

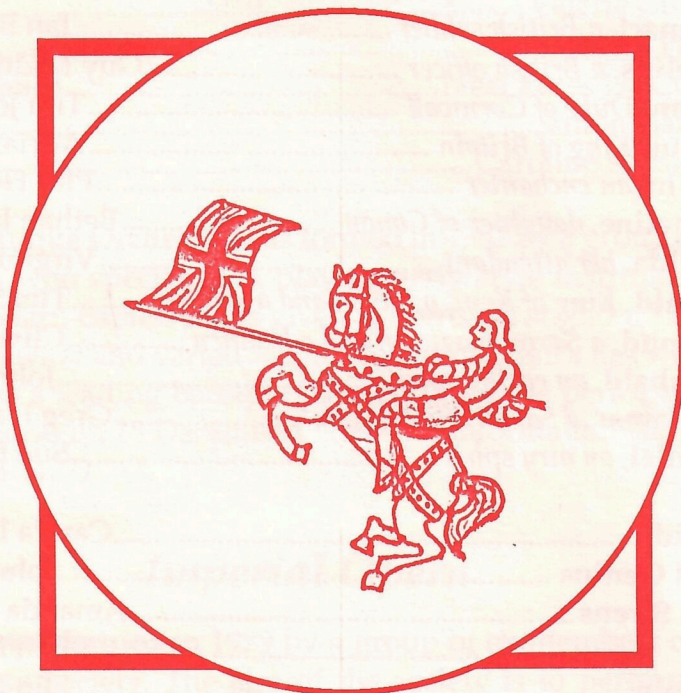
IMPERIAL
Opera

King Arthur

by

Henry Purcell

with words by John Dryden



10th -13th October 1990

The Chelsea Centre Theatre

Musical Director Michael Withers

Director Peter Mills

King Arthur

Cast

(in the Prologue)

Ye Blust'ring Brethren of the Skies sung by Clive Paget

Round Thy Coast, Fair Nymph of Britain sung by

Sally Donegani and John Tripp

Your Hay It Is Mow'd sung by Tim Johnson

Prologue spoken by Tim Johnson

(in the opera, in order of appearance)

Albanact, a British soldier Ian Buckley

Aurelius, a British officer Guy Middlemiss

Conon, Duke of Cornwall Tim Johnson

Arthur, King of Britain Adrian Cave

Merlin, an enchanter Phil Hollman

Emmeline, daughter of Conon Bethan Jackson

Matilda, her attendant Virginia King

Oswald, King of Kent, a Saxon and a heathen Tim Sawers

Osmond, a Saxon magician and a heathen Clive Paget

Grimbald, an earthy spirit John Tripp

Guillamar, a Saxon officer Greg Haddock

Philidel, an airy spirit Sue Morton

Cupid Carola Darwin

Cold Genius John Tripp

Two Sirens Amanda Hagan

..... Elin Harries

Honour Elin Harries

Soldiers, Shepherds, Shepherdesses, Nymphs, Sylvals,

Spirits, Saxons, Creatures, Peasants, Priests, People of Britain:

Birgit Ahrens, Nora Bevan, Ian Buckley, Adrian Cave, Jo Claydon,

Carola Darwin, Sally Donegani, Sue Foister, Valerie Grey, Greg Haddock,

Amanda Hagan, Elin Harries, Phil Hollman, Bethan Jackson, Jane Johnson,

Tim Johnson, Janina Kaminska, Georgina King, Virginia King, Zelda Malan,

Guy Middlemiss, Jan Mills, Sue Morton, Ed Mulligan, Clive Paget,

Julian Radowicz, Martin Raftery, Tim Sawers, Barbara Tansey,

Dave Tonnison, John Tripp, Alison Wilkie, Susan Wright

The Linden Baroque Orchestra

Leader	Nicola Hayston
Violins	Linda Martin
.....	Hannah Patrick
.....	Robin Boothby
.....	Rachel Eyres
.....	Barbara Grant
Viola	Liz Wells
Cello	Valerie Cullen
Violone	Nicholas Parle
Harpsichord	Neal Peres Da Costa
Oboes	Simon Galton
.....	Caroline Kershaw

The Linden Baroque Orchestra was formed in 1982 by a group of enthusiastic musicians who specialise in playing early style instruments, either originals or modern copies. It has given concerts throughout London and East Anglia in a wide and varied repertoire. The orchestra has worked with some of London's leading baroque players. It will be performing Bach's Christmas Oratorio on 15 December. For more information contact Simon Galton (071-223 3477).

