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THE CHALLENGE OF PLAYING MULTIPLE ARTHURIAN CHARACTERS

by

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B.A. Lee University, 2001

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
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in the College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the portrayal of multiple roles in a production of *Camelot*, written by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe. Performance and content analysis identifies and explores the difficulties and challenges in portraying multiple roles in this production, including the understudying of the leading role of Guenevere.

A detailed historical analysis provides background into origin of the Arthurian legend and an examination of its historical development. A social analysis provides information on the role of women in medieval society with a discussion of the customs and laws that applied to them.

Furthermore, a structural analysis of the script examines the plot and play structure. In addition, in individual sections is formal scene-by-scene analysis of the role of Nimue, Lady Anne, and Guenevere. A comprehensive rehearsal and performance journal also addresses the rehearsal and script development process and challenges faced as well as discoveries, adjustments, and choices made in performance from April 14 to May 30, 2004 at the Orlando Broadway Dinner Theatre. Specific entries include discussion of the challenges of playing minor roles while understudying the role of Guenevere, eventually played in one performance. Belinda Boyd and Christopher Niess, my thesis committee, have each provided a performance analysis of my portrayal of Nimue and Lady Anne. J.J. Ruscella, another committee member, has provided a performance analysis of my performance as Guenevere.

I dedicate this thesis to my Heavenly Father, who has provided for me this tremendous opportunity to develop my character, perfect my skill, and expand my knowledge. Thanks to Him for the wisdom to not only write an excellent paper, but also for the passion to write from my heart of the beautiful and amazing experience I had during the production of *Camelot*. It is to Him that I dedicate every word of this document that is the completion of the process He began over three years ago. To Him be the glory for the great things He has done in my life.

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I would like to thank Be Boyd for her encouragement throughout the entire process and the valuable time she gave up helping me complete this document. I would like to thank Christopher Niess for assisting me and challenging me to make this document the best it could be. I would like to thank J.J. Ruscella for his support and honest critique of my performance. Thank you for selflessly giving to help me become a professional that will make the UCF Theatre Department proud to have me as an alumnus.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe had a number of successes and failures in musical theatre before their production of *Camelot* opened in Toronto, Canada on October 1, 1960. Lerner was born into a well-off garment chain-store family. He received his education in Britain and at Harvard, where he first worked on college shows. Shortly after graduation he worked as a radio writer. In 1942 he met up with composer Frederick Loewe for the first time and the two worked on remaking a show called *Patricia*, a musical version of the successful play *The Patsy* done by George Grandee, J Keirn Brennan, and Barry Connors. They hired Lerner to redo the libretto and Earle Crooker to do the lyrics. They renamed the show *The Life of the Party*, but were unsuccessful at getting it any nearer to Broadway as *Patricia*. The year after this endeavor, Lerner and Loewe worked on *What's Up?*, a stylized comic opera piece which ran on Broadway for eight weeks. The team collaborated again on *The Day Before Spring*, which had a life of 164 performances at the Broadway National Theater. Lerner then explored the world of romantic fantasy and wrote the libretto for *Brigadoon*. He consciously constructed and wrote the piece in the revived Broadway operetta style made fashionable by the success of *Oklahoma!* Songs such as "Almost Like Being in Love" and "There But for You Go I" found popularity into the public. For his next piece, *Love Life*, he partnered with composer Kurt Weill, which ran 252 performances. He partnered again with Loewe for the vigorously romantic go-West-young-woman *Paint Your*

Wagon, which provided more popular songs like “They Call the Wind Maria” and “Wanderin’ Star.” Their collaboration reached a climax with the legendary success of *My Fair Lady*, which found remarkable success, marking itself as the most successful musical of that era of the American musical stage. ⁱ

Frederick Loewe, born in Berlin, a popular Operette light comedian, appeared on the musical stage in Berlin and Vienna, and in New York. “Fritz” studied music as a youth, but was unable to establish himself as a professional musician after he and his father moved to America at age 20. The first shows he produced were unsuccessful. Richard Berger’s *Salute to Spring*, with a time-wrapping libretto lasted just 20 performances on Broadway. He found success in collaboration with Alan Jay Lerner, and their obvious dynamic partnership finally led to the writing of *Camelot* in 1960. ⁱⁱ

In October 1958 when Lerner and Loewe were just about to go into rehearsal for *Paint Your Wagon*, their production manager Bud Widney placed a *New York Times* review of T.H. White’s *Once and Future King*, the story of King Arthur and the Round Table, on his desk. Bud said, “Lerner, here’s your next show.” Lerner immediately ordered a copy of the book, and before the book reached him director Moss Hart called him and asked him if he had by chance read the review in the *Sunday Times* of the book. Moss said it was a possible project. After reading the review Loewe scoffed at the idea of writing a play about a cuckold. “You must be crazy,” he said. “That king was a cuckold. Who the hell cares about a cuckold?” Lerner told him that people had been caring about Arthur for thousands of years. Though Loewe had strong feelings against the story, he agreed to read the book. Moss and Lerner instantly fell in love with it, and with some

enthusiastic persuasion, so did Loewe. After careful consideration of various producers, they decided to produce it themselves, and acquire the rights to the last three books of *The Once and Future King* from T.H. White.ⁱⁱⁱ

The team began the tedious task of writing the musical. Lerner had to answer the question of why did Arthur, a cuckolded husband, become such a hailed figure in popular French literature? Lerner found that of all the love stories that endured throughout the ages, the only tragic hero to survive the indignation of a faithless wife is Arthur. The legend of King Arthur was far more than a love story, but was one that expressed idealism because of the concept of the Round Table, which accounted for its indestructibility. According to Lerner, “Stripped of its tales of derring-do, its magic, love potions, and medieval trimmings and trappings, there lies buried in its heart the aspirations of mankind, and if Arthur lives at all, he was a light in the Dark Ages. If Arthur is pure fantasy, it is even more significant.”^{iv} So, Lerner created Arthur an innocent and ingeniously charming man, whom the audience would love, “forgive him anything, and follow him everywhere, even over the hot coals of tolerating his wife’s infidelity.” He also felt it was necessary to illuminate Guenevere’s positive characteristics, hopefully explaining to the audience her future adulterous affair with Lancelot, King Arthur’s best knight.^v

As Lerner and Loewe continued to write they began the task of casting the show. Lerner immediately thought of Julie Andrews to play Guenevere, the star of their famed *My Fair Lady*, who was still living in London at the time. She readily accepted the part. Hart suggested Richard Burton, then an unknown, for the part of Arthur, and he gladly

accepted the role. Robert Coote, who had played Pickering in London's *My Fair Lady*, was an excellent pick for the bumbling Pellinore. Shortly after they announced their plans to produce *Camelot*, Hart received a call from Roddy McDowall, who all but demanded the part of Mordred, Arthur's evil illegitimate son. Not long after Julie Andrews agreed to play Guenevere she coincidentally appeared on a television program in London with T.H. White, who lived an ascetic existence on the island of Alderney. Julie and her husband Tony fell in love with White, and bought a little house near his on the island. Lerner believes that by the time rehearsals started, Julie was more familiar with *The Once and Future King* than he was.^{vi} The production team did not find the right man to play Lancelot until the final day of auditions in the spring of 1959. Robert Goulet was undeniably handsome and had a phenomenal baritone voice, perfectly fitting the role of Lancelot.^{vii}

Lerner and Loewe worked together on the script for twenty-one months up to the first day of rehearsal on September 3, 1960. The first reading lasted more than three hours, without scene changes or intermission, and they had less than a month to prepare for the previews and the grand opening at the O'Keefe Center in Toronto, Canada. They chose to premiere the musical in this unknown, untried venue because the Centre's manager, Hugh Walker, offered them the theatre for no charge, and offered to cover all the expenses of transportation for people, scenery, trappings, and housing. Also, they desired to avoid the influx of brutal critics known as "dear shits" from New York while trying to hammer the musical into shape before its tryout in Boston. However, the public-relations staff of the Centre trumpeted the opening of this multi-million dollar

theatre, and brought in the “dear shits” that the producers had hoped to avoid. The opening show on October 1, 1960 ran for four and half hours, but the most crucial review that followed in *Variety* stated: “Obviously the present stage version of ‘Camelot’ is not the one that Broadway is going to see in finished form.” He commented further that the show needed to be trimmed to about two and half-hours. The production team immediately began working on this challenging task. In the next weeks to come among the scenes that they cut were an animal ballet that took place in the second act in the forest of Morgan LeFay, Lancelot’s song that musically explained Lancelot’s many quests, and twenty minutes from the beginning of the first act. Under this growing pressure, Lerner began hemorrhaging from a bleeding ulcer and was admitted Wellesley Hospital for three days. The same day the doctor released Lerner, Moss Hart suffered a heart attack, and was never able to return as director of the show. Hart insisted that no one else but Lerner continue on directing the show, and with much anxiety Lerner took on the task.^{viii}

Both Julie Andrews and Richard Burton were sympathetic and encouraging to Lerner, and after much deliberation he decided to cut out a large part of the second act and leave the very last pages untouched. He and Loewe then refashioned the song “Guenevere” so that just the chorus carries the plot.^{ix} In the third week of the Boston run, Lerner began writing a new song for Guenevere that he and Loewe both saw as essential in re-shaping the play. Two days before the New York preview Lerner wrote the lyrics to “Before I Gaze at You Again,” and ran through the song with Julie Andrews for the first time. According to Lerner, for the preview she sang the song as if it had been

there all along. ^x

On December 3, 1960 *Camelot* had its opening in the United States at the Majestic Theater. Audiences received the show warmly, though there was an absence of the usual laughter and applause. ^{xi} *Times* reviewer Howard Taubman did not applaud it either, for he wrote, “unfortunately...weighed down by the burden of its book. The style of the storytelling is inconsistent. It shifts uneasily between light-hearted fancy and uninflected reality.” However, he said that Lerner’s lyrics were “fashioned cleverly,” and Loewe had “written some pleasant tunes.” The show looked as if it was doomed to close early unless a miracle occurred. Ed Sullivan decided to devote a full hour of his television show to the works of Lerner and Loewe. Andrews, Burton, and Goulet appeared in costumes and sang some of the songs for the national television show. ^{xii} As a result the show ran for two more years, a total of 873 performances, but it was not until 1963, after the assassination of John F. Kennedy that the show became a hit. In an interview for *Life* magazine Jacqueline Kennedy said:

At night, before we’d go to sleep, Jack liked to play some records; and the song he loved most came at the very end of this record. The lines he loved to hear were: “Don’t let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot.” ^{xiii}

She then went on to say that there would be more great presidents to come, but there would never be another “Camelot” again. At this time, *Camelot* was on the road, playing at the Opera House in Chicago, and the night the article hit the news the theatre was packed. When King Arthur came to the lines that Jacqueline Kennedy quoted there came a sudden wail from the audience. It was not a muffled sob, but a cry of pain, and

the play stopped and for almost five minutes everyone in the theatre, on the stage, in the wings, in the pit, and in the audience, wept without restraint, and then the play continued. In the days that followed *Camelot* became a symbol to people all over the world that saw a bright new light of hope shining from the White House. Lerner states in his autobiography, “For myself, I have never been able to see a performance of *Camelot* again. I was in London when it was playing at Drury Lane, having arrived a few days after the producer, Jack Hylton, suddenly died. But I did not go to the theatre. I could not.”^{xiv}

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is broken into four major sections. The first section will provide historical research on the time period, place, politics and society, surrounding the ancient legend of King Arthur and the Round Table. The next segment will provide social analysis of women's role in medieval society. The third segment will present a plot and play structure analysis. The final segment includes a scene-by-scene analysis of Nimue, Lady Anne, and Guenevere's part in the play.

