

King Arthur: A Semi-Opera by Henry Purcell and John Dryden
La Nuova Aurora Opera

I hereby certify that I am authorized to approve this Report, which serves as a Request for Reimbursement, that I have reviewed the attached invoices in the amount of \$1250.00; that all costs claimed have been incurred for the Project in accordance with the Agreement between Susan Bywaters and the CITY OF URBANA; that all submitted invoices have been paid; and no costs included herein have been previously submitted.

GRANT AWARD FORM

Grant Award Form: Please complete the Project Questions below and include this page in your Final Report materials submitted to the address below.

The information provided in question #1 - 5 should be the same as the information on your Urbana Arts Grant Agreement with the City.

1. **GRANTEE:** Name of Applicant or Primary Contact:

SUSAN BYWATERS

Address:

410 W. GREEN ST APT 3 URBANA, IL 61801

Project Title:

KING ARTHUR: A SEMI-OPERA

2. **TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT FUNDS AWARDED:** \$ 2500.00

3. **TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT FUNDS RECEIVED TO DATE:** \$ 1250.00

4. **GRANT PERIOD:** April 1, 2016 through April 1, 2017.

5. **EXPENDITURE DEADLINE:** APRIL 1, 2017.

6. **DATE OF PROJECT COMPLETION:** APRIL 1, 2017.

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Given the number of collaborators that devoted weeks of their time to this opera, I cannot hope to estimate the total hours that went into its creation. I alone spent nearly 200 hours on planning, fundraising, organizing, and promoting the work—and I would estimate the same contribution from my partner, Nini Marchese. Between the two of us, we recruited and managed a 7-person production board, two choreographers, a 28-person cast and a 9-person orchestra. For our first performance we had an audience of about 20; our second was attended by over 100.

We spent all our grant money on our orchestra; all our other expenses, with the exception of one generous 300-dollar GoFundMe donation and a recommended donation of \$10 we collected at our performances (which earned a total of approximately \$700, of which we gave half to the Food Pantry at Wesley United Methodist), came from our own pockets. The project contributed not only to my and my partner's development as artists and as businesswomen, but to that of the entire company, as musicians, actors, and participants in a large collaborative enterprise. We learned a great deal about how an opera company operates as both a business and as a community arts ambassador. Many of us, I hope, will apply that experience to cultural and community programs in the future.

Despite extensive efforts, I have not yet found a location for an outreach program for La Nuova Aurora Opera. But we have not given up. I may be able to present at a program at the Cunningham Children's Home in the coming weeks. Whether I do or not, I will continue to look for opportunities. More generally, I am confident the experience of our performers and audience will continue to enrich ourselves and our community.

KING ARTHUR

or “THE BRITISH WORTHY,” a semi opera

Presented by La Nuova Aurora Opera

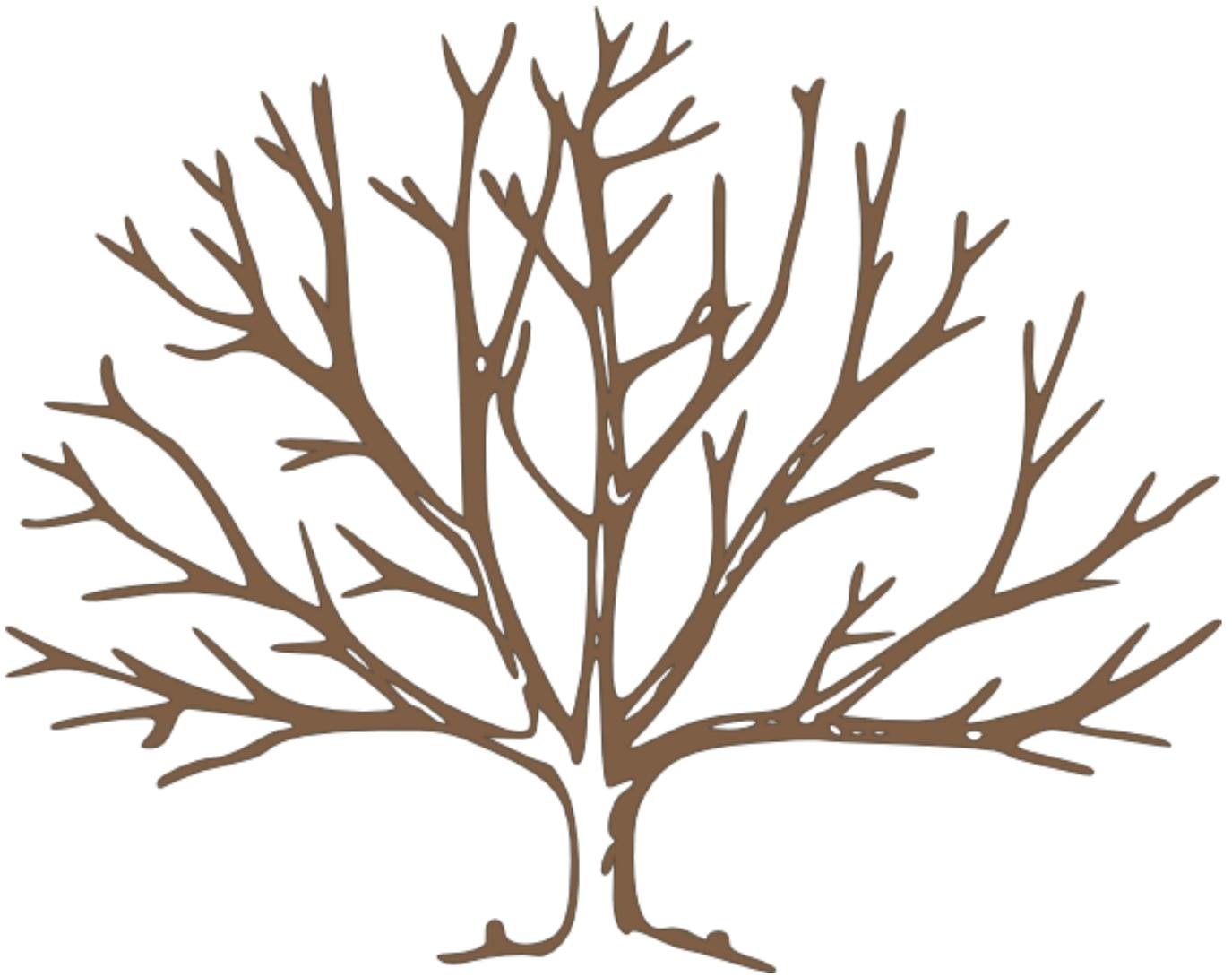
Music by Henry Purcell Text by John Dryden