Imperial Opera

Imperial Opera was formed in 1979 by a group of ex-members of Imperial College Operatic Society. The aim of the society is to perform a varied repertoire including light opera, musicals, and lesser known works. Previous performances have included *The Perfect Fool* (Holst), *The Devil and Kate* (Dvorak), *Boccaccio* (Suppé), *L'Etoile* (Chabrier), *Salad Days* (Slade), *Paul Bunyan* (Britten) and *Kismet* (based on Borodin). Future plans include *The Boyfriend* in December and Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* in June 1991.

If you would like more details about these shows or would like to join Imperial Opera, please leave your name and address with a member of the front of house staff, or phone Gini King (081 - 645 9474)

King Arthur

For it is notoirly known through the universal world that there are nine Worthy and the best that ever were, that is to wit, three Paynims, three Jews, and three Christian men ... of whom was the first the noble Arthur, whose noble acts I purpose to write in this present book here following ...

Caxton *Preface to Le Morte D'Arthur*

And so, as Sir Mordred was at Dover, so came King Arthur with a great navy; and there was launching of boats great and small, and there was much slaughter of gentle knights. But King Arthur was so courageous that his knights fiercely followed him. ... And never since was there never seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land, for there was but rushing and riding, and many a grim word was there spoken of either to other, and many a deadly stroke ... And thus they fought all the long day and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth.

Sir Thomas Malory *Le Morte D'Arthur*

If I should die, think only this of me:

That there's some corner of a foreign field

That is forever England.

... A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware.

... A body of England's, breathing English air,

Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home ...

Rupert Brooke *The Soldier*

In November came the Armistice. I heard at the same time of the deaths of Frank Jones-Bateman, who had gone back [to the trenches] just before the end, and Wilfred Owen [killed in action,] who often used to send me poems from France. Armistice-night hysteria did not touch our camp much ... The news sent me out walking along the dyke above the marshes of Rhuddlan (an ancient battlefield, the Flodden of Wales), cursing and sobbing and thinking of the dead.

Robert Graves *Goodbye To All That*

Everybody suddenly burst out singing,

And I was filled with such delight

As prisoned birds must find in freedom ...

Siegfried Sassoon

When the sound of victorious guns burst over London at 11:00 a.m. on November 11th, 1918, the men and women who looked incredulously into one another's faces did not cry jubilantly: "We've won the War!" They only said "The War is over."

Vera Brittain Testament of Youth

... As I listened ... to the organ swelling forth into a final triumphant burst in the song of victory, after the solemn and mournful dirge over the dead, I thought with what mockery and irony the jubilant celebrations which will hail the coming of peace will fall upon the ears of those to whom their best will never return, upon whose sorrow victory is built, who have paid with their mourning for the others' joy.

Testament of Youth

"Four years," some say consolingly. "Oh well, What's that? You're young. And then it must have been A very fine experience for you!"

... And no one talked heroics now, and we Must just go back and start again once more.

Testament of Youth (The Lament of the Demobilised)

I believe that ... men are beginning to see, not perhaps the golden age, but an age which at any rate is brightening from decade to decade, and will lead us some time to an elevation from which we can see the things for which the heart of mankind is longing.

Woodrow Wilson, speaking in Manchester, December 1918

Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place. And men say that he shall come again and he shall win the Holy Cross. Yet I will not say that it shall be so, but rather I would say, here in this world he changed his life. And many men say that there is written upon [his] tomb this: *Hic jacet Arcturus, Rex quondam Rexque futurus.*

Here lies Arthur - the Once and Future King

Le Morte D'Arthur

Scenes

Prologue

- 1 A concert party shortly after a Great War.

