



CANTATA
DRAMATICA

presents

RED DRAGON WHITE DRAGON

PREVIEW

Composer NICK BICÂT

Librettist TONY BICÂT

Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Great Park

Sunday 29 March, 7pm

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ARTHUR *a Briton with a Roman education*
BEDIVERE *his classmate and best friend*
GAWAIN *his classmate, out for a good time*
KAI *his classmate, a good fighter*
GUINEVERE *a peerless princess*
YGRAINE *widow of Uther Pendragon, King of the British Tribes*
NIMUE *a princess of the Cymry*
MORGAN-LE-FEY *a chief's red-headed daughter*
LANCELOT *a brave and courtly philanderer*
MORDRED *a fearsome and uncouth fighter*
CONSTANTINE *King of Cornwall*
VORTIPOR *King of Caernarfon*
CONANUS *King of Gloucester*
OSTLER *a Briton who sells Arthur a horse*
VORTRIX *a Celt, a freed Roman slave and messenger*
COLGRIM *a Saxon War Lord*
BIDDULPH *a Saxon War Lord*
HYWELL *cousin to Arthur, & leader of the Bretons fighting the Visigoths in Gaul*
CHORUS

DAVID JONES
Arthur
MILLIE BOOTH
Guinevere
GUY HAYWARD
Bedivere
PEGRAM HARRISON
Gawain / Vortipor
DARIO DUGANDŽIC
Kai / Mordred / Conanus

MAARTIN ALLCOCK
Bass Guitar
TIM MOUNTAIN
Keyboard

HELEN MORTON
Nimue
ROSEMARY CLIFFORD
Morgan-le-Fey
REBECCA ANN LEGGETT
Ygraine
ROBERT JENKINS
Lancelot / Constantine
HANNAH ROLLS
Chorus

NICK BICÂT
Guitar/Keyboard
NAO MASUDA
Percussion

INTRODUCTION

Cantata Dramatica, in a joint venture with Cumberland Lodge, is pleased to present *Red Dragon, White Dragon*, a musical drama telling the story behind the legend of King Arthur. Written by Nick and Tony Bicât, it interweaves fast paced story telling with highly accessible music in a folk/rock style that represents a new direction for Cantata Dramatica.

This evening's preview is the first outing of a fresh approach to our endlessly retold and embellished national epic. In 516 AD, almost 1500 years ago, a last battle was fought between Arthur and his enemies and the first attempt at a united Britain heroically died. Yet it was Arthur's death that sowed the seed of our island story.

Red Dragon, White Dragon tells how Arthur, Guinevere, and the knights of the Round Table try valiantly to hold the fragile Britain they have built on the chaos left by the departure of the Romans. Their Red Dragon is pitched against the White Dragon, an unholy alliance of brutish Saxons, treacherous British Chiefs and the vain and disloyal Mordred. Our version of the story was inspired by Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain, but anyone acquainted with the Arthurian legend will notice some unfamiliar twists to this familiar tale.

The purpose of today's event is threefold: firstly, to provide the composer and librettist with a unique opportunity to create a high quality realisation of the music they have written; secondly, to establish the 'performability' of the piece from the participants' point of view; and thirdly, to discover how well it all works for the audience. The first objective focuses firmly on the vocal aspects of the piece because it has not been feasible to engage the full instrumental ensemble, but our select band of musicians will provide a tantalising glimpse into the full sound world envisaged by the composer.

The next stage of the project will be an open air performance here in the grounds of Cumberland Lodge on Sunday 5th July 2015, as the culmination of an afternoon and early evening of entertainment and feasting.

We are extremely grateful to our talented cast of singer-actors and instrumentalists for their interpretation of score and script, and we thank and salute the team at Cumberland Lodge and our sponsors and other collaborators who have made this production possible.

RED DRAGON, WHITE DRAGON

It is 490 AD. The Red Dragon of Britain languishes, while the White Dragon, the marauding Saxons, snaps at its heels.

Since the Roman legions left, Britain is a land in chaos. Outside the fortified towns – London, Chester and Wall - it is every man for himself. Barbarous tribal chiefs fight over scraps of sour neglected land, like cocks on a dunghill.

But for the four young men, sailing from Gaul, Britain seems a land of opportunity. Still in their teens and seeking adventure these four friends are Gawain, Kai, Bedivere and of course Arthur. On board ship they play at dice.

SCENE 1: A SHIP BOUND FOR BRITAIN

On board, Arthur, Bedivere, Gawain and Kai dice and eagerly discuss the adventures they will have when they land. But Bedivere is seasick.

CHORUS: Unus, duo, tres, quattuor, quinque, sex,
Unus, duo tres, quattuor, quattuor, gemini!
Iacta alea unus, duo, tres, quattuor, quinque, sex,
Unus, duo tres, quattuor, quattuor, gemini!
Iacta alea est!

GAWAIN: Wake up Bedivere, it's your turn.

BEDIVERE: Oh no!

KAI: He's quite green.

CHORUS: Over the side!

KAI: Saluting Neptune again.

GAWAIN: Odd he should be so brave in battle, yet such a girl at sea. Talk less, Gawain – throw!

GAWAIN: Kai, it's Arthur's turn.

ARTHUR: They say drinking salt water helps.

KAI: A fool's tale.

ARTHUR: Two threes, gemini! Beat that!

GAWAIN: One and three, no!

KAI: Four and three, blast!

BEDIVERE: Will we never get off this infernal tub!

KAI: Four and eight, ha!

CHORUS: Unus, duo, tres, quattuor, quinque, sex,
Unus, duo tres, quattuor, quattuor, gemini,
Iacta alea unus, duo, tres, quattuor, quinque, sex,
Unus, duo tres, quattuor, quattuor, gemini,
Iacta alea est!

ARTHUR: Six and six, Gemini!
GAWAIN: Why does Arthur always win?
KAI: Lucky at dice, unlucky in love.
GAWAIN: Any fool can get lucky in the Essex marshes.
KAI: That's why Gawain came, he hopes to lose that which pains him so. There are no virgins in Britain.
ARTHUR: That too may be a fool's tale.

Arthur brings Bedivere a cup of seawater.

BEDIVERE: What's that?
ARTHUR: Seawater.
BEDIVERE: You trying to kill me?
ARTHUR: Just drink.

Arthur hands him the cup; Bedivere drinks.

BEDIVERE: Euch!
ARTHUR: Breathe deeply – as before battle. The air off the coast of Britain feels good.
BEDIVERE: The wine is filthy. The women sluts.
ARTHUR: That's only Gaulish propaganda.
BEDIVERE: Kai and Gawain believe it – that's why they came.
ARTHUR: Those two believe in dragons. Forget them, you'll see Ursula soon.
BEDIVERE: Your sister should have gone to Gaul, she'd be safer in Gaul.
ARTHUR: I want you two married as soon as possible. These are troubled times. You must breed.
BEDIVERE: But in Britain! Why in the name of all the gods are we going there?
ARTHUR: The Romans have gone
And when something dies
Something new always begins
As day follows night
We will make our own world
There is everything to play for and win.
CHORUS: The Romans have gone
And when something dies
Something new always begins
As day follows night
We will make our own world
There is everything to play for and win.
ALL: As day follows night
We will make our own world
There is everything to play for and win.

SCENE 2: DOVER – THE HARBOUR

On landing, Arthur attempts to buy a decent horse. He gets news of his sister Ursula's death. He swears bloody revenge.

ARTHUR: Call that a horse? It would not take the weight of a child.
OSTLER: Sire, this is all we have.
ARTHUR: Do you take me for a fool? Its knees are shot, and as for its teeth...
OSTLER: We are poor; any decent beast is stolen from us.
ARTHUR: Stolen by who?
OSTLER: Iceni, Pariss, Carvetii, Silures, Brigantes–
ARTHUR: Your own people steal from you?
OSTLER: Even my brother steals from me.
ARTHUR: Are you saying I should take them or walk?
OSTLER: I fear so, my Lord.

A MESSENGER arrives and prostrates himself before Arthur.