Thursday, March 17 7:30pm

McKinley Presbyterian Church

Friday, March 18 7:30pm

Wesley United Methodist Church



Filippo Ciabatti, Conductor
Maddy Gunn & Rachel Wolfe, Directors
Allegra Martin, Chorus Master

La Nuova Aurora presents,

KING ARTHUR

or, "THE BRITISH WORTHY"

A Semi-Opera in 5 Acts by John Dryden & Henry Purcell

Act I

Aurelius, Conon, and Albanact, King Arthur's closest advisors and friends, are talking of their coming victory in the war against the Saxon Prince, Oswald. Oswald once courted Conon's daughter Emmeline, who was born blind and is now pledged to marry Arthur.

The Saxon Prince Oswald is led by his priest and right hand man, Osmond, to a ritual sacrifice intended to turn the tide of war in their favor. Osmond's demon, Grimbald, reveals to Osmond that his counterpart, Philidel, has mutinied in the hope of being redeemed by God. After the ritual, Oswald and Osmond go to fight the Britons and are sorely beaten.

Act II

Philidel, the rogue demon, stumbles across the remains of the battle, where Merlin recruits him to aid the Britons in return for protection and the hope of redemption. Philidel and a collection of sprites sing away Grimbald and his spirits, and then use their voices to lead the troop back to safety.

Emmeline and Matilda, her confidant, talk of Arthur and Matilda brings in some dancers to entertain them while they wait. Emmeline imagines that Arthur is there, dancing with her. Oswald and Osmond approach the Britons' tents and, spying Emmeline and Matilda, decide to kidnap them for leverage and revenge. Arthur arranges a parley with Oswald to negotiate for Emmeline's return but Oswald refuses. Arthur pledges to destroy the Saxon army at dawn and retrieve his love.

Act III

Albanact and Aurelius return from the front and plead with Arthur to retreat. Arthur turns to Merlin for help, who says that the enchantments are too strong. Arthur demands that Merlin do what he once promised: to restore Emmeline's sight and Merlin agrees.

Philidel, on Merlin's command, traps Grimbald and, in his absence, leads Arthur to see Emmeline. Philidel uses dewdrops to restore Emmeline's sight. Emmeline promises that though Oswald and Osmond both attempt to woo her, she has refused them.

When Arthur is gone, Osmond appears and attempts to seduce Emmeline. She refuses him but Osmond says to Emmeline that he has taken over the garrison and that she has no choice but to submit. In an attempt to soften Emmeline, he creates an imaginary world of Cupid where freezing men are warmed by love and companionship. The creatures of Osmond's illusion encircle her and disappear, leaving only Osmond. Osmond attempts to rape Emmeline. At the last moment, Grimbald summons Osmond to release him from Philidel's trap. Osmond goes to Grimbald and tells Emmeline to prepare herself for his return.