Historical Analysis

The legend of King Arthur and the Round Table is the basis for the story of *Camelot*, written by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe. Historical evidence suggests that there might have been a real Arthur, and writers over the centuries, including Lerner and Loewe, have built their stories off of some of this evidence.

The Origin of the Legend

The Romans invaded Britain around 50 B.C. under Julius Caesar's rule. However, it is not until the reign of the Emperor Claudius that the Roman domination of Britain began. Barbarian pressures began to increase on the lines and imperial armies

engaged with their enemies on their own ground. The Romans traditionally extended citizenship to barbarian races that they conquered, and recruited as many of them as possible to defend the far corners of the Empire. In the final years of the Roman occupation the Sarmatian legions defended the borders of Wales. These soldiers were superficially Romanized, and brought into Britain their mythology and their heroes. Some of the strange similarities between Arthurian legend and some Sarmatian myths exist because of this reason.^{xv}

The Roman Empire fell when a wave of invaders arrived from the East. The Celts came to settle on the island, but the ‘Britons’ subjugated these original settlers. However, they did not succeed in dominating the northern tribes who were supposedly of Germanic origin. The Picts or the Scottish did not integrate, but when the Saxons arrived, they received a warm welcome north of the Humber. In the south part of Wales, the Irish gained a foothold and integrated among the region’s earlier settlers. Wales would later to be one of the centers of Briton resistance to the Saxon advance, and even later, the Norman Conquest.^{xvi}

The pagan Anglo-Saxon invaders in the late fifth and early sixth centuries fought against the Romanized and Christianized Celtic inhabitants of Britain, the Britons. Associated with their resistance was a leader that Bede, a monk of Wearmouth and Jarrow speaks of in his *Latin Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (Ecclesiastical History of the English People). This is perhaps the most authentic historical story that describes the figure that is assumed to be the legendary author. The book completed in 731 is supported by fairly reliable continental sources and by archaeological finds. It

describes how various continental marauders plundered the rich counties of southern and eastern England and the people who eventually settled there.^{xvii}

The period of integration was gradual, and the Romans did not exit the country in a period of a few months. Many of the old campaigners settled in Britain when their period of service came to an end, and married native women and founded a family line. There are traces of Romanized aristocracy that tried to keep up Roman traditions, customs, and culture and continue to fight the Saxons and other invaders long after Roman rule ended. One member of this aristocracy was a ‘centurion’ named Lucius Artorius Castus, who was a sort of prototype for Arthur. Around AD 410 the ancient Britons also resisted the Pictish, Scottish, and Saxon invaders by regrouping and establishing a unified front against them. There is no record of a supreme commander that emerged during this time. The Ancient Britons lived in a multitude of separate minor kingdoms ruled by many petty kings who battled out their differences with immediate neighbors instead of uniting against a common foe. Written references indicate that in a period of twenty-odd years there was a pause in the Saxon advance and Britons were victorious against the Saxons under the leadership of an exception general. Scholars today believe that these written records refer to Arthur.^{xviii}

The historical analysis of the legendary King Arthur is partly guesswork. Gildas, a Celtic monk of the mid-sixth century is the earliest witness for the story of a British resistance against Anglo-Saxon invaders under the named leader that is assumed by some scholars to in fact be Arthur. In the “Ecclesiastical History of the English People” Bede writes the account of Gildas. Interestingly, Gildas’ religious perspective as a monk

viewed the Anglo-Saxon conquest as a punishment visited by God upon an erring people. (The medieval monkish writers generally took this approach in their explanations of disasters of all kinds, including earthquakes and plagues to a succession of particularly disreputable popes.) There is not much evidence to prove the existence of Arthur in Gildas' account, even though he wrote near the time when Arthur supposedly existed and about the battles that he was said to have played a prominent part. Gildas does mention a British leader who found an enormous battle against the Anglo-Saxons at Mount Badon around the year 500 A.D., but he calls the man Ambrosius Aurelianus.^{xix}

The *Annales Cambriae* (Annals of Cambria), which catalogues significant events year by year, also tells us very little. According to the annal, a chieftain, or king, by the name of Arthur won twelve victories. On the inside of his shield was the image of the Virgin Mary. At the battle of Mount Badon, he emerged victorious due to the fact that prior to the battle he did penance for twenty-four hours by reproducing the stage of Christ's passion. In addition, the *Historia Britonum* (The History of the Britons), formerly attributed to chronicler Nennius, contains a year-by-year catalogue of significant events. Literary scholars believe that an earlier version of the chronicle called *terminus ante quem* existed around 801 A.D. Supposedly, this chronicle gives the clearest picture of Arthur before Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his decisive work *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Geoffrey derived much of his information from this earlier work. The chronicle devotes a full chapter to Arthur's twelve battles, giving particular concentration on the last, great tragic Battle of Camlann.^{xx}

Historians do not know the extent of "Arthur's" victories or precisely when they

occurred. Archaeologists have searched for evidence to confirm their suspicions, but have found no convincing artifacts.^{xxi} Scholars of King Arthur have not been able to find any inscriptions anywhere that chronicle lists of kings. The only historical piece available is an ancient slab on the banks of the River Camel, near Camelford, in Cornwall. The slab lies near the supposed site of the legendary 'last battle' at Camlann where Arthur and Mordred died. Some Arthurian enthusiasts believe that this Ogham and Latin inscription from the sixth century refers to Arthur, but there is no other evidence to support this belief. The question of whether there was a real historical Arthur has never been answered.^{xxii}

Welsh and Celtic Legends

Unlike the British legend, the Welsh legend actually includes the character of Arthur. The first record of him is in the *Gododdin*, a commemoration of British heroes who fell at Caertrath about 600 A.D. written by Welsh poet Aneirin. His poetry presumably flourished in the seventh century, though his writings only survive in manuscripts from the thirteenth century. Later Welsh legends hail Arthur as a great warrior with superhuman powers, not virtuous or Christian. He appears for the first time as a great patriotic Christian national leader in the *Historia Brittonum*, a collection of historical notes attributed to an early ninth-century monk called Nennius. Here his enemies killed him in the triumphant and decisive last charge at Mount Badon in 516 AD.

Celtic legends of Arthur circulated for many years, mostly in oral form, but the only surviving written copies come from no earlier than the thirteenth century. Arthur appears a number of times in the collection of Welsh prose tales called the *Mabinogion* presumably dated from the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. In these tales he is usually associated with other warriors who have a permanent place in the later Arthurian tradition, particularly with Cei (Kay) and Bedwyr (Bedivere). In one of the tales in this collection called *Culhwch and Olwen*, he appears as the king of a well-known court.^{xxiv} This tale is far removed from the knightly world in which we usually find Arthur, but two of its features become typical in later stories about him. He is a ruler of the noblest court in the world, where the great heroes live, and all of the adventures are marvelous and strange. The anonymous author of *Culhwch* drew from a tradition that dates back to the ancient stories of Ireland. The central episode of this romance is the pursuit of the great boar Twrch Trwyth. This story is the basis for one of the accounts in *The History of the Britons*. Though there is no question of jousting or mail-clad warfare in the romance, there is hunting and journeys on foot through a landscape of the mysterious. Though the rich tradition of Welsh story-telling has not survived due to its relative isolation, something of the quality of performance survives in *Culhwch*. Scholars will never know what led to the recording of these storytellers' tales, but a great mass of the material circulated among the Welsh. From these Welsh tales comes the particular flavor of Arthurian romances that later develops.^{xxv}

Even though the character of Arthur persisted for hundreds of years in Celtic and

Welsh legend, he became more narrowly imbedded in cultural history with Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin prose *Historia regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*). This work dates to between 1130 and 1136 A.D., and meticulously accounts British history, including details of the reigns of king who never existed and of the numbers killed in battles that never actually occurred. However, authors erected the whole story of Arthur upon this pseudo-historical basis.^{xxvi}

Before Monmouth's work existed, the stories of Arthur largely circulated by word of mouth, but did not have a great presence in the world of literature. He drew from the Welsh tradition, from which he derives many of the names of Arthur's weapons and many of the names of his characters. He also followed *The History of the Britons* carefully, but his invented stories take place in the time period before and after the roman conquest. He masterfully created a portrait of Arthur, using borrowed material from all kinds of sources. His description of Arthur's birth, which Merlin arranges by disguising Uther Pendragon as the husband of the beautiful Igera of Cornwall, is like a similar tale in the romance about Alexander the Great. Geoffrey reflects the seventy years (preceding his writing of the book) of ambitious expansion of Norman power in the vast empire Arthur conquers. Other events such as William I's stay at York at Christmas 1069 A.D. might have provided information for some of the details, as well as the politics of his day: the Norman interest in bringing Brittany into their sphere of influence. All of Geoffrey's efforts were not in vain because he was in tune with what the public wanted – a hero-king. His writing was not merely a fictional history because it reflected the latest fashions in courtly behavior. His work was popular in the Middle Ages, and fifty

chroniclers used it as the basis for their account of the early history of Britain. Only a few questioned its accuracy.^{xxvii}

Historical Locations

The history of the British Isles has been turbulent, with cycles of invasion and contention for territorial supremacy. Though the Romans were probably the fewest in number of all the invaders, they exerted the most lasting influence on Britain during the early Middle Ages. This influence was crucial in shaping the Arthurian legend. The scene of the Arthurian legend is the kingdom of Logres, which bears little resemblance to the British Isles in 1534 (of which we have maps). The kingdom of Orkney, a place identified by the Arthurian legend, may be what is known today as the Orkney Islands, but the majority of important locations associated with the legend are a mystery.^{xxviii} However, a number of places cited by the first literary texts associated with the Arthurian legend have been identified. A few of these include Cornwall (Tintagel, Arthur's birthplace), Salisbury Plain (Stonehenge, monument to Pendragon), and the ancient regions of 'East Anglia' and 'West Anglia.' Some historians believe that the Cadbury Castle may be the site of the legendary Camelot. Archaeologists have found traces of Roman and Briton fortifications at Cadbury that prove the possible existence of a military structure and castle that existed around the 5th century. Some other possible sites for the kingdom of Camelot are further north, on the borders of Northumberland, where

Merlyn's teachers supposedly lived in a forest and wrote down the story of King Arthur dictated by Merlin. In addition, the ancient tower of Glastonbury, identified in the 12th century with the Celtic Avalon, is the place where the legendary fairies took the wounded Arthur after the last battle. To this day the hill is crowned with the ruins of this ancient tower that rises above the site of the medieval abbey. "It was in the Benedictine abbey, which had been partially destroyed by fire and was suffering major financial difficulties, that in 190, the tomb of king Arthur, complete with a magnificent Latin inscription, was discovered, and alongside what were assumed to be the bones of the king the remains of a head of gold hair identified as Guinevere's." Nothing remains of this tomb today. Though many possible locations mentioned in Arthurian legends exist, there is no sufficient evidence to link to any of these sites conclusively with Arthur.^{xxix}

Social Analysis

In order to portray the characters of Lady Anne and Guenevere, it is important to explore the social customs, traditions, and laws of the Middle Ages and how they applied to medieval women. This information influences the perspective and behavior of these characters in the particular social settings that take place in the course of the play.