VORTRIX: Dux! Dux, do not have me put to death.
ARTHUR: I am no lord. My name is Arthur. What is it?
VORTRIX: I have a message from Ambrose.
ARTHUR: Is my sister Ursula safely embarked from Trier?
VORTRIX: Ambrose was too ashamed to come himself. I am just a slave, following his orders.
ARTHUR: The message - what news of Ursula?
VORTRIX: I would rather tear out my tongue than tell you this.
ARTHUR: I'll tear it out if you don't.
VORTRIX: Your sister Ursula is dead, the ship sunk by Saxon pirates. Only Ambrose to his shame survived. Pardon me, Sir. Even as I speak he is in sackcloth and ashes, doing penance at the temple of Minerva.
ARTHUR: We'll take your horses. Bedivere, pay this rogue. You Messenger, get off your knees. What is your name?
VORTRIX: Vortrix, my lord Arthur.
ARTHUR: Vortrix, I do not blame you for doing your job. You, ostler, see this man is fed and has shelter. Be warned, Vortrix has my protection. Gawain, Kai, to horse! We have a long way to ride.
BEDIVERE: Some things are written.
ARTHUR: Some things are wrong.
ARTHUR: Even in our childish games
Ursula and Bedivere

What I always wanted for my sister
A man as bold and true as you

Now raped and murdered
She lies ten fathoms down
Fish feasting on her eyes
While her companions let her drown

My noble virgin sister
Will be washed where once she bled
While Neptune bears her soul away
To reign among the dead
And I will kill a thousand Saxons
For every hair on her head.

SCENE 3: THE ROAD TO LONDON

They ride to London, Arthur silently nursing his rage, through Uther Pendragon's devastated Kingdom.

CHORUS: No decent inns, food scarce and filthy/ Weak beer and wine like piss./ In every village, frightened people/ Speak of the death of Uther Pendragon./ Outside the towns all is in chaos./ Anarchy rules and the strongest/ Merely take what they need from the weak./ The Brits even miss the Roman law./ Uther has no son and his court is ruled by women./ The legions with their crucifixions./ Whippings and amputations/ At least there was order./ Now, it's every man for himself./ Uther has no son and his court is ruled by women.

BEDIVERE: Look how Arthur rides – seeing none of this,/ Nursing his rage like a new-born babe./ Is he even mourning for Ursula?

CHORUS: Silent as a stone – the only sound/ Four knights riding to London./ Uther has no son and his court is ruled by women.

SCENE 4: LONDON – THE COURT OF QUEEN YGRAINE

While Uther's widow Ygraine mourns, the ladies of the Court decide to issue a proclamation.

LADIES: Ygraine, Uther's widow.

GUINEVERE: My name is Guinevere.

NIMUE: Sometimes called 'the fair'/ Because her hair/ Is as gold as mine is black.

MORGAN-LE-FEY: Nimue, whose tresses/ Float like storm clouds/ Over the great Welsh mountains.

GUINEVERE: Morgan-le-Fey/ Whose hair burns/ Red as a fire spitting in a wet night.

NIMUE: Dark as coal.

GUINEVERE: Fair as gold.

MORGAN-LE-FEY: Red as fire.

CHORUS: Three 'frail ladies of the court'/ With no time for mourning/ In the hour of the wolf./ Britain has no King, Ygraine no husband,/ Guinevere, Nimue and Morgan-le-Fey/ No champions.

Three 'frail ladies of the court'/ Should weep by Ygraine's side/ Taking turns to wipe her eyes.

MORGAN-LE-FEY: If we do not act, the tribal chiefs/ Will rip Britain apart, as a wolf/ Tears living flesh for its young.

GUINEVERE: Even as the Saxons snap at our heels/ Our chiefs, who should protect us, throw dice/ To see which of us they will ravish first.

CHORUS: So with Ygraine's weeping in their ears/ Guinevere, Nimue and Morgan-le-Fey/ Sit down to write a proclamation.

LADIES: A proclamation to save our land/ A proclamation to save Britain/ A proclamation to save the world.

CHORUS: Hear ye!

LADIES: When all the people are gathered/ He who can draw the sword from the Stone/ Shall be King/ Only the strongest can take Excalibur

CHORUS: Only the strongest can take Excalibur/ Only the strongest can be the Chosen/
Dux Britanniae!

LADIES: King of the Britons!

ALL: Dux Britanniae!

SCENE 5: ARTHUR ARRIVES IN LONDON

Arthur, suppressing his rage, rides to London. Arriving at a great square, he kills his exhausted horse and gives the meat to the peasants.

ARTHUR: I barely open my eyes
On that road of fire and flood
And when I do I see the land
Through a mist of Saxon blood.

CHORUS: Fol-de-ri-di-doh!

ARTHUR: I cannot cry for Ursula.
The bile of boiling grief
Burns up my chest and throat
And washes against my teeth.

CHORUS: Fol-de-doh and a watch him go!

ARTHUR: I feel the bones of my sweated horse
Knackered between my thighs
In London town in a mighty square
I dismount and open my eyes.

CHORUS: Fol-de-ri-di-doh!

ARTHUR: In an act of mercy with a single blow
I slaughter the wretched beast
And peasants starving in their rags
Bear it away for a feast.

CHORUS: Fol-di-ri and tonight we eat/ Light the fire and cook our meat!

ARTHUR: A great square and a thousand souls/ With a queen upon her throne/ Is this a hanging?

CHORUS: No!

ARTHUR: No, a broadsword stuck in a stone.

CHORUS: A broadsword stuck in a stone
Fol-di-do and a-here we go!

Guinevere, Nimue & Morgan-le-Fey step forward.

LADIES: Hear ye hear ye!

YGRAINE: When all the people are gathered/ He who can draw the sword from the Stone/ Shall be King/ Only the strongest can take Excalibur/ Only the strongest can be the Chosen.

CHORUS: Dux Britanniae .

LADIES: King of the Britons.

ALL: Dux Britanniae.

SCENE 6: LONDON – A SWORD IN A STONE

The Tribal Chiefs – Constantine, Vortipor, Conanus, and Maelgwyn – assemble to compete for the throne. Ygraine makes a ritualized announcement of their names.

YGRAINE: Welcome Tribal Chiefs – Constantine of Cornwall, Conanus of Gloucester, Vortipor of Caernarfon and Maelgwyn of Cumbria.

BEDIVERE: If this is how they choose their kings they're even more primitive than I thought.

KAI: A sword in a stone?

GAWAIN: It'll be some sorcery.

BEDIVERE: It will be some trick.

YGRAINE: Conanus of Gloucester, loyal ally and friend of my beloved husband – you go first.

CONSTANTINE: No favourites here; we shall draw lots.

GAWAIN: I give you three to one on Conanus, look at that chest.

KAI: No he's all fat – no muscle.

GAWAIN: Vortipor looks good.

KAI: Him – he's a woman in man's clothing. What about Conanus?

BEDIVERE: Could be, he looks handy.

GAWAIN: I still like the look of number three, what's his name?

KAI: Maelgwyn – Welsh, only good for thieving. Arthur, what do you think?

ARTHUR: Who is the golden-haired girl?

YGRAINE: The chiefs will draw in this order: Vortipor, Constantine, Maelgwyn, Conanus.

ARTHUR: The people hate them all.

Each chief tries to draw the sword.

GAWAIN: Look at that barbarian sweating and straining.

KAI: Veins swelling, sweat pouring .

BEDIVERE: But Arthur is a man in a dream/ Eyes only for Guinevere, standing silent by the Queen.

As each chief fails to draw the sword, the crowd roars with joy, cursing the unpopular chiefs.

YGRAINE: Vortipor.

CROWD: Thief

YGRAINE: Constantine.

CROWD: Usurer!

YGRAINE: Maelgwyn.

CROWD: Lick spittle!

YGRAINE: Conanus.

CROWD: Pig lover!

CHORUS: Excalibur! Excalibur! Excalibur!

Arthur makes his way through the crowd.

GAWAIN: Arthur, wait!

BEDIVERE: Arthur leaps onto the stage/ Bows to the Queen/ Grasps the sword/ And as easily as drawing an arrow from its quiver/ Pulls the sword Excalibur from the stone.

CROWD: Dux. Dux. Dux!

ARTHUR: What is your name?

GUINEVERE: Guinevere.

ARTHUR: Keep your Kingdom, Oh Queen. She is my prise.

CROWD: Dux!

YGRAINE: What is your name?

ARTHUR: Arthur.

YGRAINE: King Arthur. Only the strongest can be the chosen.