The Play of King Arthur

- 2 The British camp on the morning of the last battle against the Saxons. Arthur says farewell to his love, the blind Emmeline.
- 3 The Saxon camp before the battle. The evil Grimbald tells how his fellow spirit, Philidel, has deserted the Saxon side. King Oswald, with his magician Osmond, presides over animal and human sacrifices to win the favour of their gods.
- 4 The Battle.
- 5 Afterwards, on the battlefield, the shocked Philidel is found by Merlin.
- 6 Grimbald, disguised, tries to lose Arthur in the marshes as he pursues Oswald. Merlin's spirits, led by Philidel, intervene to protect Arthur.
- 7 Emmeline waits for news of the battle.
- 8 In the countryside, the shepherds are untroubled by war.
- 9 Oswald, lost in the dark, finds himself in the Britons' camp, and captures Emmeline. He challenges Arthur to win her back in battle, against the magic of Osmond and Grimbald.

Interval

- 10 Arthur's soldiers have been beaten back by Osmond's magic in their attempt to rescue Emmeline. With Merlin's help, Arthur resolves to go on alone.
- 11 Philidel is surprised by Grimbald while laying spells in the enchanted forest.
- 12 By Merlin's magic, Arthur is transported to Emmeline's prison, where Philidel restores her sight. As Osmond returns intending to seduce Emmeline, the power of magic wanes and Arthur must leave.

The Music of King Arthur

King Arthur was first performed during the summer of 1691 at the theatre in Dorset Gardens. According to John Downes, one of the earliest 'historians' to record details of performances during the late 17th century, it was:

an Opera, wrote by Mr. Dryden; it was Excellently Adorn'd with Scenes and Machines: The Musical Part set by Famous Mr. Henry Purcel; and Dances made by Mr. Jo. Priest: The Play and Musick pleas'd the Court and City, and being well perform'd twas very Gainful to the Company.

Dryden's play was written in 1684 in support of Charles II, but it wasn't performed until William and Mary had reached the throne. 'Opera' at the end of the 17th century did not mean the same as we understand today. Especially in England, it was a play with musical episodes - in most cases characters in the play did not sing, and the singers did not speak. For much of the 17th century it was proper only for gods and 'fantastick' beings to sing.

The music for *King Arthur* was never published in full. Although it was performed quite regularly throughout the 18th century, it is only scholarship during the 20th century that has allowed us to put the majority of Purcell's music in its rightful place. In order to ensure that the performance you see tonight is of a living work rather than a museum piece, we have adapted the sequence of music slightly from the original and cut several items.

Michael Withers

- 13 When his advances are rejected, Osmond uses his magic to create a living fantasy and prove to Emmeline the power of love to melt the coldest heart.
- 14 Learning that Arthur is on his way to destroy him, Osmond casts further spells to protect his magic grove, source of his power. Visions appear to tempt Arthur as he searches for Emmeline. Arthur finds the grove and faces the final temptation.
- 15 Finally Arthur and Oswald meet again to settle the issue in single combat.
- 16 Finale. All join to celebrate the victory of good over evil, and Britain over her enemies.

For the Company

Stage Manager	Andy Potter
Deputy Stage Manager	Cathy Bee
Stage Crew	Jo Bosley
.....	Peter Murphy
.....	Mike Tonnison
Lighting Team	Ed Mulligan
.....	Tom Monk
.....	Adam Craske
Photography	Greg Tansey
Coordinator	Jo Claydon
Publicity	John Tripp
.....	Greg Haddock
.....	Ian Buckley
Front of House Manager	Fred Larkins
Front of House Staff	Rachel Spence
.....	Katina Dawe
.....	Barbara Steel
Costumes	Irianwen Reece
.....	Andrew Joslin
Make Up	Georgina King
.....	Carola Darwin
Properties	Clive Paget
Accompanists	Andrew Hanley
.....	Guy Middlemiss
Deputy Conductor	Debbie Johnson
Programme	Daniel Glum
Thanks to	Imperial College Operatic Society
.....	Imperial College Dramatic Society
.....	Chelsea Centre Theatre
.....	Kensington and Chelsea Arts Council
.....	Novello