-10 MINUTE INTERMISSION -

Act IV

Grimbald stops Osmond on his way to Emmeline; he warns that Merlin has brought down Osmond's spells of horror. Merlin brings Arthur to the edge of the forest and says that he must bring down the tree in the middle of the grove to break the enchantments. He warns that everything beyond this point will be illusion, and then leaves. Many creatures appear but he

refuses them. He comes to the tree and as he tries to strike it down, hears a shriek. Emmeline appears, begging him to stop because Osmond has charmed her to die if the tree is harmed. Philidel appears and strikes Emmeline with Merlin's wand, revealing it to be an illusion. Arthur strikes down the tree and the spell is broken.

Act V

Arthur, Aurelius, Albanact, and Merlin have broken through the Saxon armies. The spell is broken and the war is all but won. Oswald arrives and asks for a parley with Arthur. They duel; Arthur wins, and shows mercy. He restores Oswald's original lands and asks him to never come back. Emmeline and Arthur are reunited, the Britons imprison Osmond, and Merlin prophesies that the Saxons and the Britons shall someday be one people, of one tongue and religion.

Cast

King Arthur: Chris Anderson
Oswald: Lyle Jackson
Emmeline: Hailey Cohen
Emmeline Understudy: Kelsey Grotkiewicz
Matilda: Stefanie Greene
Osmond: Alexander Richardson
Conon: Jeff McGill
Merlin: Jeff McGill
Albanact: Thereza Lituma
Aurelius: Sam Walters
Grimbald: Danielle Strickland
Philidel: Nini Marchese
Chorus: Kelsey Grotkiewicz, Olivia Gronenthal, Maggie Wolfe, Thereza Lituma, Patty Weisensee, Yuetong Xing, Deleon Rocquemore, David Wilcox, Joseph Lubars, Connor Riggs, Stephen Bruce

Cupid: Elena Negruta
Cold Genius: Chris Anderson
Aeolus: Rafael Luquis-Piñero
Nereid: Ruth Kenney
Pan: Chris Anderson
Venus: Nini Marchese
Honour: Ruth Kenney
He: Rafael Luquis-Piñero
She: Susan Bywaters
Comus: Kelsey Grotkiewicz
Shepherd: Ruth Kenney
Sirens: Susan Bywaters & Elena Negruta
Shepherdesses: Maggie Wolfe & Olivia Gronenthal
British Warrior: Yichen Li
Saxon Priests: Rafael Luquis-Piñero, Elena Negruta, Maggie Wolfe, Thereza Lituma, Yichen Li, Nini Marchese

Orchestra

Oboe I: Evan Tammen
Oboe II: Angela Schmid Tammen
Bassoon: Elliott Cobb, Jr.
Trumpet: Donny De La Rosa
Trumpet: Morganne Garcia

Viola: Alexandra Brooks
Cello Continuo: Kirsten Landowne
Harpsichord: Jonathan Young
Rehearsal Pianist: Simon Tiffin

Production

Stage Directors: Maddy Gunn & Rachel Wolfe
Producers: Nini Marchese & Susan Bywaters
Fight Choreography: Dylan Connelley

Conductor: Filippo Ciabatti
Assistant Conductor: Allegra Martin
Choreography: Claire Happel

A Note about John Dryden

By David Bywaters, author of *Dryden in Revolutionary England*

King Arthur was staged in the summer of 1691, when the sixty-year old poet, John Dryden, had been living for nearly three years in political disgrace. In November of 1688, Dryden's patron and fellow Catholic James II, was dethroned by his daughter Mary and nephew William of Orange, who were duly installed by Parliament as joint monarchs. Dryden lost his position as poet laureate and his pension; as a longstanding apologist for James and his brother Charles II, he was reviled and distrusted by much of the playgoing public.

In *King Arthur* he responds to this difficult situation in various ways. William since his accession had been alienating some of his original supporters by carrying on an expensive war with France; Dryden insists throughout the play on the evils of war and the blessings of peace. The Saxon's elaborate militaristic rites at the play's beginning are made hollow by their immediate defeat; thereafter Arthur achieves his aims by patience and trust in heaven rather than force. Meanwhile the gods above and the shepherds below regard the "mad labour," the "drums and trumpets" of war with pity or happy indifference.

Though Dryden had lost his authority as a political commentator, he retained his reputation as the foremost poet of his day. So most of the play is given over to purely poetic material— what Dryden in a prefatory dedication calls the "fairy kind of writing which depends only upon the force of the imagination"—airy/earthy creatures, enchanted forests, and distressed damsels drawn from Shakespeare and Tasso, Spenser and Milton.

And whatever his political misfortunes, Dryden remained unquestionably English, so the play ends in a patriotic masque extolling Englishness while loftily setting aside the messy political details of Briton and Saxon, Vortigern and Hengist. England is the queen of islands, the envy of the world, abounding in fish, grain, and wool, stocked with hardy peasantry, and beloved of Venus. In the final chorus, however, William, "Our Sovereign High," is presented with subjects who, though they may "wait on his commands," are yet oddly "sceptered," and so in the long run maybe not as docile as they seem.



THANK YOU to our many supporters for their much needed help!

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