CHORUS: Dux Britanniae!

YGRAINE: King of the Britons!

ALL: Dux Britanniae!

BEDIVERE: So Arthur becomes King in all but name/ Dux, the people call him/ One of the only Roman words they know.

CHORUS: Who can argue with Excalibur?/ Who can argue with Fate?/ Ygraine has knelt/ And calls Arthur "King".

BEDIVERE: The Tribal Chiefs all slink away/ Nursing their hatred for another day/ Arthur takes Excalibur, breaks open the Palace stores and gives food and wine to the people.

GAWAIN: How those Britons drink!

KAI: And dance!

BOTH: Come on Bedivere, this is why we came!

BEDIVERE: Arthur took Guinevere to bed. We did not see him for three days.

SCENE 7: EPISFORD – THE FIRST BATTLE

Leading a small force Arthur ingeniously defeats the Saxons. They slink away, back up the river Trent.

CHORUS: The White Dragon is coming
And with it the hellish scent
Of burning thatch and weeping women
Along the banks of the River Trent.
Three ships sail up river
Each one with thirty Saxons armed to the teeth
Colgrim and Biddulph at their painted prows
Standing proud - their bloody chiefs.
They sack each village
Burning and stealing the wine and corn.
They slit the throat
Of each boy child - ten summers born.
The White Dragon is coming
And with it the hellish scent
Of burning thatch and weeping women
Along the banks of the River Trent.

ARTHUR: The Romans are gone/ But they left their roads./ I need fifty well-horsed men./ Riders move faster/ Than men in boats./ At every bridge we'll ambush them./ Each Saxon we capture/ Will be put to death./ No prisoners – let them learn/ To never come again.

CHORUS: Arthur chooses only the best horsemen
The best horsemen, the strongest knights
Just fifty men at the Bridge of Episford
The White Dragon is coming.
And with it the hellish scent
Of burning thatch and weeping women
Along the banks of the River Trent.

KAI: Like spearing fish in a barrel!

GAWAIN: We kill some.

KAI: I'll give it to them, Saxons are good sailors.

CHORUS: Colgrim and Biddulph flee like women
One boat is burning – two sail away
Saving themselves - to fight again one day.

GAWAIN: Follow and kill!

ARTHUR: No. The horses are tired.

GAWAIN: Chase them and kill them!

KAI: Follow and destroy!

BEDIVERE: Hang Colgrim and Biddulph from a bridge/ Like crows on a fence.

ARTHUR: No. It is more important to keep/ Horses and men fresh, be ready to move fast/ Should they attack elsewhere.

GAWAIN & KAI: Yes, my Lord.

BEDIVERE: No! Follow and destroy!

CHORUS: Colgrim and Biddulph flee like women
One boat is burning – two sail away
Saving themselves - destroy, destroy, destroy!

BEDIVERE: So the Saxon dragon limps away and Arthur returns to Guinevere – for you cannot argue with love, and love has destroyed more kings than war.

SCENE 8: THE SAXON COMPOUND, NIGHT – FIRELIGHT

The Saxons lick their wounds. They resolve to destroy the Roman bridges so that Arthur will not be able to ride swiftly to rescue his people.

COLGRIM: Who is this Arthur?

BIDDULPH: Some say a God, some say a boy with a magic sword.

COLGRIM: Steal his sword.

BIDDULPH: He has few men, some good knights, that's all.

COLGRIM: Poison his knights.

BIDDULPH: But he is clever, he moves fast on the Roman roads and the Roman bridges.

COLGRIM: He thinks like a Roman.

BIDDULPH: The Brit Chiefs all hate him, they would turn on him in a second.

COLGRIM: Poison his people against him.

BIDDULPH: Cut off his legs!

COLGRIM: Perhaps that's the answer.

BIDDULPH: If he cannot move, we have the superior force.

COLGRIM: Cut off his legs!

BIDDULPH: Cut off his legs – how?

SCENE 9: THE COURT – IN GUINEVERE'S BEDCHAMBER

Arthur and Guinevere make love, and Arthur dreams of ruling over a just and peaceful Britain.

CHORUS: Silk rustles and armour jingles

GUINEVERE: Arthur, please, on your skin is Saxon blood
Do not stain my sheets with slaughter;
Before we drown in love's sweet flood
Let me wash you in clear water.

Arthur, please, take off your mailed vest
Lest you tear my robe apart
As you break into my maiden's chest
Where you claim my beating heart.

Arthur, wait, Arthur, my king, my lord!
Even lions sheathe their claws.
Too late, I'm caught, I'm felled and gored,
I'm yours.

Excalibur on my pillow, my love lies on my breast,
Yet dreams disturb my warrior as he takes his rest

ARTHUR: I dreamed that night I ruled a land
Where wise heads counselled probity,
Sworn foes would clasp each other's hands
And all men lived with dignity.
I dreamed I'd no more need to fight,
That every fractious jealous knight
Could just be silenced with a word,
That famine would no longer haunt
Children who are born to bear
Empty bellies, misery and want
And in my dream those days were here.

CHORUS: Arthur dreamed that Guinevere was his wife
And they had brought a son called 'Britain' into life.

SCENE 10: RIDE BY THE COASTAL ROAD

*With the bridges destroyed, Arthur has to ride by the coast road to relieve the city of Wall.
He enlists the aid of Hywell's Bretons and makes a fatal promise.*

ARTHUR: Ride, ride!

CHORUS: While Arthur plays at being King
The White Dragon sails again
Like a wolf in the night, then in broad daylight
With many more ships and men.
The terrified villagers watch from the bank,
Like sheep they shiver and cry
As Colgrim and Biddulph silent as death
Don't stop but sail on by.
Ride by the coast road – ride!

BIDDULPH: Cut off the boy king's legs, let's see him move his army now!

CHORUS: And Guinevere still has no wedding ring
As the Saxons stone by stone
Destroy each bridge, smash fine Roman work

To dust on the waters sewn.
On land all flee the Saxon horde
Like soft earth parts for the plough.
At Britain's heart a barbarous blade;
Can nothing stop them now?

ARTHUR: Ride by the coast road, ride, ride!

GAWAIN: We should have slaughtered the Saxons when we had the chance.

BEDIVERE: Now, we are outnumbered two to one, maybe more.

ARTHUR: Shut up, Bedivere, and ride! Ride!

CHORUS: They are living on rats and rumours
There in the city of Wall;
If Arthur does not rescue them
They have no hope at all.
The Romans built the city of Wall
With gates of British oak
But can they hold the Saxons back
From the terrified townsfolk?
But Arthur must take the long coast road
He spares not man or beast
He rides possessed with fury
Like a savage wind from the East.
But beasts are not immortal
They must rest and drink their fill
One of Arthur's scouts returns with news
Of a large force over the hill.

KAI: A small army of men and horses.

ARTHUR: Saxons?

KAI: No; Bretons led by your cousin Hywell.

GAWAIN: Here they come now.

ARTHUR: Hywell, what brings you here?

HYWELL: We go to help the Gododdin fight the Picts.

ARTHUR: Would you like a little warm-up at Wall?

HYWELL: Saxons?

ARTHUR: If we join forces it will be a picnic.

HYWELL: The Saxons are no picnic.

ARTHUR: Our joint force will overwhelm them.

HYWELL: And in exchange?

ARTHUR: I swear that should you ever need my help I will come.

BEDIVERE: Careful what you promise.

HYWELL: Anywhere? Anytime?

BEDIVERE: Arthur!

ARTHUR: Cousin, at the gates of Hell or in Eternity/ I swear it on my sister's watery grave.
HYWELL: My men are rested but need sharpening./ Like a blade too long in its scabbard./ I shall whet them on your Saxon skulls, /Make them ready for the Picts at Strathclyde.
ARTHUR: We have a deal then.
HYWELL: Yes.
ARTHUR: Ride by the coast road, ride!

SCENE 11: THE BATTLE OF WALL

Despite Hywell's extra forces, it looks as if the Saxons will defeat the Britons but, when Bedivere invokes Ursula's death, Arthur unsheathes Excalibur, goes berserk and wins a bloody victory.