Medieval Women

Maidenhood

The age in a woman's life that was known as maidenhood occurred in her teens and early twenties before she married. Maidenhood was a period of passage, immaturity, and incomplete womanhood. Unlike adolescent boys, maidens generally did not have the opportunity to enter apprenticeships in particular trades, but some girls did receive some formal schooling, though not in the universities, and some aristocratic girls had governesses. Many other girls from all different social levels left home to serve in the households of others. The general exclusion of women from public life closed off structures such as tithing groups to them. However, there were a few devotional associations in existence in some parishes of "maidens' guilds" run by women. Because

there was no organized structure, maidenhood was not as formalized a period of passage as male adolescence. In late medieval England maidens were caught between sexual maturity and the requirement of chastity. Maidenhood was a time of courage, perseverance, patience, self-sacrifice, temperance, and trust, as well as a time of disadvantage, displacement, and the fragmentation of identity. ^{xxx}

Young girls of the nobility as well those of lower status often worked in the royal households. This labor was labeled “service” and it aided the economic well being and the social status of others as well as of the maiden herself. There is record of a teenage girl by the name of Eleanor Ross who after her father Sir Robert died in 1448 became a damsel in Queen Margaret of Anjou’s household. Noble households highly valued and sought after these positions, and with Eleanor’s entrance into court society drew her into exalted circles. English society considered Eleanor’s work in the household the highest level of female service. Commonly the majority of the noble unmarried female population that served in royal and aristocratic households outside of their family could retain their positions after marriage and even into old age. In addition, those girls at the lower levels of the nobility often served families of the same status. These maidens provided companionship for the lady of the house. The lady of house was likely to have a husband who was frequently absent and adolescent children who were in service elsewhere. As well as companionship, these women were put to work with spinning, sewing, mending, cleaning garments, furs and linens, keeping vegetable and herb gardens, making potions for medicine and cosmetics and the rudiments of cooking. ^{xxxi}

In a household of higher nobility such as the duchess of Oxford or countess of

Bedford, a young woman generally had few household duties. Sometimes even after married these women retained their title of “damsel.” Damsels probably helped to tend to the infants and toddlers of the household, as well as performed various duties directly for the lady of the house. According to the “Harleian Regulations” of the late fifteenth century one of the noble women in service was required to bear her lady’s train when the lord and lady entered their chapel for morning mass. These noble women were also responsible for preparing their lady’s bedding in the evening by bringing the bed linen and pillows to the bed while the other attendants made a fire and grooms placed lights in the bedchamber and smoothed the bed. The woman known as the gentlewoman chamberer passed each item of linen to the grooms making up the bed. ^{xxxii}

Households also allowed damsels and gentlewomen to serve political functions. They were often useful advocates or go-betweens for ambitious men trying to gain the favor of a great lady. Their ladies might also entrust them with financial duties or errands, but the more responsible tasks that required independent journeys were usually given to the older or married ladies in service in the household. Medieval culture valued the maiden as a woman in “perfect age,” making them welcome in great households. Their display of splendor and beauty represent the strongholds of wealth and power. This presentation of maidens grew stronger towards the end of the Middle Ages. In aristocratic households the role of young women became increasing complex, especially in the late thirteenth-century and early fourteenth-century courts when a retinue of ladies and maidens accompanied queens and princesses during their frequent travels and made some provision for their wardrobes. By the late sixteenth century Elizabeth I dressed her

damsels in white, probably wanting to provide a flittering backdrop to her own “virginal” self-presentation in the presence of official visitors. In medieval society the maiden was the equivalent of a modern businessman’s “arm candy,” who reflected some of her glory back on the household which she served.^{xxxiii}

A salary did not always reward noble maidens, and frequently their parents had to pay the board of their daughters in other people’s households. However, some households paid for the shoes or clothes of resident maidens. Even at court some queens did not supply damsels with necessities. The variety of financial circumstances proves that money was not of the highest consideration for both parents and mistresses in the employment of maidens. The noble maiden’s service procured more of an indirect rather than a direct economic reward. Often these maidens met their future husbands while they were in service or their mistresses or other contacts assisted them in finding a husband. The entire family benefited from the strengthening of networks of noble daughters’ service. Though noble maidens had no real economic autonomy during their years of service, they had privilege, even if their lives were not their own.^{xxxiv}

Women’s Legal Rights

Medieval theology emphasizes that God created woman second to man. She is to be a helper for man. Legal codes of the day enforced the theory of female inferiority as a daily reality. Women did have some legal rights and abilities, but these usually

subordinated to the rights of men. Unmarried women and widows had greater legal abilities than married women, but the law excluded them from public offices of any kind. ^{xxxv} Men expected them to devote themselves to their feminine and domestic occupations. They could not serve the king either in the army or in any other royal service. Both the Church and the State plainly justified their denial of rights to women. Ecclesiastical law justified their denial of women's rights based on the idea that woman is the second creation and played a part in the Original Sin. Secular law justified their legal and civil restrictions of women on the basis of women's limited intelligence, craftiness, and covetousness. For this reason, women did not perform functions on the manor, or in the institutions of municipal authority, or in the systems of government of the feudal lords and kings. They also did not take part in the town councils and assemblies. Even on the manors, where single women and widows participated in the manorial court assemblies, they did not hold office or perform any function. ^{xxxvi} Ladies that married into the Crown felt intense pressure because her husband simply had so many advantages in law. Upon marriage, a woman was under her husband's authority. If she wanted to get out of the marriage because she was unhappy, the consequences were potentially serious. Her husband not only controlled her person, but also her property. In other words, any money or movable goods that she possessed belonged to her husband. Under common law a married woman had no right to make a will since she had no goods of her own. However, husbands frequently gave permission for their wives to make their own wills. ^{xxxvii} Noble women who inherited fiefs and ruled over territories participated in the feudal assemblies of their lords alongside the other vassals. If the fief inherited carried

with it a certain office, it was sometimes given to another person to perform, but occasionally she herself performed the office. ^{xxxviii}

Despite the extensive legal advantage that men had over women in the Middle Ages, the wills of later Anglo-Saxon England give no exclusive preference to men as heirs. A man by the name of Wulfgeat, for example, left his property to his wife, his two daughters, and a kinswoman despite the fact that he had a grandson. According to the law of Cnut, upon a man's death if no will existed, his property was to be divided justly between his widow, his children, and his close kin. Women did have the right to bequeath their lands as they themselves wished. Noble women bequeathing considerable amounts of land were generally required to share their estates with the rest of their family. ^{xxxix}

In the High and Late Middle Ages the legal system barred women from serving as judges or lawyers, and could not even appear as representatives of other persons in court. The only exception to this rule was if she appeared on behalf of her own husband. Women could not testify in court or serve as an oath-helper. Also, courts restricted women with property rights from bringing suit in civil law or from drawing up a contract or a will to borrow money. A married woman could only press a civil suit with her husband's permission. In criminal law both married and unmarried women could only press charges for bodily harm, for rape, and for insult, but not in any other matter. However, the actual punishment for a rapist in England and France was usually a monetary fine. Even when rape could be biologically verified, courts often held suspicion that the woman had enjoyed the act. The court occasionally pardoned a rapist

if he married the victim. ^{x1}

Though government limited women's legal rights, a single or married woman could be sued in the same way as a man. Women could be sued for non-repayment of debts, violations of contracts, and the illicit brewing of ale. Occasionally, the customers of women weavers charged them with pawning or selling good raw silk and weaving the cloth they bought from them from inferior materials. Many towns also had sumptuary laws that allowed townspeople to bring charges on women for excessive opulence of dress as well as for abusive and blasphemous conduct, trespassing, and fistfights. Other criminal charges brought against women include theft, heresy, witchcraft, arson, infanticide, and murder. ^{xli}

Women's Familial Role

Aristocratic and gentry women subordinated to their male peers in daily dealings, but were above men of lower social status. For example, a widow could control a household that included male apprentices, servants, and journeymen. Though a woman's class, occupation, marital status, and age determined the constructions of women, they did not overpower the idea of social, economic, political, and cultural subordination. In later medieval English society the centrality of family was crucial to economic organization, so laymen of all classes could not afford to shun women. The smooth running of society depended upon active, but subordinate women to produce successful

family units, which made many social groups facilitate an environment that would produce adult women with these characteristics. Mothers, father, sisters, brothers, female teachers, mistresses, and employers all participated in the production of approved femininity in young maidens. They taught maidens what could be called “active docility.” They were not taught to be completely passive, nor dominant, but to subordinate while still playing important roles in the family, religious life, and the economy. ^{xlii}

Women generally chose to not better their social position because the structure surrounding them would crush their aspirations. The medieval economy was never really wealthy or flexible enough to give the majority of women the option of independence from family life. The house persisted as the chief economic unit regardless of other economic conditions. Only well set-up widowed women could escape their household responsibilities. Only a woman with a genuine vocation or an outright aversion to marriage chose the single status because she could not abide by institutionalized subordination. Those women in well-off urban and noble families had alternatives to marriage, as well as those who chose lifelong singleness. However, lifelong singleness was only open to a few because of the poverty of most contemporary English nunneries. Society was generally hostile to and marginalized those women who chose to remain single, often driving them to poverty. Only a woman with a genuine vocation or an outright aversion to marriage chose the single status because she could not abide by institutionalized subordination. ^{xliii}

Medieval Marriage and Law

The Church determined the relevant norms, laws and customs of marriage since it considered it a sacrament. The minimum allowed age for marriage was 12 for girls and 14 for boys. A properly arranged marriage constituted three stages: negotiations between the families, betrothal, and marriage ceremony at the church. A Church representative was present for the betrothal and the signing of the marriage contract. At the church door the bride had to provide a dowry and the bridegrooms had to pledge property to his wife in the event that he died before her. The piece of property was known as the dower, and it usually amounted to one third or one half of all of his assets.^{xliv}

The Church banned polygamy under the influence of Roman law and because of its ideas about the aim of marriage. The church prohibited divorce, and in certain cases it also prohibited separation. Couples sometimes separated on the basis of their property. A couple who chose to separate was not permitted to remarry. Only if the Church tribunal could be persuaded that the marriage had never been valid, was there a possibility of annulling a marriage. The Church had a number of laws relating to the familial proximity of marriage partners. From 1065 to 1215 persons related to the seventh degree could not marry, and a person could not marry a relative of their deceased spouse. Also, the church prohibited marriage between person with spiritual proximity, such as the godfather or godmother of a child. Therefore, persons could declare a marriage invalid only for the following reasons: if they discovered that the partners were relatives to a degree where the Church banned marriage, someone coerced one of the

partners into the match, or the marriage had never been consummated because of the husband's impotence. In addition, unlike Germanic law which only required the consent of the bride's father, brother or some other male relatives, ecclesiastical law by the end of the twelfth century required the consent of the bridal couple alone. A valid marriage consisted of two agreeing partners, not consenting families or the consummation of marital relations. However, young people of various classes without consenting families marry were still unable to marry, and secular law often punished those who chose to marry without familial consent. Generally, noble persons were the most limited in choice. Noble families exerted strong pressure on young girls in which marriage would entail financial contracts between the families.^{xlv}

Noble marriage was largely a matter of family strategy where material concerns were of utmost importance. Children were not supposed to marry until puberty, but the Church allowed betrothal from the age of seven onwards. Noble families often followed this practice of betrothing their children so young in the interest of lineage. Marriage among the nobility was strategically controlled and well regulated in the public domain. Noble families generally tried to arrange their children's marriages within a circle of near equals, distant cousins and neighbors, which helped them, strengthen them individually and collectively. However, even in the predominance of arranged marriages, there was not an absence of love in the marriage relationships. Often affection developed after marriage.^{xlvi}

The church punished both man and woman equally for infidelity in marriage. Ecclesiastical courts usually required adulterers to enter a time of penitence which

included fasting, prayer and temporary celibacy, fines, and sometimes even a period in the stocks. Secular courts also tried and punished adulterers. In the Central Middle Ages in the nobility there was often private revenge for adultery. There are recorded cases of cruel revenge against adulterers. Occasionally, a husband would take revenge against the lover, and leave his wife to mere humiliation. Fulk Nerra, count of Anjou, avenged himself against his wife, and burned his wife Elizabeth alive.^{xlvi}

