bay.

"We have such a good time when we're performing together, and we encourage each other, so we're not worried."

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