CHORUS: Hack, hack, hack through flesh and bone/ One falls, another takes his place.
BEDIVERE: Arthur does not draw Excalibur/ He moves men back and forth/ But a battle is not a game of chess.
ARTHUR: We have more men but I cannot use/ My horsemen in the narrow streets of Wall./ The Saxons throw women and children/ In front of us like sacks of grain.
CHORUS: Hack, hack, hack through flesh and bone/ One falls, another takes his place.
BEDIVERE: The Bretons – Hywell's Bretons/ Would push through, but Arthur forbids it.
ARTHUR: I will face any man in a fair fight/ This is not a fair fight./ Colgrim and Biddulph dare not face me/ They hide behind innocent hostages.
BEDIVERE: He does not draw Excalibur/ But moves men back and forth/ Black square, white square/ A battle is not a game of chess.
CHORUS: Hack, hack, hack through flesh and bone/ One falls, another takes his place./ Silence in the midst of battle/ silence but for cries of pain.
ARTHUR: My men around me: broken weapons, bloodied faces.
HYWELL: They are pushing us back, Cousin.
GAWAIN: They are winning, Arthur. They have won the fallen city.
KAI: They will finish us, Arthur.
GAWAIN: Arthur, what shall we do?
ARTHUR: Think, think!
BEDIVERE: A battle is not a game of chess. Arthur, is this how you revenge Ursula?
CHORUS: Such a cry of pain/ Broke the silence then/ – And Arthur drew Excalibur again!
BEDIVERE: No words describe what follows when careless/ Of blows Arthur charges the Saxons on his own/ We scramble after him as they retreat/ He is like a hundred men using the corpses/ As stepping-stones back into the city.
CHORUS: Blood spurts everywhere/ blood falls on blood/ Excalibur cuts armour/ bone and stone/ killing, killing, killing/ The Saxons' fine-forged blades/ Snap like twigs/ On Arthur's sword/ On and on he went/ Killing, killing, killing.

BEDIVERE: Then Arthur spies them – Colgrim and Biddulph/ Their courage gone cowering on the castle stair/ He fights his way to them. Backhand, forehand/ Their bodyguards fall like ripened corn/ With one blow he decapitates the pair./ Colgrim and Biddulph's steaming heads roll down/ But Arthur, the battle won, will not stop/ From every nook and cranny he drags whimpering Saxons/ He silences their groans/ As they squirm beneath his feet/ Slaying the wounded without breath of mercy/ For his sword's hunger must be fed./ On, on, berserk and merciless Excalibur,/ till the White Dragon lies dismembered by the Red.
ARTHUR: Oh Ursula my sister, now you reign among the dead.
BEDIVERE: He takes a long-haired Saxon scalp
And wipes his steaming blade.
He sheaths his rage and looks around
And quick as it came it fades.
ARTHUR: Bedivere. What have we done?
BEDIVERE: A great victory, Arthur. A great victory.
ARTHUR: I hear only weeping.
BEDIVERE: Believe me, Arthur, this is a great victory.
CHORUS: A thousand Saxons for every hair on her head.

SCENE 12: A TRIUMPH IN LONDON

Hailed as the conquering hero, Arthur marries Guinevere and establishes the Round Table. The country united, his dream is realised.

CHORUS: After the battle of Wall
No one talks of a 'boy king'
And every miserable village bard
Of Arthur the hero sings.
So Arthur sits on gilded oak
Anointed with Saxon fear
And calls before him his three brave knights
Gawain, Kai and Bedivere.
Excalibur sheathed, lies to his left,
Guinevere pressed his right
Like a love-sick ploughboy he plays with the hand
Of the Princess not yet his bride.
ARTHUR: I will not marry alone. We must unite the Kingdom. Sir Bedivere you will marry Nimue.
BEDIVERE: Never!
ARTHUR: What about the redhead then?
GUINEVERE: She is called Morgan-le-Fey.
BEDIVERE: I am still in mourning for Ursula. I beg to be excused this...lottery.
ARTHUR: Then Kai will marry Nimue and Gawain, Morgan-le-Fey. It is settled. We shall find you a wife yet, Bedivere.
BEDIVERE: So be it, in the fullness of time.

ARTHUR: Kai's marriage will secure the West, and Gawain's the North.

CHORUS: From East and West and North and South
In each forest a sacred tree
Fell to the axe and the chiefs brought wood
To their king on bended knee.
And Arthur had a round table made
It was a wondrous thing,
No high no low no above no below:
All were equal with their King.

I dreamed that night I ruled a land
Where wise heads counselled probity
Sworn foes would clasp each other's hands
And all men live with dignity.
I dreamed I'd no more need to fight
That I could now hang up my sword
And every fractious jealous knight
Could just be silenced with a word
That famine would no longer haunt
Children who are born to bear
Empty bellies, misery and want
And in my dream those days were here.

Arthur the King! Dux Britanniae!

SCENE 13: CAMELOT, ELEVEN YEARS LATER – 506 AD

In the court of King Arthur, Arthur himself is absent. He is helping Hywell fight the Visigoths in Gaul. Guinevere presides over a fractious Round Table. Two new knights arrive: Mordred and Lancelot.

CHORUS: Eleven winters and summers pass.
Arthur rules an unruly nation
But all that holds it together now
Is his heroic reputation.
For Arthur was bored with courtly life
He had no taste for the politic lie
He leaves in charge Gawain and Bedivere
And on the throne Queen Guinevere
The fair and faithful peerless Guinevere
His childless wife

BEDIVERE: He takes Kai with him to fight in Gaul/ Hywell's debt he must repay/ This leaves two empty seats at the Table/ I seek the bravest knights of the day/ Mighty Mordred and bold Lancelot/ Never leave their foes alive.

GUINEVERE: Unseen, I watch from the tower/ As the two brave knights arrive.

SCENE 14: LANCELOT AND MORDRED'S DRINKING SONG.

Unseen, Guinevere watches as Lancelot and Mordred introduce themselves.

LANCELOT: My lords, I present to you Lord Mordred.

MORDRED: I am Mordred!
Kill one with my axe
True to my word
Spit two on my bodkin
An' three on my sword
But the last and the best
Is he who stands
I strangle
With my bare hands.

MORDRED: Sir Lancelot!

LANCELOT: I am Lancelot!
One before breakfast,
No shame at all
And a good half a dozen
Before nightfall
But my sleep is sweetest
On the breast
Of every virgin
I've undressed.

LANCE. & MORD.: Lancelot and Mordred
We live to fight and screw
The whole world's heard of us
But it's never heard of you.

BED. & GAWAIN: But we have fought at Arthur's side
Next to the warrior King
Until you've stood at his right hand
Your boastful words don't mean a thing!

ALL: We are the bravest knights in Britain
Hearts upon our shield
Beneath the skin we're brothers
In bed or battlefield.

LANCELOT: I always say, the more you ask/ The more you tend to get...

Guinevere enters.

BED. & GAWAIN: Queen Guinevere.

LANCELOT: I offer my service to your majesty.

MORDRED: Your majesty.

GUINEVERE: In the name of my husband I welcome you to King Arthur's Court, to the Round Table of Camelot.

SCENE 15: HYWELL'S PALACE AND CAMELOT

Separated by the Channel and Arthur's sense of duty, Guinevere and Arthur cannot sleep. They write to each other.

CHORUS: What does a hero do
When there is no war to fight?
He finds another country's war
To exercise his might
In Britain the lovely Guinevere
Counts sheep but can't sleep a wink
She wakes her servant to light the lamp
And bring her pen and ink.

GUINEVERE: Dear King, how much slaughter does it take/ Till the endless battle's won/ And Excalibur
is satisfied/ And you set sail to join your bride?

ARTHUR: Guinevere my Queen/ I've a debt I must repay/ Brave King Hywell saved us all/ And his
enemies will not give in/ So I must remain in Gaul.

GUINEVERE: Dear Arthur, here the market riddle goes/ Who has a King but no King there?/ A
husband but no husband there?/ The answer is your Guinevere.

ARTHUR: Dear Queen/ The Visigoths are a Monster/ a Hydra-headed beast./ An endless task;/ The
more I kill, the less it seems are dead.

GUINEVERE: Admit you like it there in Gaul./ My Camelot, our British Court/ Has customs much too
coarse for you./ Oh why did I marry a Roman?

ARTHUR: No! No, I am still my country's King./ No British King shall leave a job half done.