Though secular and ecclesiastical court usually imposed similar punishment on adulterous men and women, they were sometimes more lenient towards men. In some regions a married woman who committed adultery with another man, whether married or bachelor, was considered an adulterer, while a married man was only considered an adulterer if he had relations with a married woman. However, the level of strictness of courts varied. Under the legal code of Frederick II a woman caught in adultery had her nose cut off and was banished from her husband's home. Her husband could keep her from mutilation by choosing to forgive her, but he could not keep her from public lashing.^{xlvi} Acts of vengeance by the husband were more common in the nobility than in any other social status. A woman who committed adultery was not only an infidel to her husband, but an offender against the honor of the entire dynasty.^{xlvii}

The Church was sometimes not as lenient with women as they were with men because it wanted to guard the sexual virtue of woman and keep her from sin. Medieval society honored sexual chastity as woman's most important quality together with obedience to her husband. One medieval author lists a series of evils: a king without wisdom, a master without counsel, a knight without valor, a rich man without generosity, an

old man without religion and a woman without chastity.¹ Young unmarried women serving in households away from their immediately family were forbidden to participate in any sexual activity. If employers found their male and female servants in compromising circumstances within their own home, they could enforce marriage between the two servants. Girls' premarital chastity was so important because of the concerns of lineage. Also, residents' behavior affected the reputation of the household and in the community. In mercantile families the level of interaction between men and women was highly controlled in terms of flirtation and courtship. Parents of aristocratic and gentry girls living either at home or in service at court or another great household ensured that their daughters had chaperones. These chaperones were often under the supervision of older ladies-in-waiting.^{li}

Noble households guarded the virginity of young women, but between the lines of illicit and licit behavior was the realm of flirtatious interaction, playfulness, humor, and titillation. In the great noble households young men and women spent their days in visual and physical proximity to one another. Though the ladies and their attendants slept in all-female chambers at night, these rooms were often rearranged during the day for eating, socializing, working, and business. High-ranked male and female servants sometimes dined at the same tables at both feasts and on a daily basis.^{lii} In the large castles of the Central Middle Ages none of inhabitants enjoyed privacy. The lord and lady of the house slept in one of the upper rooms of the tower, and there was constant traffic on the staircase leading to the room. In rooms nearby slept the soldiers of the guard, and doors in between these rooms were usually open.^{liii}

Sexual interaction was also central to court culture. In the tournaments and jousts men and women festively celebrated their sexuality. Author Froissart details a tournament in 1390 hosted by Richard II in London that opened with a parade of sixty ladies on palfreys with each lady leading a knight with a silver chain. This was a playful symbolic inversion of power roles that represented the courtly sexual bonds of knights and ladies. A narrative account of the marriage of Richard, duke of York with Ann of Norfolk in January 1478 describes jousts that followed the wedding where the men competed for the admiring ladies. The jousts were not only an occasion for the men to display their physical prowess, but were also a chance for women to view and assess men's attributes. Medieval clerical authors recognized this charged sexual atmosphere and ritualized forms of flirtation, and warned against the temptation for lechery.^{liv} Perhaps it is not merely coincidence that at the jousts Guenevere first feels passion for Lancelot.

Women with Power

In contradiction to the great legal and public restrictions placed on women, there were a number of noblewomen in the Middle Ages who wielded powers of government, unlike any women in the Roman or Germanic society or in Western Europe before the twentieth century.^{lv} Many of these women had to fight to exercise authority, claim their inheritance, or to oppose an unwanted divorce. In some cases they had to fight to retain

power or defend their rights. However, whenever they did have the opportunity to participate in an official function, men treated them equally as the ruling authority irrespective of their sex.^{lvi} Men working with women in politics, religion, and scholarship as colleagues, recognized women's political and intellectual authority. Surprisingly, medieval society often valued and trusted friendship between women and men. Men often preferred in some cases to work with a woman instead of a man because a woman generally mediated and negotiated without the need to defend her honor in a male-dominated world.^{lvii} They nobly represented their sex in these roles and set a models for others, showing others that these roles could be assumed well by their sex. These women essentially rose above their sex and acted like men.^{lviii}

Well-educated noblewomen also participated in a number of leisure-time activities. They were expected to know how to ride, breed falcons and release them during the hunt, play chess and backgammon, weave and do embroidery, to dance, sing, recite poetry and tell stories, and even to read romances and poetry. Women who ran their manors often went on pilgrimages and attended tournaments, so riding served a practical purpose. All other leisure-time activities were for passing the time. Not all noblewomen were given education in all of these skills, especially in singing and dancing because they required natural talent. Particularly those noblewomen who lived in castles participated in these activities because of infrequent social gatherings. Women also attended tournaments dressed in their finest garments in order to encourage the competitors. Occasionally a knight would wear the colors of his lady who would sometimes remove her jewels and throw them to the winner of the tournament. These

noblewomen also accompanied queens and female fief holders in processions as they entered towns. The queen often would enter a city in a separate procession from the king, and her noblewomen would accompany her.^{lix} However, in the smaller and isolated castles women often had long periods of time of loneliness because husbands were often absent from home, and visitors and wandering troubadours did not reach every castle, and when they did come to visit it was only at long intervals. In these periods of loneliness women often could not utilize their knowledge of poetry, dance, falconry, or chess. Sometimes noblewomen interacted with local peasant wives, irregardless of social status, because they had no other women to befriend.^{lx}

Religious Patrons

Though society generally did not allow young maidens to act as religious patrons, some fragmentary historical evidence indicates that young noblewomen could participate in cultural patronage on their own or as witness to their parents' gifts.^{lxi} Noblewomen in the twelfth century exerted power and influence through cultural patronage. The interaction between writers and women stimulated the productions of literature written for specific women. Relationships that developed between churchmen and noblewomen indirectly influenced the context of the production of specific texts. As patrons of books and literature, the twelfth-century secular noblewomen played a role in the procuring, commissioning and selection of literature. Women's patronage of the church was

inherent to aristocratic culture because they donated grants of land and emoulements as well as interior furnishings, books and relics. Spiritual counsel was often important in the relationships between leading churchmen and important political women such as the queen, or a powerful countess. Their relationships with clerics stimulated the production of letters and spiritual texts and yielded political dividends that could be used to influence political events of significance. For example, Adela of Blois, the daughter of William the Conqueror, was a queen patron of the poet Godfrey of Rheims, who in 1080-5 praised her as a “royal virgin.”^{lxii}

As religious patrons women had the power to grant land, giving them a magnified public role is they were in heiress or a widow. Though women generally did not formally hold public office, such as chamberlain, mayor, juror, sheriff or other administrative roles in twelfth-century England, evidence suggests that at least one woman of a noble household, Matilda de Percy countess of Warwick, had a female official named Julianna employed as a chamberlain. Her office as chamberlain might have been familial and heritable but in was also linked with the patronage and power of Matilda de Percy.^{lxiii}

In addition to patronage in a personal/spiritual context, women’s patronage extended to political, religious, personal and familial, educational and other cultural realms. Beginning in the Carolingian period all the way through the later Middle Ages, there was female involvement in book production. Women’s patronage played a role in the twelfth-century England and Normandy in innovative forms of literature and the development of secular literature. They patronized new forms of literature. Women of lesser nobility patronized writers and poets. As writers themselves, they actively fostered

the production of books. Secular women who patronized historical works desired to have a role in the preservation of the commemoration of the dead. Cultural patronage was a legitimate exercise of power for the noblewomen in the Middle Ages in which they could exert lasting cultural influence as well as influence contemporary society.^{lxiv}

One noblewoman whose activities have been scrutinized in detail is Elizabeth de Burgh, lady of Clare. She left behind fine estate records, including both accounts and statements of what she could expect from her estates, as well as household accounts and her will that was drawn up in 1355. All of these accounts are impressive in both quantity and range. Over a period of 14 years she was widowed three times by noblemen Earl of Ulster, Theobald de Berdon, and Roger d'Amory, and from 1327 to 1360 she was able to enjoy her own estates in peace. Her household account rolls detail her lavish lifestyle. Her own demesnes provided the basic foodstuffs for the household, and there were constant and considerable purchases of fish, wines, spices, cloths, and furs from London suppliers and from fairs. In noble households all "business" centered around the head of household who presided over a clearly delineated hierarchy. In Elizabeth's household there was a strong element of theatre. At meal times Elizabeth presided her great chair with all the members of the household playing their roles. She brought in a number of guests to enjoy the quality of food and entertainment, including minstrels. Even within her household were members clothe according to their rank, and her wardrobe had a medley of colors. She was also a patron of the minor arts. She regularly employed goldsmiths, who create beautiful private chapels. There is record of her possessing gold rings with rubies and diamonds, as well as silk belts and gold chains decorated with silver

or enamel and with pearls and diamonds in their design. In addition, her beds had coverlets of fur and expensive cloth, and some of her clothes were embroidered. She also gave her support to priests and scholars to help advance her own officials. In a number of churches in England, Wales, and Ireland she held the right to nominate the priest. The clothes and furs made in Elizabeth's household in 1343 were made for her estate officials, relatives and members of her affinity, including a list of fifteen knights, 21 clerks, 93 esquires, 4 sergeants, 9 lesser clerks, and 45 attendants of her household. She also gave donations to the Prior and Convent of Ely, the Walsingham Priory, the Greyfriars in London, as well as providing most of the funds for the rebuilding of the Augustinian Priory at Clare. She founded two new friaries, one in Ireland and one in Norfolk, but is most remember for her foundations of Clare College in Cambridge England.^{lxv}

Women as Regents

Medieval women involved in a male world of secular or religious government often participated as regents for the head of state, and were expected to make and enforce decisions or to persuade husbands or sons to do so. They also provided justice and protection and mediated between hostile parties, to take an active role in fighting heresy, and to give generously to the church. These women did have the right to be involved in ecclesiastical appointments and negotiations for imperial succession rule the lands they

inherited, and act as regents for male relatives. There are quite a few examples of women regents. Women in regent positions technically only filled in for their husbands or sons or other male relatives while they were away or too young to exercise their power.^{lxvi} There are numerous accounts of women regents in the East and the West from the fifth to the thirteenth century whom popes and other rulers praised. For example, Blanche rules for her son Louis IX of France in the thirteenth century. A number of regencies also were not temporary. Brunhild rules her husband's lands, Austrasia and Burgundy for thirty-eight years as regent. In addition, in the tenth century there was a female "summit" that most likely included the Ottonian empresses Adelaid and Theophanu, regents for Otto II; perhaps Adelaide's daughters by different husbands, queen Emma of France, and Matilda, abbess of Quedlinburg.^{lxvii}

Orderic Vitalis, William of Newburgh and William of Malmesbury are three key narrative sources that detail the actions that women took to support their husbands who were in political office. These recorded women played important roles in the decisive political campaigns of 1141. For example, Orderic Vitalis states that Matilda countess of Chester and Hawise countess of Lincoln acted as decoys in a ruse by which earl Ranulf managed to capture Lincoln castle. Also, William of Malmesbury in *Historia Novella* describes the events after the battle of Lincoln. After the capture of Earl Robert of Gloucester and King Stephen, Earl Robert relied upon his wife, the countess Mabel to support his political strategy. Stephen's supporter cajoled and threatened him to abandon the empress, but he remained steadfast in his opposition because he knew that his wife would send Stephen to Ireland should anything happen to him.^{lxviii}

During the times women were regents or rulers the highest authority was concentrated on them. However, they were also involved in the governments of their husbands as royal or noble consorts, and had jurisdiction over their own holdings or carried out various administrative or diplomatic duties. Popes encouraged women not in power to persuade their husbands to do the right things or to stop doing wrong. Pope Nicholas I praised Byzantine empress Theodora when she was regent for her son for defending the church even against her husband while he was alive and for fighting heretics. Ivo of Chartres praised Queen Matilda for her religious devotion. These religious and secular leaders often approached women for advice and information and help by mediation. Both religious and lay men alike recognized the authority of women in positions of power and worked with accordingly. These men did not necessarily encourage women to retain their power in the world over retiring to save their souls.^{lxix}

The Clothing of Women

The distinct of classes in England made heraldry an important part of their culture. Its primary function was social display. It was on the field of battle and tournament, and on seals and on funeral monuments, as well as on dress, domestic plate, caskets and chests, tiles, wall paintings, in stained glass and on manuscripts. Female's involvement in this decoration was strong. For example, the tiled pavement in the church of the Cistercian abbey of Hailes in Gloucestershire founded by Richard of Cornwall, the

brother of King Henry III, includes his arms as well as those of his three wives, Isabella Marshall, Sanchia of Provence, and Beatrix von Falkenburg. Heraldry was an important part of fashion because of the spirit of exclusion in England. Aristocratic seals from the twelfth century depict ladies wearing the latest fashion in dress, the tight-fitting gown with long manches. In other seals women of nobility wear fur-lined cloaks and elaborate headdresses. These headdresses were the epitome of female vanity even though men paraded their own nobility in their wives' dress, indicating their ability to provide for them the latest fashions. Various members of the social strata were often the subjects of sumptuary legislation. In 1337 parliament legislated that only knights and ladies should wear fur. Though this may have been prompted by commercial or fiscal considerations, the social statements these legislations contain are clear. One could determine a person's social status based on the apparel they wore.^{lxx}

The legend of King Arthur and Round Table originates from around either the Carolingian period or Romanesque period. In the Carolingian period dress was sophisticated. Clothing fit carefully, and was made of finer-woven fabrics. Women wore chemises, which were the under tunics next to the body, and on top of them they wore a wider-sleeved tunic somewhat like dalmatics. A semicircular mantle was usually fastened over the shoulders, and a large kerchief covered the hair. In the Romanesque period the new laced tunic known as a bliaut was worn by both men and women. Married women wore a kerchief that covered both the head and the neck, and both men and women wore mantles that were usually half-circles fasted with a brooch on the right shoulder, or they had an opening for the head. For travel women sometimes wore a

collared and hooded outer garment. Usually the outergarment had a long tail and a scalloped collar. Necklines on women's dresses were usually bordered in embroidered bands and might be blue, rust, purple, red, ochre, or yellow, but no matter how bright they were, they had a slightly muted earthly tonality. By the tenth century a new style of dresses had wide, open sleeves that were longer than the arm.^{lxxi}

The bliaut was one of the most popular of women's garments during the Romanesque period. The bliaut fit the body tightly and was laced under the arms or up the back from the neck to the hips. Below the hips the skirt spread out into a semicircular shape that gave a large amount of fullness to the hem. Wider bell shaped sleeves spread out from the elbow or from the armseye or hung down to the calf with a hole halfway down for the arm. The court bliaut that came to full development about 1150 had a skirt that was cut separately and sewn on at the hips. The top might be creped or honeycombed in texture, possibly through a smocking technique, and the bottom might be made of a very soft fabric that was sewn on with a multitude of fine pleats at the hips. Knotted silk cord, cut leather, or linked chain at the hips richly girdled the wide, open sleeves.^{lxxii}

The chief fabric of the Carolingian and the Romanesque periods was wool manufactured domestically in France. In the beginning of the Carolingian period there was great use of stripes and plaids in weaving and clothing textures were coarse. By Romanesque times there were beautifully subtle, highly drapeable, soft textures. Undergarments were made of linen that was manufactured domestically, however, cotton was imported from Egypt until the twelfth century. Silk came from Byzantium in all its

varieties, and after the beginning of the Crusades it was imported directly from the Orient.^{lxxiii}

Plot and Play Structure Analysis

In order to understand the characters it is important to look at the play structure, and the sequences of events in the plot. The following section provides a discussion of the divisions of the play, elements of exposition, inciting incident, point of attack, major dramatic question, protagonist's goal, climax, and resolution in Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe's *Camelot*.

Exposition, Inciting Incident, MDQ, Point of Attack

The audience enters the play's action with the exposition, or presentation of information revealed in the very first scene, which explains the inciting incident, or the event that lit the fuse of the play's action before the curtain went up. King Arthur has a teacher named Merlyn who lives life backwards. Merlyn has taught Arthur about life. King Arthur and Guenevere's father, the King of Camillard, signed a peace treaty (before the curtain went up) in which Arthur would gain Guenevere as his wife. Arthur confesses that he is nervous about meeting his new queen in "I Wonder What the King is Doing Tonight." Guenevere, who is traveling by carriage to Camelot, runs away from her carriage and sings "The Simple Joys of Maidenhood," expressing her contempt towards the marriage. She would prefer to have the chance to enjoy her maidenhood instead of marry a king. After her song she meets Arthur, whom she thinks is a stranger intending to carry her off on an adventure. She tries to talk him into running away with her, and

Arthur realizes that she is entirely reluctant to marry. Before revealing his true identity, he tries to convince her to stay in Camelot because it is a perfect place for “happ’ly-ever-aftering.” By the end of the song Guenevere has clearly warmed up to Arthur and idea of staying in Camelot, but then the court procession enters and reveals that he is the one whom she must marry. Arthur then tells her about his past and how he became king by pulling the sword out of the stone. He then confesses that when he laid eyes on her for the first time he decided in his heart that he had a reason for being King and wanted to be the wisest king of all, but he will escort her back to her carriage and have her returned to her father because she clearly does not want to be his wife. She then decides that she will marry him. Their royal marriage is the point of attack of the story, or the event that begins the play’s action and allows the audience to perceive the plot line and the major dramatic question: Will Guenevere and King Arthur’s marriage and the peace of kingdom remain stable? Merlyn’s words foreshadow conflict in the marriage, “But Lancelot and Guenevere! Did I warn him of Lancelot and Guenevere? And Mordred?”^{lxxiv}

Complications, Climax, and Resolution

The equilibrium of the story is stable until Lancelot arrives in the time that elapses between scene 2 and 3; five years later. At first, Guenevere scorns the prideful Lancelot and the marriage is maintained. However, in the jousting tournament Lancelot brutally wounds Sir Lionel and miraculously brings the knight back to life with a healing touch.

After the tournament Lancelot and Guenevere confess their love for each other. This is the first major complication in the plot that changes the course of play and introduces the protagonist's goal (Guenevere): to maintain her marriage with Arthur while having a love affair with Lancelot.

The entrance of the antagonist Mordred, King Arthur's illegitimate son, presents a major complication. Mordred disrupts the peace between the knights and makes them want to leave Camelot and return to their homelands, as well as schemes to prove Lancelot and Guenevere's affair and accuse them of treason. The climax of the play occurs when Mordred, surrounded by knights, catches Lancelot and Guenevere together in the queen's chamber, and war breaks out in the kingdom. The climax answers the major dramatic question and destroys the protagonist's goal – the marriage and the peace of the kingdom can not remain stable.

The resolution shows the universe of the play in a state of equilibrium and finishes the story. In act two, scene 8 Arthur offers forgiveness to Guenevere for her betrayal of him, and Guenevere goes away with Lancelot. Arthur meets young Tom of Warwick who tells him that he has heard of the Knights of Round Table and wants to fight in the war. Arthur commands him to return home so people will remember that the Knights of Camelot went questing for right and honor and justice. He then knights him Sir Tom of Warwick. Pellinore returns from the battle and asks Arthur why he is taking the time to talk to a young boy when he has a battle to fight. Arthur points to young Tom and says that they have won their battle and what they did will be remembered.^{lxxv}

Structural Units

Act One of *Camelot* has 11 scenes and 12 song numbers, and Act Two has 8 scenes with 7 song numbers. Like other American musicals, including Lerner and Loewe's other famed musical, *My Fair Lady*, the song helps to expand upon individual character's internal point of view, as well as create the magic and mood of the grand production. The solo songs are essentially monologues written to music, and help the audience to understand why the principle characters choose to take a particular course of action. The incredibly witty song lyrics reflect the personality of the characters, as well as provide comedic relief in the midst of a serious plot. For example, King Arthur's first song "I Wonder What the King is Doing Tonight" in the opening scene speaks of his fear of meeting his bride-to-be. The audience immediately sees him as not a stately, wise and courageous king, but a very human one with very real fears.

Character Analysis

Analysis of Nimue

Nimue's Presence in Arthurian Literature

In medieval literature the titles “The Lady of the Lake,” or the “Dame du Lac” denotes several female characters whose frequent namelessness makes them difficult to distinguish between because they betray their fairy or quasi-fairy nature. When the writer did name the Lady, she might be called Eviène, Niviane (or Niniane), Nyneve, Viviane, or Nymue, (as in Lerner and Lowe’s *Camelot*). According to Arthurian legend, the Lady of the Lake is one of the fairy women who gave Excalibur (the sword) to Arthur and, sometimes, as the person who raised Lancelot. She is often considered as a “split-off” of Morgan LeFay. In the Prose *Lancelot* Ninianne is one of the fairies. She “knew the powers of words and stones and herbs, which allowed them to retain youth and beauty and enjoy whatever wealth they wished.” In *Lancelot* she is the same character as the Lady of the Lake, who takes *Lancelot* away from his mother and raises him. As she mentors Lancelot, she emphasizes that the purpose of knighthood is to defend the Holy Church. This is a highly Christianized characterization. Modern French writer Rene

Bajavel centers part of *L'Enchanteur* on Merlin's relationship with Viviane. However, in Bradley's *Mists of Avalon*, Viviane is High Priestess of Avalone, and Nimue, Niviane, and Viviane are separate characters. Nymue is the name that Malory gave to his "Chief Lady of the Lake." She entombs Merlin in order to preserve her virginity. According to Bradley, Malory could not tell tales of Arthur without including the characters of Morgaine and the Lady of the Lake. "One place where the female characters sometimes assume their full measure is in depictions of the fairy world, which may then cast light on the romance." ^{lxxvi}

Fairy Characters

In most of Chrétien's works he depicts a fairy world in addition to a human one. In this fairy world were a host of otherworld women who often interacted with the other human heroes of the story. "The romance world may have depended upon its audience's knowledge of the fairy one, for the romance offered itself as an improvement over that world, even as it often sought amelioration and enhancement from the magic ladies." However, the separation between the two worlds was not neat or uncomplicated because in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the romance drew upon fairy tales in numerous ways. ^{lxxvii}

In early twelfth century literature, supernatural women who divide their time between the other world and human one are called fairies. They are more beautiful than

the most beautiful mortal women are, and they immediately inspire love. The romance texts of 1160-1220 A.D. describe the supernatural natural of fairy women, but do not classify them with the title “fairy.” In a number of Arthurian legends, the word “fairy” never appears, though the work seems to call for it. With the use of an imprecise vocabulary to describe the fairies is the intention to stylize the text to create the mystery world. Though the title “fairy” was not attached to the mythical romances written in the beginning of the twelfth century, the fairy nature of certain female characters is obvious. In these early twelfth century romances before supernatural appearances within the story, are a whole series of descriptions of the supernatural world that replace the actual naming of the fairies. Writers generally setup the “marvelous” in the first narrative sequences. ^{lxxviii}

In the *Lancelot-Grail* cycle, many of the adventures are marvelous tales, and many of the characters qualify as fairies. In this work, however, only two characters qualify as fairies: Morgan and Dame du Lac. The text never explicitly states that Morgan is a fairy, but her title is *Morgue la fee* (“Morgan la Fay, Morgan the Fairy”). Also, the *Huth Merline*, which speaks of the lake of fairies when it mentions Excalibur, does describe neither Morgan nor Viviane as a fairy. In the *Lancelot-Grail*, the Lady of the Lake is never classified as a fairy, except in one instance – the famous scene of the abduction of the young Lancelot. A fairy, with the characteristic of a crafty enchantress, comes to carry off Lancelot into the lake. However, the fact that the prose romance of the early thirteenth century also described fairy characters in a rational way reveals how no established set of fairy traits existed. ^{lxxix}