GUINEVERE: I bet you have a dozen Gaulish girls/ With whom you have your fun!/ Oh, Arthur! Let me
come to Gaul/ So that I may be an exile too./ Braving the violence of the waves/ To love
and care for you.

ARTHUR: No! Britain needs a queen./ Her Queen upon the throne./ My subjects when they see you
there/ See a testament of my return.

GUINEVERE: Arthur, I live, but this is not a life./ You cannot rule from far away./ Your restless knights
all pout and preen./ Their elbows on your great Round Table./ Trying to impress your
Queen!

ARTHUR: I lost my sister to the waves;/ I will not lose a wife.

GUINEVERE: You could still lose a wife!/ Dawn breaks, my inkwell is dry./ I cannot live on letters/ And
the memory of your touch

ARTHUR: Dawn breaks/ Now my pen is blunt/ I live only to return to you.

GUINEVERE: Your wife.

ARTHUR: My Queen.

GUINEVERE: My King.

ARTHUR: Arthur.

GUINEVERE: Guinevere.

SCENE 16: BEDIVERE FINDS BRITAIN IN A BAD STATE

Bedivere tries to make alliances among the fractious tribes while in Gaul, Arthur prepares to face Alaric and the Visigoths at the Battle of Vouillé

CHORUS: While Arthur sinks in Gaulish sloth
Where sweet corruption stinks
In whispered tales in our troubled island
The great Round Table shrinks.

BEDIVERE: Gawain is become impossible and vain
By fashion his purse is bled
While Mordred speaks in the crudest words
Of triumphs in battle and bed.

CHORUS: Ride by the old roads, ride!
Lancelot has a hundred stories,
He strokes the maidens' arms.
They flock to him like starlings,
Only Guinevere scorns his charms.

BEDIVERE: I travel Britain, alas, alone
And with both threats and bribes
I broker a pale uneasy peace
Among the warring tribes.

CHORUS: Ride by the old roads, ride!
In the grandest hall or castle,
Round the humblest hearth that burns
The only question we all ask
Is when will our King return?

BEDIVERE: Then messengers come hotfoot from Gaul,
They seek me out to say
That Hywell and Arthur will fight the Goths
On the fields of Vouillé.

CHORUS: Ride by the old roads, ride!

SCENE 17: THE BATTLE OF VOUILLÉ

In Gaul, Arthur leads the Bretons to victory but his old comrade Kai is killed. The slaughter is terrible; only a small band of Visigoths and their leader Alaric escape.

THE CHORUS: Arthur leads the Bretons to defeat the Visigoths
On that day hundreds die
But the price he pays for this
Is the death of his dear friend Kai
In Britain Guinevere hears the news
Of the tragic death of Kai.
Every inch a Queen on her royal throne,
No emotion showing on her face
In the castle cloister, Lancelot comes upon Guinevere weeping.
But in the cold castle cloister

She walks alone
Feeling a widow's grief for Nimue
As if it was her own.

LANCELOT: Oh Guinevere, why do you shiver and weep?/ Here, take my cloak of Tarentine cloth/
And let me walk with you.

GUINEVERE: Spare me your idle talk of damsels
Singed with dragon's breath.
My lonely heart is pierced for Nimue
As she mourns her husband's death.

LANCELOT: I will walk in silence/ But just say this: what better way for a knight to die/ Than to fight
beside his King?

GUINEVERE: What does it matter how he died?
Spattered in blood or steeped in shame?
The hero that falls the coward that runs
A woman's grief is just the same.
How could you understand my tears?
I cannot hold Nimue when she cries
Or lie beside my husband
As he mourns his dear friend Kai.

LANCELOT: A knight's trade is death/ To fight for his Lady or his King./ And my death would be
joyous too/ To lay down my life for Guinevere/ To die and fall in you.

GUINEVERE: You seem to forget I do not need a champion/ I wear the royal wedding ring.

LANCELOT: I would serve you till Arthur returns.

GUINEVERE: And after...

LANCELOT: To my grave.

GUINEVERE: Here take back your cape, I am quite hot now.

LANCELOT: As my lady wishes.

GUINEVERE: As your Queen and your King's wife wishes.

LANCELOT: As you wish.

GUINEVERE: I want to be alone. Go, Lancelot, go.

SCENE 18: THE BURIAL OF KAI IN GAUL

Kai's widow, Nimue, laments over his body, but as she leaves the funeral, Arthur takes her hand.

NIMUE: The hall of Brave Kai is dark tonight/ Without fire, without a bed/ I will weep for a while;
then I will be silent/ Who will give me sanctuary?/ My protector lies in his grave/ While
he lived no one breached my gates/ Respect was mine/ Alas death, why does it spare
me?/ Without fire, without songs/ The hall of Kai is a constant wound/ His empty hearth
mocks/ My cold cheeks burn with tears.

CHORUS: Kai is buried and Nimue sings
A lament in a foreign land
As Arthur leaves the funeral

He takes her by the hand
Who knows what comfort Arthur brings
To the hapless widow who weeps
But for the first time in many months
The victorious hero sleeps.

SCENE 19: CAMELOT, A GREAT FEAST

As the court prepares to celebrate the news of Arthur's victory, a worried Bedivere comes to Guinevere.

CHORUS: With jousting music and dance
And a great feast in Camelot's hall
The Round Table will celebrate
Their King's victorious return from Gaul.
Bedivere comes to Guinevere
Saying this party will only disguise
The perilous state of Britain
Where everyone closes their eyes
He fears for the great Round Table
He fears for the Brit Chiefs hate
He fears uncollected taxes
Fears Arthur will come too late.

A messenger comes with a letter from Arthur. Bedivere takes the letter.

GUINEVERE: Read it to me.

BEDIVERE: It is in the King's hand.

GUINEVERE: Please.

BEDIVERE: 'My dear Queen/ I hate to write this./ Nimue is too sick to travel./ I must hunt down
Alaric/ who escaped Vouillé./ A few more months/only a few I...'

GUINEVERE: Enough!

BEDIVERE: There is more.

GUINEVERE: Twelve dry summers and icy winters/ I have endured/ Weaving an endless cloth of
misery/ That I have tried to wear with dignity./ I have feasted too long on ashes/ Alone in
an empty bed/ Oh, Arthur, do you want to return/ To a bitter wife and a broken country?/
Is this your golden dream?

BEDIVERE: I shall stop the celebration.

GUINEVERE: No. Let them sing and dance, let the dancers' feet bleed and the musicians break their
instruments. Let them play so loudly that their music is heard in Gaul. Go to him,
Bedivere. Bring him back, in chains if you have to. Let that Welsh witch drown in the
Channel. Tell him he has lost his country; tell him he may yet lose his Queen.

BEDIVERE: I...

GUINEVERE: Go! I curse that sword that will not let him rest!

SCENE 20: HYWELL'S PALACE IN GAUL, AND A BOAT BOUND FOR DOVER

Hywell offers Arthur everything to stay in Gaul, but Bedivere at last persuades him to return. Arthur says he must re-learn his country.

CHORUS: Hywell offers Arthur half his Kingdom/ And all his daughters./ Nimue is with child/ They say the child is Arthur's/ That he has pissed away his Kingdom/ For a foreign war and Hywell's Breton brides./ Bedivere again endures the waves/ He goes to Hywell's court./ Day and night he talks to Arthur/ And makes him understand/ How Britain suffers from his neglect/ Crying out for their King's return./ Iacta alea est./ So the dice are thrown./ So once again, now aged and battle worn,/ these two friends stand on a ship for Dover/ two friends crossing over troubled water./ Bedivere clings to the rail/ and wishes he could die.

Unus, duo, tres, quattuor/ Quinque, sex/ Gemini!/ Iacta alea est./ The dice are thrown!

ARTHUR: Am I waking from a sickness, Bedivere?

BEDIVERE: Please do not talk of sickness.

ARTHUR: Should I throw Excalibur overboard and fight no more?

BEDIVERE: Pray that we are not too late./ Pray you don't have to fight your own people.

ARTHUR: Do you remember I made you drink seawater?

BEDIVERE: Do not remind me.

ARTHUR: I have a mind to walk to London/ You go on ahead say, but do not say I am coming.

BEDIVERE: This is madness. If you had the wings of Pegasus, you should fly to the Round Table.

ARTHUR: I must relearn my country.