Literature from the Middle Ages depicts two types of fairies: the Parcae, whose classical image was transformed by popular tradition, and the ladies of the forest who often interact with mortals. The ladies of the forest were later known as fairies in the twelfth century when they entered into learned culture. The word fairy became distinct from the character of the Parcae. Then, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, these two distinct identities melted into one new figure in literature, with the combined character of loving goddess and mistress of destiny. After the Middle Ages, fairies had no other countenance, and the fairies of our modern-day tales have felt the influence of the romantic creation in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.^{lxxx}

Mallory's *Le Morte D'arthur*

The Chief Lady of the Lake, Nymue has a significant presence in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D Arthur*. She is the woman whom Merlin loves who accounts for his disappearance. She imprisoned him after he taught her all the magic art that she desired to know. With the exception of the Vulgate *Merlin* Sequel, all major versions in medieval literature identify her as the Lady of the Lake. She is also called "Niniane" in the Vulgate *Lancelot* and the *Suite du Merlin*, and "Viviane" in the Vulgate Sequel. Though in Arthurian legend she is responsible for the disappearance of Merlin, she is not represented in medieval fiction as being an evil character.^{lxxxi}

In Malory's tales, she is given a number of roles, none of which are evil. She

appears in the whole of Malory's *Arthurian* in his collection of assorted tales and in the narrative sequence. Malory has two Ladies of the Lake, and one of them is called Nymue. Malory depicts her in her role of benign helper, and presents her as the bold and helpful female who generously aided King Arthur and his knights. In seven instances, Malory calls her Nymue, and in seven other instances variations of the Lady of the Lake. Both of these titles refer to the same character. Arthur sees the Lady of the Lake going up on the lake where her sword Excalibur is held aloft by an emerging arm clothed in white samite. Arthur promises to fulfill a future request and she gives him the sword in exchange for his promise. A little later, in the tale of Bailin, she enters the court and demands that Arthur keep his promise by decapitating either Bailin or a certain damosel whose sword Bailin has taken. Bailin completely rejects the request, and cuts off her head for revenge. Arthur then reproaches Bailin for killing the Lady of the lake who was under his safe conduct. He then gives the Lady a noble burial.^{lxxxii}

There are three other references to Nymue in Malory's book. Malory does call her Nymue in the adventure of Pelinor, but in the tale that follows, Malory tells of her relationship with Merlin, he calls her "damoyssel of the lake." After the story of Merlin's entombment, are two references to her again as "the damoyself of the lake." In the one of the incidents she puts Merlin under the stone. Altogether, Nymue appears in ten distinct actions or references spread throughout *Le Morte Darthur*, some of them include: the stories of Arthur's battle with Accolon and Morgan's magic mantle, the adventure of Gawain, Pelleas, and Ettard; and in the tale of the poisoned apple. In one of her appearances she shuts the dotting Merlin into his living grave, and in another she saves

Lancelot and aids Arthur and his queen. In the narrative sequence her characterization is accepted with good logic. She progresses from a damosel in distress to a sorcerer's apprentice and then finally to a benevolent sorceress on the side of good knights and particularly in Arthur court.^{lxxxiii}

In one section of *Le Morte Darthur*, Merlin goes everywhere with Nymue. He often tries to craftily detain her some place privately until she forces him to promise that he will practice no enchantment upon her or he will never have his will with her. However, she deceives him with this promise in order to protect herself. Nymue becomes tired of this pressure and wants to find a way to get rid of him. She slyly persuades Merlin to go under a great stone to describe to her the marvels he says are there. At the close of chapter five of the book, the entombed Merlin tells Bagdmagus that only Nymue can help him out of there, but she implicitly refuses to do so.^{lxxxiv}

Nimue's Scene

The number of cuts that Lerner, Loewe, and Hart made in the development of the show were significant, deeming every scene and character as significant, even Nimue, who only appears in the one scene. As previously examined, her character is better developed in other Arthurian legends, especially in Malory's *Morte Darthur*. In creating her character for performance, these details provided a substantial background for understanding her character.

The script answers few questions about Nimue's origin and background, but it is necessary to answer the questions of where, when, who, what, why, and how in order to create her as a real person in performance. The research about her presence in Arthurian legend provides possible and likely answers to the questions, however some of the answers must be fabricated.

Script's Description

In the first scene of *Camelot*, Merlyn tells Arthur that he does not have time to teach him about love and marriage because he is “due to be bewitched by a nymph named Nimue, who will steal my magic power and lock me in a cave for several centuries.” Arthur comments that Merlyn always mentions Nimue coming to take him away when he is displeased with Arthur. Merlyn claims that he does not mention Nimue's soon arrival because he is angry with Arthur, but simply because it really will happen at any moment. The audience learns from this scene that Nimue has the ability to change herself into whatever form she desires, even a bat. This is all to be learned in this scene about the nymph called Nimue: she has stronger magical powers than Merlyn, and she could come in any form, any minute.^{lxxxv}

In Act 1, Scene 2, Sir Dinadan and Merlyn talk about the destiny of King Arthur, and just as Merlyn starts to talk about what will happen to him five years later, the voice of Nimue sings from the distance. Merlyn suddenly stops as she sings “Far from day, far

from night...Out of time, out of sight..." Merlyn then tells Dinadan that after the Battle of Bedegraine a formidable event will occur. Then, the audience hears Nimue's voice again singing, "Follow me...Dry the rain, warm the snow...Where the winds never go..." She stops singing and Dinadan asks what will happen on that fateful night. Merlyn says that he can not remember. Dinadan apparently does not hear it, and the voice continues singing, "In a cave by a sapphire shore. We shall walk through an em 'rald door. And for thousands of breathless evermores my life you shall be." While she sings Merlyn tries to ask her if it is really she, and begs her to not come yet because he needs to warn Arthur of the future. He wails that she should wait a little longer until he tells Arthur everything he needs to know about Lancelot and Guenevere and Mordred. Merlyn keeps begging Nimue to wait, but then realizes that Nimue has already taken away all of his magic. The music swells, and Nimue continues to sing, "Only you, only I, world farewell, world goodbye, to our home 'neath the sea, we shall fly, follow me." Merlyn shouts goodbye to Arthur and says that he no longer has his memory of the future and he does not remember anything of the joys and sorrows that Arthur will experience. According to the script, he continues up the stairs and disappears.^{lxxxvi}

Approach and Style of the Play

Nimue's character easily fits into the combination of tragedy, reality, and fantasy. She is one of the two fairies that appear in the play, and her presence helps to create the

magic of the story for the audience. The operatic quality of her song adds to the ethereal mood of the scene, and makes the audience imagine her as a beautiful creature. She transcends the reality of the play because she is not human.

If Nimue did not take Merlyn off to a cave, he would have been able to warn Arthur of Guenevere, Lancelot, and Mordred, and the plot of the story would have been greatly altered. Her act of removing Merlyn from the story is a hint to the answer to the Major Dramatic Question: Will Guenevere and King Arthur's marriage and the peace of the kingdom remain stable? Merlyn becomes frantic when he realizes that he did not warn Arthur of Guenevere and Lancelot and Mordred, which is a clue that all will not be well in both the marriage and the kingdom in the future.

Location

The scene takes place in the afternoon a hilltop outside of Camelot, a kingdom in England. According to the script, there is "a large tree with great branches reaching high and out of sight, and a small hillock beyond the tree."^{lxxxvii} One might imagine it as a very magical setting with beautiful landscape.

Nimue has walked to this setting from the lake, since her title is also "Chief Lady of the Lake." She sings that she will take him to a lake with a sapphire shore. The cave is near the lake, which Nimue prepares for Merlyn. She fills it full of flowers and soft needles for him to have a bed. She works on the cave for the entire day before and all

morning, and decides to leave because this is the day she has chosen for Merlyn to go away with her. She has been to this location many times because she frequently watches Merlyn and Arthur as they talk about life. She knows it is time for Merlyn to go, for Arthur has learned all that he needs to know as a human.

Time

The time period of the play is the Middle Ages, but time is irrelevant to Nimue because she is a fairy. In the scene in which she appears it is winter on a clear afternoon and a light snow is falling.^{lxxxviii} She wears a long green and gold dress with long, flowing sleeves and a medieval style headpiece. In performance the dress prevented quick movements, so it was necessary to walk as a weightless entity. Though the social structures of the day do not affect the carriage of Nimue's body, her strength and purity keeps her carriage rather regal.

Characteristics

Nimue has both very human qualities and mystical qualities about her. She moves between the real world and the fairy world. According to Malory, she is often in trouble herself, and is seen as a damsel in distress. At other times in her life she has been Merlyn's apprentice, and travels around with him on many exciting journeys. Sometimes she is a benevolent sorceress who aids the good knights.^{lxxxix}

Nimue has fallen in love several times and one time in particular with Merlyn.

She is like Morgan LeFay in that she can speak things into existence, and knows the power of stones and herbs. She will retain her youth and beauty forever, and because of this knights often fall in love with her when she comes to their aid. In Lancelot's adolescence she mentored and taught him that the purpose of the knighthood is for the defense of the Holy Church.^{xc}

The lyrics of the song also indicate Nimue's nature. The lyrics are poetic, and invoke magic and a trance-like state. It is perhaps the breath-taking description of the place to which she is taking him that creates the magical mood of the scene. She speaks of the sapphire shore, the emerald door, perfect weather, where they will be far away from the real world in between earth and sea.^{xcii}

Objective, Tactics, and Obstacles

Nimue's desire is to enchant Merlyn and lure him away from Camelot to a cave. She wants Merlyn's full attention, which she gains by her haunting voice, and sparkling colorful appearance. In performance movements were slow, for Nimue has complete control of the situation. Merlyn is incapable of resisting Nimue. She removes this obstacle as she waves her hands around when Merlyn tries to remember Arthur's future. According to Merlyn in scene 1, there was to be no way of stopping Nimue from luring him away, so the audience knows even before it hears the sound of Nimue's voice that she will accomplish her goal.^{xciii}

Analysis Lady Anne

The script does not provide the background of the character of Lady Anne, details of her background must be invented. Lady Anne comes from the aristocratic household of Sir John Malory. Her father serves in King Arthur's court on the jury. She was born in Camelot not far from the castle and was reared in a happy household with one brother. Her relationship with her parents was very good, and she was a well-liked child. She stayed by her mother's side and helped her run her own household, and had the privilege of receiving schooling by private tutors that came to her house from the time she was 8 years old. Her teachers noted her to be a very clever and pleasant girl who found great joy in reading the literature of ancient authors. They encouraged her parents to find her a household of high noble status where the lady of the house would appreciate her charm and cleverness. As a result of her father's close ties with the king, when she was sixteen years old she came to serve in the king's house, and Queen Guenevere immediately took a liking to her because of her charming sense of humor.

With time Lady Anne became Guenevere's most beloved companion and attended to Guenevere's well being in the household. When she expressed an interest in the court cases of the kingdom, Guenevere saw to it that she became a lady of the court, and included her in the retinue of ladies presented at the knighting ceremonies. Lady Anne enjoys participating in these ceremonies, and loves to dress up in the court dress.

Present

Taking part in court sessions and keeping Guenevere abreast of the gossip in the kingdom has become Lady Anne's favorite "duty" in the household. In addition to her discussions with Guenevere about the court sessions, she spends much time keeping Guenevere up to date on the happenings of the kingdom outside of the castle. She and Guenevere get along very well because they both like to talk about politics and also sorcery. Lady Anne loves to hear the stories from Guenevere about Arthur's experiences growing up with the wizard Merlin. Though she likes to give the appearance of being a very moral person, especially around her father, her affinity to gossiping proves otherwise. She has no conviction about occasionally fabricating the details of the "true" stories she tells Guenevere about the people of Camelot. Although Lady Anne is not extremely religious, she obeys the laws of the Church of England and attends mass regularly.

As a servant in the royal household Lady Anne takes great pride in her duties. One of her duties is to prepare the queen's bedchamber for bed every night, and another is running errands for the queen and teaching the queen embroidery. She loves to do embroidery and has made many beautiful pieces that she has given to the queen on special occasions. Most of her duties are easy, and she loves the queen so much that she does not feel like they are work. As a young noblewoman she is required to attend all the jousts that the king and queen attend. She loves to attend them because she enjoys watching Sir Lionel, her favorite knight, compete with the other knights, which he

usually defeats. In her spare time she has the opportunity to read books from the king's library that Guenevere chooses for her. She spends many evenings reading these books, and has a vivid imagination and sharp intellect.

Scene-by-Scene Analysis

Lady Anne does not speak in each of the scenes in which she is onstage. However, in order to give importance to her character throughout the play, it is necessary to take a look at her actions in each scene and examine her objectives and obstacles. As a member of the ensemble of actors, her actions are closely related to the objectives and obstacles of the other ensemble actors and principal actors in the play.

“The Lusty Month of May”

In act one, scene five, Lady Anne enters the stage for the first time. She sings and dances with the ensemble on this bright and sunny May day. The ladies' costumes are all similar – a blanket-like weaved material in solid pastel colors with flowers sewn on the dress in random places. Lady Anne's dress is pale lavender in color. Each lady wears a wreath of flowers on her head with ribbons streaming down the back, as well as pink cloth ballet slippers. The lights come on and each individual couple enters the stage either

chasing each other or teasing one another flirtatiously. Lady Anne runs out on the stage holding Sir Lionel's hand and laughing. She grabs a ring with ribbons and flowers from one of the ladies who hands them out to all the other ladies. The moment Sir Lionel and Lady Anne stop at center stage right, next to the platform, Guenevere enters the stage from the audience upstage left stairs. Everyone bows to her, and she begins to sing. All stand and watch her sing about the lusty month of May "when everyone goes blissfully astray." ^{xciii}

Lady Anne and Lionel are courting, but they have not known each other for very long time at this point of the story. Guenevere certainly alludes to some very "cheeky" things when she sings of the lusty month of May, but Lady Anne is amused, not embarrassed, because she has already privately confessed to Guenevere that she is having a terribly hard time not doing a "wretched thing or two" with Sir Lionel! For this reason she has no shame in openly flirting with Sir Lionel, just as the other knights and ladies who are dancing and singing with her on this beautiful day. She has been taking walks with Sir Lionel, and she has often wished that he would kiss her. She is infatuated with him and feels that he is the most skilled knight in the kingdom. He adores her, too, because she is sweet and pretty. Lady Anne enjoys dancing with Sir Lionel because he is so much fun and so kind to her. They constantly laugh at each other throughout the song while they dance because they are in a euphoric state of infatuation. Part of the choreography involves motioning in Sir Lionel for a kiss, and then quickly bumping him away when he gets too close. Finally, at the end of the dance, she can not resist, so she kisses him on the cheek.

When King Pellinore enters the scene, Lady Anne finds him just as amusing as Guenevere. She laughs hard when he says that he does not have the foggiest idea where he is. Guenevere walks away from him at one point in the conversation to quietly comment to Lady Anne on Pellinore, and she encourages Guenevere to invite him to spend the night. The script does not include lines between Lady Anne and Guenevere, but Arthur does mention at one point that Guenevere and Lady Anne spend time together. Guenevere has a better relationship with Lady Anne than any of the other ladies and would be most likely to comment to Lady Anne than any of the other ladies. Also, this moment of interaction between Lady Anne and Guenevere developed in performance naturally. Their quick conversation connects Guenevere and Lady Anne and keeps her from being just a smiling face and observer of the scene.

Arthur brings in Lancelot after King Pellinore exits and introduces him to Guenevere and everyone else. Chris Jorie directed the ensemble to stay on stage during this scene as Lancelot, Guenevere, and Arthur converse about the training program. Lady Anne finds Lancelot arrogant and pretentious, just as everyone else in the court including Guenevere. As Guenevere tries to subjugate him, she occasionally winks at Lady Anne who finds Lancelot's mention of noble Christian principles outrageous because he presents himself in such an arrogant matter. The scene closes and Lady Anne internally applauds Guenevere when she asks the final question, "Have you come to grips with humility lately, Milord?"^{xciv} She feels Guenevere put Lancelot in his place very well. She always exits the scene quietly conversing with the ladies about the "big-headed" Lancelot.

“The Jousts”

For perhaps the most energetic ensemble number in the show, the ensemble enters the grandstand facing the field from both sides of the stage and chats for a moment until the king and queen enter. Lady Anne enters in a simple rust-colored one-piece satin dress. In order to create the reality of the scene, in a “stage” conversation she asks Sir Lionel if he is ready to joust. In each performance (in order to add variety) she asks him a different question, or flirts with him a little bit and tells him that she knows he will have no trouble beating Lancelot. When the king and queen enter everyone bows to them, and immediately the music begins. Sir Lionel shouts, “Sir Dinadan’s in form and feeling in his prime,” and the ensemble echoes back, “Yah! Yah! Yah! Oh, we’ll all have a glorious time!” Lady Anne means this when she sings it, for she loves to attend the jousts. Since she and Lionel have been courting she loves to attend the jousts because she has someone specific for which she can cheer. As she sings with the ensemble, she bends her knees as she sings lines such as, “Oh, charge him, Dinadan! You have him now so charge him, Dinadan!” Christy, the choreographer, directed the ensemble on the left side of the stage, to focus progressively in three specific spots on the back wall of the theatre and then to the center to watch where the blow takes place. For the first, “Here comes the blow,” everyone on stage left with Lady Anne quickly turns their bodies and bends their knees to look at the specific spot on the wall. As all heads move to focus on each spot, each person lifts their bodies up in anticipation for the blow that takes place in the center. The

right side does the movement going the opposite direction, from right to center, where all exclaim, “OH, NO!” Lady Anne thought for sure that Dinadan would have easily defeated Lancelot, so the blow exasperates her and makes her more nervous about the second joust. ^{xcv}

Following the first joust there were spoken lines between the ensemble members. Lionel says, “Twas luck, that’s all it was; pure luck and nothing more.” Lady Anne completely agrees with him because she does not want to believe that Lancelot has as much skill as he says he does. Sir Guilliam stands next to Lady Anne and says, “The Frenchman struck him first, but the blow was not that great,” and Lady Anne says, “Sagramore will open up his pate.” In other words, Sagramore knows a trick that Lancelot does not know that will allow him to knock him off his horse. Sagramore runs out onto the field to joust, and all begin to sing again. This time everyone has more anticipation because Lancelot already defeated one of the best jousters in the kingdom. One of the ladies screams, “Crack him!” Lady Anne screams, “Whack him!” She gets so carried away with enthusiasm that she whacks Sir Guilliam who stands next to her. The audience catches this comical moment, as Lady Anne non-verbally apologizes to Guilliam for whacking him so hard. The ensemble assumes the same focus positions as they watch for the blow. Lancelot knocks Sagramore off his horse, and everyone screams, “OH, NO!” Patrick, our musical director, directed the ensemble to sing this second “OH, NO” with more anguish than the first one. Everyone worries now that Lancelot may prove them all wrong and demonstrate physical perfection just as he said.

^{xcvi}

Immediately after the blow, Lionel runs off to joust against Lancelot, and with even more enthusiasm than the first two jousts, sings, “Oh, charge at him and throw him off his horse!” Lady Anne is especially excited because Lionel is jousting this time. Lionel rides faster than they have ever seen him ride, and they are all sure that Lancelot will go down. However, Lancelot runs him through with his spear, and Lady Anne sings high soprano notes for “Oh, no! Oh, no! Sir Lionel is down! Dear God it isn’t true! Sir Lionel is dead! The spear has run him through!”^{xcvii} Lady Anne is horror-stricken. If Lionel did go down, she only expected he would have a bruise or two. She watches with great fear as the knights bring Lionel down the aisle and up onto the stage for King Arthur to check his pulse to see if he is truly dead. Lady Anne holds her breath and is about ready to cry as he checks for Lionel’s pulse. When Arthur nods that he is dead, Lady Anne almost bursts out into tears, but she is so shocked that she can not react to the situation largely emotionally. Lancelot bends down to pray for Lionel, which greatly touches Lady Anne’s heart and she hopes that maybe, Lancelot might truly perform the miraculous. After a few seconds that seem like an eternity Lionel takes a deep breath and everyone watching gasps at the miracle. Lady Anne looks at Lancelot with wonder and amazement, and then tenderly at Lionel. In those moments her scoff-full attitude towards Lancelot changes to a respectful one. After Guenevere bows to Lancelot, Lady Anne and everyone else bow to Lancelot for performing such a great miracle.

“The Knighting”

In “The knighting” the ladies and gentlemen of the court file into the great hall in a processional. The ladies each wear a formal court dress with a train and a large round headpiece with a beautiful cranberry-colored chiffon veil that drapes over the back the headpiece. Elegantly each lady holds the train of the dress and the veil in her left hand with palms facing up and walks out in a step-touch fashion. The heavy headpiece requires proper carriage of the body to keep it from tipping off the head. The ladies of the court cross each other on a diagonal, walk in one circle, cross each other again diagonally, bow in towards the center, and wait for Pellinore to bring in Excalibur. Everyone crosses to opposite sides of the stage and stands in position while Dinadan calls out the names of the knights who step up are knighted by King Arthur and step back into their position. After King Arthur knights Lancelot, the lights slowly dim and everyone exits the stage in the blackout.

Act Two, Scene Four

It is the day that Guenevere is to give the prizes at the cattle show, and Lady Anne and the other ladies must escort her to the show. In the simple satin rust-colored dress (that she wore for the jousts), she and the other ladies enter the scene and find themselves in a very awkward situation. When they enter she and Lancelot abruptly let go of each

other's hands and try to act as if they were not holding hands. However, Lady Anne and the other ladies saw this, and Lady Anne is uncomfortable when Guenevere asks her if it is time to go. Chris Jorie explained that it is one of those awkward moments that we all have had at one time or another in our lives. It is the feeling that you have walked in on something that you feel you should not have. Lady Anne hesitates as she replies that it is time to go, and nervously helps the other ladies put Guenevere's cloak on her.

Guenevere explains to Lancelot what she will be doing that afternoon, as if to remove the awkwardness of the moment, and Lady Anne says that she has the list of winners. When she hands the list of winners to Guenevere, she looks quickly at Lancelot to see if he looks uncomfortable, too. Lady Anne notices that he does look uncomfortable, but Guenevere diverts her attention and says that she is pleased because the Aberdeed Angus has won for a change. The ladies follow her off while casting accusing looks behind her back.

There is awkwardness in the moment between Guenevere and the ladies. This scene needs this tension because Mordred enters in the next scene and quickly learns of their affair. The love affair disrupts the balance of the story, and in this scene tension begins to mount leading up to the climax.

Act 2, Scene 8

Four of the ladies enter in this scene, including Lady Anne who is in charge of the nightly preparation of Guenevere's chambers. They have prepared her chambers for bed, and they quickly exit the scene when the lights come up and wish her to sleep well.

Each lady curtsies and bows and wishes the queen a good night sleep. Lady Anne is the last of the four ladies to say, "Sleep well, your Majesty." ^{xcviii} This is a bit of business that the ladies do every night to tuck Guenevere into bed.