BEDIVERE: Oh no.

ARTHUR: I must relearn my country.

SCENE 21: DOVER, THE OSTLER'S STABLE

Arthur meets the Ostler from eleven years ago. The man does not recognise him. He says the country will only heal when Arthur returns.

OSTLER: I sold King Arthur a horse once/ He was a fine man like a statue of a god/ Well over six foot and broad shouldered/ He admired my horses, he took the best/ I gave it to him for next to nothing/ A knock down price/ He was every inch a King even then.

ARTHUR: Why was he gone so long?

OSTLER: Gaul.

ARTHUR: Gaul?

OSTLER: Says it all./ His people starve while he lives off goose fat./ His famous Round Table rob us/ Worse than the old chiefs did./ For years we've lived on a promise:/ "He will return"./ I don't believe it./ Would you return to this broken country – this midden?/ When Hywell's daughters are feeding you grapes, /Polishing his sword if you get my meaning.

They say Hywell even crowns him with laurel/ Like a Roman Emperor./ No, Lancelot's the man these days/ For all his fancy armour and courtly ways./ All the other Knights fear him even Mordred/ They even whisper that he beds the Queen

ARTHUR: Your best horse – now!

CHORUS: So Arthur does what he does best/ He rides like a devil on fire./ But with every spark of his horse's hoof/ The kingdom is falling apart./ Through village and town, over bridge and ford/ In the smoke of the burning crop/ The people cry his name aloud./ King Arthur does not stop./ Ride like the devil, ride, ride!

SCENE 22: CAMELOT, GUINEVERE'S LAMENT

Believing that Arthur will never return, the Round Table breaks up. At the height of the mayhem, Mordred defects to the Saxons. Lancelot goes to Guinevere in her bedchamber.

LANCELOT: Nimue has had a son in Gaul./ They say he is the image of his father.

GUINEVERE: Kai?

LANCELOT: Apparently not.

GUINEVERE: I see.

LANCELOT: I am leaving now. /As always I offer you my protection/ My devotion and my love.

GUINEVERE: We nurse them back to health
So they can fight again
Lighting fires on shifting sands
To warm and feed our men
They have their noble scars of battle
We have our empty hearths
They burn the roofs and salt the earth
And take up again the warrior's path.

What choice do women have
When kingdoms fall apart?
When every hope is taken
All we have to trade's our heart.

CHORUS: The victors take the spoils
The losers live the dross
While turncoats turn each setback
Into profit from our loss

GUINEVERE: Were all those sad years wasted
Weaving on duty's loom?
A tapestry to an absent love
Bright threads, mocking my barren womb?

CHORUS: We weep for our poor country
We weep for all we've lost
For every hearth and every home has paid the cost

GUINEVERE: Now I am Queen of nothing.
This cloth you cannot mend.
He fathers bastards on that whore

Who once I called my friend.
I join my sisters as they trudge
The exile's path of pain,
My crown a heavy useless cap
That won't keep out the rain
We step among the bodies of the slain.

SCENE 23: ALLIANCES – REALPOLITIK

Bedivere manages to win Gawain back to Arthur's side. He tries to bribe and cajole the Tribal Chiefs but they cannot forgive Arthur.

CHORUS: Though Arthur is now a cuckold/ Yet he is still their King./ Some rally to him as he swears/ "I will rebuild Camelot"/ So the hero gives his word./ Gawain defects from Mordred's camp/ When Bedivere pleads with him/ Remember Kai, remember our youth/ And remember the dreams we shared./ Do not desert your King/ So Bedivere rides to the Tribal Chiefs/ Who stand at Mordred's side/ Ready to join with the Saxons/ To rip the belly of the kingdom open wide.

BEDIVERE: Remember the Saxons are your enemy too/ Forget the past and fight at Arthur's side/ He will restore your lands/ Caernarfon and Cumbria will be yours again/ He'll give you the right to raise your taxes/ and be even mightier than before.

CHIEFS: We all remember the beardless boy
That whelp, who cast us aside
Who tricked the sword from the magic stone.
And snatched Queen Guinevere as his bride.

Who made our people accuse us
Of a thousand imagined crimes.
He swore that he would right all wrongs
And give them better times.

He made our clansman brothers spit on us.
Taxing our cattle and draining our lands.
And if we protested?
He'd send his Round Table knights
To steal his tithe
Burn our barns and rape our wives.

We were no more than slaves!

CONSTANTINE: He bound us to his kingdom/ By breaking every law./ He mocked our gods/ He spurned our pleas/ He laughed in our face/ When we were on our knees.

CHIEFS: No!

CHORUS: With the mocking laughter of the Tribal Chiefs/ Ringing in his ears/ Empty-handed Bedivere returns to Camelot/ But for a company of knaves and fools/ And pikemen beyond their years/ He brings no hope for Arthur/ He just confirms his fears.

SCENE 24: BRITAIN, CAMLANN – ARTHUR'S LAST BATTLE

Heavily outnumbered and despite fighting heroically Arthur is beaten. Mordred kills Gawain and Arthur kills Mordred. But King Arthur is fatally wounded.

CHORUS: The Round Table is no more than two knights/ Gawain and Bedivere/ The Saxons have Mordred and the British Chiefs/ The Red Dragon has only Maelgwyn of Cumbria/ No other allies.

BEDIVERE: Now the red now the white.
Which of them will win the fight?

CHORUS: Which of them will win the fight?
Now the red now the white.

BEDIVERE: King Arthur, at his best/ Against these odds/ Fights as no man ever fought before.

CHORUS: Now the red, now the white.

BEDIVERE: When the traitor Mordred kills Gawain/ Arthur goes berserk/ And his strong arm strikes through/ That bastard's scheming heart.

CHORUS: The White Dragon wounded and bloodied fights back/ With poisoned arrows and treacherous blades/ Till sheer weight of numbers/ Brings Arthur's forces down.

CHORUS: Red Dragon, White Dragon.

BEDIVERE: And good King Arthur lies mortally wounded/ As the noise of battle fades.

CHORUS: Oh King Arthur! Red Dragon! White Dragon!

SCENE 25: BY A LAKE NO LONGER THERE

Arthur lies dying attended by Bedivere and Guinevere; together the three of them create The Legend.

CHORUS: How did Arthur die?
By a magic lake or in some sordid inn
A thousand legends the poets sing
Did he float away on a golden barque
With three golden Queens
And the humming of angels' wings
In the bull rushes or in soiled sheets?
As Lord Bedivere watched over him
We know he sent word to Guinevere
Who at the last returned to her King.

ARTHUR: I had a debt of honour to repay. It just took so long./ Yet I would say sorry, she was the noblest Queen.

GUINEVERE: Arthur it is me, I am here.

ARTHUR: I should have had a faster horse, forgive me Guinevere.

GUINEVERE: Speak to me, Arthur.

BEDIVERE: He cannot see you/ He is half out of this world already.

GUINEVERE: Yet he still clings to Excalibur.

BEDIVERE: I have tried to prise it from his fingers.

GUINEVERE: If only to wash him.

BEDIVERE: He will not let go, always the King, always the warrior.

GUINEVERE: That sword was always my only rival.

BEDIVERE: It saved us many times.

GUINEVERE: It is a curse. Saved us at what price?
We cannot live peace and make war.

BEDIVERE: The sword could be the hope
Of your defeated people.

GUINEVERE: The sword will be the rope
To hang them by the neck.

CHORUS: But then Queen Guinevere works her strong fingers under Arthur's hands and tries to
take the sword.
And by a miracle the King awakes.

BEDIVERE: Arthur sees Guinevere and revives.

CHORUS: He awakes – Arthur awakes!

ARTHUR: My sword is just a sword
No magic in it but the smith
Whose mighty arm beat out the sparks
To forge a better blade.

BEDIVERE: The sacred symbol of a better life.

GUINEVERE: A constant talisman of death.

BEDIVERE: A witness to the future.

GUINEVERE: The devil's very breath
I would take Excalibur and plunge it in my heart
If it meant my love and I
Could never be apart.

BEDIVERE: I see the Britons follow Excalibur like a holy star
To light their future path even in their darkest hour.

GUINEVERE: A pilgrimage of misery as bloody as before
The people slaves to weeping and endless, endless war.

ARTHUR: A legend does not lie.
It outlasts rust and bone,
Forgives us all those sins
For which we can't atone,
Wipes Time's slate clean
For the foolish and the brave.
Excalibur must lie with me
In my deep and watery grave. A legend does not lie.

SCENE 26: DUX BRITANNIAE – THE LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR

ARTHUR: They must not find my body, or Excalibur. If you love me, if you love our people, do this.

CHORUS: Arthur breathes his last.
Guinevere and Bedivere row him and Excalibur
To the deepest part of the lake.
They weigh him down with heavy stones
And say a prayer and sink him there
When Arthur breathes his last.
And our hero was wise
For as they slide his body
Into the water with barely a splash
And the ripples spread out around them,
Arthur's legend begins to rise.

GU & BED: With our falling tears.

CHORUS: Arthur's name spreads from mouth to mouth
East and West and North and South,
From the heart of a lake no longer there
Many years of barbarism follow this
The Plague bestows its fatal kiss
But with each dread decade
A vagabond Knight – but a true witness
Bedivere wanders always alone
Guinevere in silence prays
In cloistered silence away from a cruel world's eyes.

ALL: From mountain top to valley floor
All voices of the nation sing
The Legend ringing down the years
Of the once and future king
Rex quondam, rex futurus, dux britanniae.
By water's edge or flickering fire
From cave to castle, hovel to hall
A promise forged in steel and stone
He will return to save us all.
Rex quondam, rex futurus, dux britanniae.

BIOGRAPHIES



ANDREW OGILVY

NICK BICÂT

Composer / Keyboard / Guitar

Nick Bicât has composed extensively for film, television, and live performance. Twice nominated for BAFTA and Ivor Novello Awards, he has worked many times at the RSC and the National Theatre. His opera *The Knife* was nominated for best musical score in the 1989 New York Drama Desk Awards. His orchestral work *Under the Eye of Heaven* was performed at the Barbican and London Arena. Other concert performances include *When Will There Be Peace?*, an internationally televised open-air

concert for the International Red Cross in Geneva, and in 2000 *Symphony in Morris Minor*, performed in Oxford to an audience of 50,000.

Nick has written songs for artists as diverse as Emma Kirkby, Deniece Williams & P.J. Harvey, whose recording of his song *Who Will Love Me Now?* was voted BBC Radio 1 top film song for 1998. The London première of Nick's dramatic cantata, *Perpetua*, took place in Southwark Cathedral on 1 October 2014.



TONY BICÂT

Librettist

Tony Bicât has been writing lyrics for his brother's music since they were teenagers. They have maintained and refreshed their creative partnership over four decades and parallel careers in film, theatre and television. His collaborations with Nick include *Class* (BBC Radio), *Teeth and Smiles* (Ivor Novello Award) and *Symphony in Morris Minor*. Tony has written and directed many original TV films, all scored by Nick, including *Cotswold Death*, *The Laughter of God* and *Exchange of Fire* and two ground breaking TV musicals *Glitter* and *Facelift*.

Co-opting the great arias of Mozart, Verdi, Wagner and co, Tony wrote the libretto for *Flashmob the Opera*, BBC3's live TV opera from Paddington Station, which won numerous awards.

Tony continues to explore and experiment with lyrics and poetry. He recently performed as one of the finalists in the Oxford area heat of the Hammer and Tongue poetry slam and was involved in creating an instant pantomime for The Chipping Norton Theatre.



DAVID JONES

Arthur

David Jones studied at Oxford University and Trinity Laban. Recent highlights have included an exploration of major song cycles by Finzi and Vaughan Williams, recitals for the innovative Bach to Baby concert series and performances of Schubert's little-known works for male voice ensemble. He appeared as Ko-Ko in an acclaimed production of *The Mikado* with Co-Opera Co. in which 'his deadpan sense of humour and immaculate timing proved irresistible' (Opera magazine).

Upcoming projects include the premiere of *Oh, Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad* at the Tête-à-Tête Festival, playing Robin Oakapple in a new production of *Ruddigore*, and the performance of his own incidental music for a reading of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*.

He has played the title role in *Hamlet* and Ariel in *The Tempest* with Oxford Chamber Theatre, and first worked with Cantata Dramatica on the première of *Perpetua*.



EMILY BOOTH

Guinevere

Millie is a graduate of The Guildford School of Acting, where she gained a BA Hons in musical theatre. Whilst training she played the roles of Celia in *As You Like it*, Milly in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, the Chanteuse in *Marguerite*, Cinderella in the Yvonne Arnaud's pantomime *Cinderella* and Maria in *West Side Story*. Since graduating Millie has played a variety of roles, including Josephine

in *HMS Pinafore* and Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas* as well as sailing the seas as a principal singer with Headliners Theatre Company. Her concert performances include A Tribute to Dora Bryan at the Haymarket Theatre, London and a concert version of *West Side Story* at the Sheldonian Theatre, alongside Scottish tenor Nicky Spence with the Oxford Philomusica Orchestra.



GUY HAYWARD

Bedivere / Chorus

Guy started singing as a boy treble at Bath Abbey when he was seven years old. He won a choral scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he read Music, and understudied the title role of Don Giovanni for the 2008 Cambridge University Opera Society.

He studied in Cambridge until last year, taking an MPhil in Musicology and then a Ph.D. in Music Psychology/Anthropology, looking at how group singing forms community. He has given various song recitals, and has performed roles such as

Clock in Ravel's *L'enfant* (Edinburgh Fringe 2010); Body in Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione* (dir. Philip Thorby, Venice, 2011; Cambridge, 2012); and Pudens in Cantata Dramatica's staged oratorio *Perpetua* (2012, 2014).

He also performs with his satirical jazz duo Bounder & Cad (www.bounderandcad.me) who performed a vetoed Cameron/Clegg take on *Me and My Shadow* at 10, Downing St. for the Christmas Party 2013, and "pilgrim folk" duo Hayward & Parsons (www.awalkaroundbritain.com).



DARIO DUGANDŽIĆ

Kai / Mordred / Conanus / Chorus

Dario completed his undergraduate studies at Trinity College of Music under Ameral Gunson, Martyn Hill and Mary Hill and currently studies with David Barrell.

Stage credits include Papageno, Schaunard, Erster Schöfer (Daphne), Barone Douphol, Mozart's serfs Simone and Nardo, Death (*Der Kaiser von Atlantis*), Poeta (*Prima la Musica...*), Low Tim (*Kiss Me Figaro*, J. Ramster), Luka (*The Bear*), Titone (Bononcini's *Cefalo e Procris*), Betto, Fiorello, DancaOro, Yakuside, Albert (*Werther*, cover), Peachum, Commissaire (*Dialogues des Carmélites*).

Ensemble work includes ensemble in *Coram Boy* at the National Theatre.

Contemporary works include *Anatomy of Melancholy* (B. Tassie), *Without Warning* (Old Vic Tunnels), *Fight Music* (P. Venables, LSO), Edward Harris (*When a Man Knows*, R. Hugill), Craig/DC Tubbs (*The Face*, C. Bowers-Broadbent), Merlin (*Child Roland*, W. Godfrey) and *In Meadows* (J. Brown, St. John Smith's Hall).

For more information please visit www.dariodugandzic.com.



PEGRAM HARRISON

Gawain / Vortipor / Chorus

Pegram Harrison was a choral scholar at Clare College Cambridge, and has been a freelance musician in and around London for the past twenty-five years, singing regularly with various Oxford-based

ensembles: Choros, Encoro, Commotio, Sospiri and the Ashmolean Singers.

Pegram is also an associate professor in strategy at the Saïd Business School in the University of Oxford.



ROSEMARY CLIFFORD

Morgan-Le-Fey / Chorus

Rosemary Clifford gained a first-class degree in English Literature from the University of Bristol before beginning postgraduate vocal studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, from which she graduated with distinction in 2013. Recent operatic roles include Nancy in *Albert Herring* (Hampstead Garden Opera), Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* (Cooper Hall Emerging Artists) and Gertrude (cover) in *Fortunio*

(Grange Park Opera). She is an experienced oratorio soloist and made her solo Royal Albert Hall debut in 2013 singing Handel's *Messiah* with the Really Big Chorus. She is a member of the Royal Hospital Chelsea chapel choir, and is a Monteverdi Choir Apprentice for the year 2014-15.

Future plans include singing the role of Popova The Bear for Opera Anywhere during their summer 2015 season.



ROBERT JENKINS

Lancelot / Constantine / Ostler / Chorus

Robert was born in 1990 and completed his Bachelor in Music (Honours) degree at Birmingham Conservatoire in 2012, studying under Professor Julian Pike. Currently studying with Christine Cairns, Robert is a freelance tenor based in London. His opera roles include: Pang (*Turandot*), Damon (*Acis and Galatea*), Harry Easter (*Street Scene*), Mr Pasek (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Ferrando (*Così fan Tutti*, scenes), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*, scenes), Albert Herring (*Albert Herring*, scenes) and Cochenille (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*,

scenes). Solo oratorio performances include: Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Britten's *Serenade for Tenor and Horn*, Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *St John Passion*, and Mozart's *Requiem*.

As well as solo work, Robert sings with many professional groups, including: BBC Singers, Ex-Cathedra, Polyphony, Siglio de Oro and The Proteus Ensemble. Robert holds a position at Chelsea Old Church and is a regular deputy at Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral.



REBECCA ANN LEGGETT

Ygraine / Chorus

Rebecca Leggett (mezzo soprano) is a first year student at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London. She studies with Wendy Eathorne and is a chorister at the Old Royal Naval College Chapel Choir with Ralph Allwood MBE.

Opera and oratorio performances include ensemble/principal understudy in the community opera *Imago*, conducted by Nicholas Collon; ensemble/soloist in the Britten youth project *Into the Harbour*, both at Glyndebourne; Chorus/First Witch

in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* with the Kantanti Ensemble, conducted by Lee Reynolds; Mrs Sem in Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, ensemble/alto soloist in Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*; alto soloist in Vivaldi's *Gloria* with Nicholas Houghton and in Handel's *Messiah* with the Southern Sinfonia, and mezzo soloist for Rutter's *Feel the Spirit* with the East Sussex Bach Choir.

Last autumn (2014) Rebecca understudied the role of Flora in Britten's *Turn of the Screw* for the Glyndebourne Tour.



HELEN MORTON

Nimue / Chorus

Helen studied at Cambridge and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Jack Irons. She has performed throughout Europe and the USA, in particular with the Monteverdi Choir and more recently with the Joyful Company of Singers and has broadcast for BBC Radio, Classic FM and recorded for EMI, ASV, Naxos and Chandos. Her operatic roles have included Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*, Donna Anna in

Don Giovanni and Violetta in *La Traviata* in various London opera groups and one of the Seven Dwarfs in *Snow White* with Opera Factory. She is now based in Oxford and has performed Berio's Folk songs and Kurt Weill songs with Ensemble Ox and the soprano solos in Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* and Haydn's *Nelson Mass* with local choirs.



HANNAH ROLLS

Chorus

Hannah Rolls joined her first choir at the age of eight and she hasn't stopped singing since. After a studying for a Master's Degree in the History of Art at the University of York, she now works in publishing, specialising in children's books. She has studied singing with

Anne Linstrum, Stephen Shellard and Fiona Dobie and has sung with choirs including The Oxford Bach Choir, The Worcester Festival Chorus, Choros and Encoro. She now lives in London and sings with the Holst Singers.

ABOUT CANTATA DRAMATICA



MAARTIN ALLCOCK

Bass Guitar

Maartin Allcock is a multi-instrumentalist session musician from Manchester with 40 years experience, eleven years as a member of Fairport Convention, four years with rock band Jethro Tull, and has toured and recorded on well over 200 albums with such diverse artistes as Robert Plant, Yusuf Cat Stevens, Beverley Craven, Kieran Halpin, Ralph McTell, Dave Swarbrick, Mike Harding, Steve Tilston, Dan Ar Braz, Hamish Imlach, The Mission, Sally Barker and Judith Durham. Maart is gaining a reputation as a record producer

of Welsh traditional music and as a regular performer on the Italian prog-rock scene, and is booked to produce an album in Naples in May for rock band Cirque des Rives featuring singer Lisa Starnini. He has also published music books featuring the songs of Fairport Convention, Sandy Denny, Beth Nielsen Chapman and Richard Thompson. He has been working together with Nick Bicât since they first met in the 90s, and has contributed to many of Nick's TV and film scores.

www.maartinallcock.com



TIM MOUNTAIN

Keyboard

After working as a studio engineer for many years at the world famous BBC Maida Vale music studios, Tim moved to the Cotswolds to setup a studio and concentrate on composing his own music. He has produced compositions for BBC Radio/TV, C4, ITV, Commercials, Educational, Sporting, and Corporate productions. He has worked with bands and singers producing live as well as studio recordings. Tim has played in a whole variety of bands over the years varying from soul, blues and RnB to disco, funk and folk!

Recently he composed and produced the music for the highly acclaimed dance production *Chasing the Eclipse*, featuring Chantry Dance Company. An outdoor, high impact dance show, with immersive surround sound design and music. This year he completed a number of projects including a dressage commission and several corporate pieces. He is currently working on another dance production and various choral works.

www.timmountain.com



NAO MASUDA

Percussion

Japanese born Nao Masuda started composing and performing at the age of thirteen. While working mainly as a singer-songwriter and at times as an instrumentalist playing several instruments in unorthodox ways, she also produced and directed multi media events and exhibitions as an artist/designer.

In 2007 Nao took part in her first theatre piece as a solo live musician and has since provided various types of live and recorded music and sound effects for theatre projects

of diverse disciplines, as a musical director, composer, and multi instrumentalist.

In 2013 Nao was funded by Arts Council to lead a project to create musical sign language with both deaf and hearing artists (Music in Motion project).

Outside the theatre, Nao performs solo and in ensembles as a Taiko drummer and a percussionist in both national and international festivals including London Jazz Festival, concerts and events.

Cantata Dramatica is a not-for-profit organisation (charity registration number 1158027) whose objective is to commission and promote new music.

Our first commission, *Perpetua*, was premièred at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, in November 2012. In 2013 we commissioned two works: *Missa Aedes Christi* with music by Francis Grier and *Cantata Eliensis*, a collaboration with three different composers. In September and October 2014 we performed two London premières, as well as the first public performance of *Cantata Eliensis* in Grantham.

We work with a mix of professional and amateur performers at many different levels and we aim to provide a rewarding creative experience for all.

Chairman Nick Pitts-Tucker

Treasurer Julia Stutfield

Secretary Virginia Goode

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Cumberland Lodge for the opportunity to present this preview performance of Red Dragon, White Dragon, and to all our collaborators who have encouraged and supported us in this ambitious project. We would especially like to thank Peter Champness, Jeremy James and John Leonard for giving so freely of their time and expertise and Canon Edmund Newell, Principal of Cumberland Lodge, for his unfailing support and encouragement.

Performances of new and unusual works call for a high degree of creative collaboration between composer, conductor, singers, instrumentalists and our production team. We would not be able to embark on such projects without the generous support (financial and otherwise) of our Sponsors, Friends, Angels and enthusiasts, to all of whom we are immensely grateful. We would particularly like to acknowledge our major sponsors:

Pury Hill Limited

Blackrock Frontiers Investment Trust

Cantata Dramatica also works closely with **Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance.**

Producer Julia Stutfield

UPCOMING EVENTS

Our goal is not just to commission accessible, performable new music dramas, but to get them performed more widely in front of diverse audiences.

Cantata Dramatica welcomes your support in achieving this, whether by making introductions, building our contacts with venues, performers and Directors of Music, by fundraising, or by enthusiastic attendance at our performances and spreading the word. For more information have a look at the Supporters section of our website, www.cantatadramatica.com, or contact us at cantatadramatica@gmail.com.



RED DRAGON, WHITE DRAGON

An outdoor performance in the gardens of Cumberland Lodge. Doors open from 2pm for a family afternoon out with food and entertainment culminating in the performance at 5pm.

CUMBERLAND LODGE
SUN 5 JUL 2015, 2PM



CANTATA ELIENSIS

The story of the building of Ely Cathedral, performed in the Lady Chapel at Ely as part of a weekend of celebrations in honour of St Etheldreda.

ELY CATHEDRAL
SUN 26 JUN 2016, 6PM

Follow Cantata Dramatica on Facebook or Twitter for updates on new and current projects!



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