"Guenevere"

Lancelot flees Camelot after Mordred discovers he and Guenevere in her chambers. The court rules that Guenevere must burn at the stake. "Guenevere" describes the court's ruling, Arthur's torment, Guenevere walking to the stake, Lancelot rescuing her, and the knights being slaughtered in the yard. The ensemble sings this song as members of a Greek chorus. One of the men sings the first verse, the rest of the men enter and sing the second verse, and then the women join them to sing the rest of the song. The same simple rust-colored satin dress is the costume for the song. Chris Jorie directed the ensemble to look forward while singing and show no expression. In between various lines, the ensemble changes positions slightly while various characters speak to King Arthur and Mordred. At the end of the song this ensemble member is on

the stage left platform for the last couple of phrases.

This song is very dramatic and would normally be sung by a much larger group of singers, so each ensemble member sings with as much volume as possible. The soprano notes are very high, and only two sopranos sing the high soprano part. The lights produce a red glow on the stage, and a spot follows each of the characters that act in between the lines sung. This song is very different from any of the other song numbers in the show, because the ladies do not sing as the people of Camelot, but as members of a Greek chorus. The identity of each person singing is not important. It is most important for the story to come through to the audience in this song. When the song ends ensemble members stand all across the stage at different levels and there is a blackout.

Finale

All but a few members of the cast enter from the stage right aisle in two lines while Arthur and Tom of Warwick finish their conversation. The ensemble stops just before the proscenium arch of the stage and sings the first few lines of the “Finale Ultimo” softly, and then sings the last couple of phrases loudly facing the audience. The lights blackout and the cast bows.

Analysis of Guenevere

Guenevere's Presence in Arthurian Literature

Before Guenevere was ever known as Lancelot's lover, she had a long existence in Welsh tradition as Arthur's wife. Though Arthur's name appears in early chronicles, Guenevere's does not. She does appear in a Celtic tale, the *aithed*, which is about the abduction and rescue of a woman. She appears for the first time as Arthur's queen in extant literature in the Welsh *Culhwch and Olwen*, and in Geoffrey's *Historia* where she engaged in acts of adultery and committed high treason with Mordred. Three other Welsh texts: *Peredur*, *Owein*, *Lunet*, and *Gereint and Enid* include Guenevere in a positive light, although they were written after Geoffrey's *Historia*. The three Welsh texts probably date back to the thirteenth century, and do not hint of her adulterous nature, as other contexts did. ^{xcix}

The romances of King Arthur and Guenevere constructed a whole biography of both Arthur and Guenevere. During the turbulent times when the Saxons tried to take over Camelot, Arthur followed Merlin's advice and offered support to the King of Carmelide, which Lerner and Loewe called Camillard according to T.H. White's *Once and Future King*. This neighboring kingdom probably paid tribute to the kingdom of Logres, and the people suffered from an onslaught of pagan 'giants,' and the Saxons, too. According to legend this king had a beautiful and accomplished daughter called

Guenevere, and when peace finally concluded, Arthur took her as his wife. The marriage brought to a close a period of military engagements, and facilitated an era of peace and prosperity. Arthur was not to be a warring king, but a king whose purpose was to act in the manner of a civilizing hero. He needed Guenevere to found a dynasty, and confirm his legitimacy as sovereign.^c

The name Guenevere comes from the Welsh name “Gwenhwyfar,” meaning ‘white ghost.’ This name is of ill omen as it anticipates the negative role that she will later play.^{ci} Medieval painters depict her as a young woman of great beauty. Medieval descriptions of feminine beauty are based on a handful of specific traits: golden hair, shining eyes, snow-white skin, crimson lips, and teeth like pearls.^{cii}

Background

The script offers a few details about Guenevere’s background, and many questions remain about the specifics. The answers to some specific questions I must invent in this section. She is from Camillard, and she is a princess, who has never before been out of her castle.^{ciii} King Arthur and her father included marriage to Guenevere in the treaty. The treaty was meant to bring peace between the two kingdoms, and according to Arthur, if he changed his mind and decided he did not want to marry Guenevere, war would have been declared.^{civ}

Guenevere is the daughter of a very wise and sovereign king. She grew up amidst

much wealth and power. Everything she ever wanted was at her fingertips. She took many lessons growing up from private tutors and learned to dance, sing, and play the harpsichord. She adores singing and dancing, and sings for her family on many occasions. However, because the kingdom of Camillard is about 20 miles from any other kingdom, she did not have the chance to show off her skills often because her father hosts very few parties. Her father realized her loneliness, and when he began negotiating a peace treaty with King Arthur of Camelot, he thought marriage between his beautiful daughter and Arthur would not only be beneficial for the kingdom, but for Guenevere, who had very few friends her age. To his dismay, after he had already arranged the treaty, Guenevere bemoaned the idea of marrying King Arthur. However, because she adored her father, she decided to submit.

Unique Characteristics

Despite the fact that Guenevere participated in a very small number of social occasions growing up, her friends and family recognized her charm and wit and loved her dearly for it. Not only is she always a positive person, but she thinks independently and boldly expresses her feelings about politics and religion. For instance, though she regularly attends church and adheres to its standards in her life, she feels that the church sometimes limits the freedom of people and controls people's lives. Guenevere feels that the church's rules for women's dress are too strict and she feels that women should be

able to wear whatever style of clothing they desire. She articulates this viewpoint very articulately in social settings, but does not try to undermine the church's authority. Though she is generally an optimistic and charming person, she is at times demanding and selfish, but when others make her aware of this, she tries to change her behavior.

Scene-by-Scene Analysis

As understudy for the role of Guenevere, many discoveries were made by listening and watching Elizabeth Ariza act out the scenes as Guenevere. Weeks of observation of Elizabeth illuminated different personal perspectives of particular scenes that influenced her acting choices. When the role of Guenevere was actually performed, the goal was to play slightly different objectives and intentions, and create a unique Guenevere different from the one observed. This scene-by-scene analysis is a comparison of these different objectives and intentions and the unique Guenevere created in performance.

“Simple Joys of Maidenhood”

When Guenevere enters the scene, she is running away from her carriage because she decides that she can not go on to Camelot. She blames St. Genevieve for her fate of

having to marry so young. In a white rabbit stole and cape and crown, she runs down the audience left ramp and onto the stage in sort of a “tizzy,” making certain that no one has followed her. After listening and looking for people nearby, she realizes that she is alone, sits down on a grassy knoll and begins to tell St. Genevieve how unhappy she is that she has to marry so young. In “The Simple Joys of Maidenhood,” her objective is to incite Genevieve to change her circumstances. Guenevere claims to be very devout and faithful, but the lyrics of the song indicate a playful attitude in her prayer to the saint. She says she intends to pray to someone else instead because the saint has gone too far in allowing her to be “bid and bargained” for in the treaty. After scolding the saint in her prayer, she starts to run away from the hilltop, but realizes her foolishness, turns around, walks back to the hilltop and asks the saint tenderly where she was when her youth was sold, and why she can not be young before she is old. ^{cv}

Director Chris Jorie explained that this scene is very organic. Guenevere is young and naïve and girlish, and dramatically impulsive. She pleads selfishly and can only think of herself, and nothing of the treaty and the peace that the marriage is supposed to bring. She is very daring in running away from the carriage because this is not an inconsequential action on her part, for she might have caused major disarray in her Father’s kingdom and in Camelot, had she never been found. Later the audience observes a refined woman of grace, but in this scene the audience observes girlish behavior and selfish longings.

Elizabeth sings this song in a serious tone, rather than lightheartedly. The lyrics are naturally funny and the song should actually be more comical and put a smile on the

audience's face immediately. The lyrics to the first part of this song are rather amusing, especially the line, "I'm over here beneath this tree." ^{cvi} Guenevere assumes that the saint is unable to see where she sits. In performance closing the eyes on the first two lines, then snapping the head and looking around to find a reference point for the saint was comical. Naiveté partnered with vehement rebellion towards the saint reaped some chuckles from the audience. The goal was to energetically engage the audience immediately with the first lyric of the song.

One challenge to deal with in this song was the awkwardness of the costume. The white fur stole was very heavy and the cape draped past the ends of the fingertips. Pinning the sleeves up a bit remedied this, though it still limited freedom of the arms. Cumbersome costumes such as this one are an annoyance and a distraction to any performer, so the challenge was to ignore the costume and focus on acting.

After the first section of the song, is a monologue spoken directly to Saint Genevieve. As mentioned in the social analysis section, daughters of nobility often felt much pressure to consent to marriage for financial and political reasons. It seems that Guenevere's father did pressure her into the marriage, as the dialogue reveals that it is an arranged marriage. To show the saint that she means "business," she demands that the saint meet four clauses in order for her to continue praying to her. She demands that the saint: fix the border, establish trade, deliver her, and stop the war. In other words, she wants the saint to make everything okay in the land between her father and King Arthur without her having to marry Arthur. The four clauses that she demands of the saint must be the clauses that King Arthur and her father agreed upon in the treaty. After she

demands that the Saint Genevieve fulfill her clauses, she then whines again and tells the saint how cruel and unjust she is, and ask if she will ever know the joys of maidenhood. She knows that the Church will bless her marriage to King Arthur because of the peace between the two kingdoms that it will bring, but she is angry that she has to marry so young, and decides to direct her anger toward the Saint Genevieve. The little monologue ends on a “down note,” and then she begins the next part of the song. She describes all of the situations she dreams about in her adolescence: adoring and daring boys, knights pining and leaping to death for her, being rescued in the wood, knights tilting over her and spilling their blood for her, and feuds beginning over her. ^{cvi}

A number of interesting acting choices in performance engaged the audience and created different energies. When singing of the knights in different romantic situations, literally dreaming off all of these situations was necessary. Pretending to wield and sword and spill blood out of the heart when asking the question about knights doing this for her, also fit well. Starting off with a serious facial expression, and suddenly turning the head to the audience and smiling evoked a chuckle from the audience. Sitting back down on the grassy knoll and sulking for the end of the song once again reflect her youth. She sings, “Oh, where are the trivial joys...? Harmless convivial joys...? Where are the simple joys of maidenhood?” ^{cvi}

There are times during just about any young woman’s adolescent years that she absolutely loves the idea of having a couple of different guys liking her at the same time. If the average American teenage girl’s father insisted upon her marrying an older man, anger would most likely ensue. A girl as such might possibly believe that God was

punishing her for some reason. As an actress (who was once a teenager), identifying with Guenevere's point of view came naturally. Just like many well-intending teenage girls, Guenevere does not really intend to cause trouble in the kingdom, she is just young and foolish. She might have wanted to shout at her father for arranging this marriage, but was afraid to stand up to him. On the seven-hour carriage ride to Camelot, she has been fuming, and reaches the point that she has to vent her frustration. When the carriage stops for a second, she runs away, but she would have found her way back to the carriage on her own eventually because she would have been too scared to go wandering through the forest alone for too long. She just needs some time to think and get away from the people controlling her life. In the back of her head she hopes that she will run into someone who will take her somewhere besides Camelot. She knows full well that she will be found probably sooner than later because she is the daughter of a king.

She sits on the grassy knoll, and King Arthur, who has been sitting in the tree watching her rant and rave, startles her as he falls out in front of her. She immediately begins to run away, but Arthur shouts, "Wait! Don't run. Please! I won't harm you." ^{cix} She runs away fully intending him to come running after her, because she wants an adventure. Chris Jorie directed Elizabeth to act the first few lines of this scene melodramatically. He directed her to sling her body around and wait for Arthur to toss her over his shoulder and carry her off. However, he does not dare touch her, so she then begins to work towards her overall objective - to convince Wart to take her away on an adventure. She first tries to achieve this objective by intimidation. She tells him that he insults her by not carrying her off, and asks if her looks repel him. Then, she demands

him to apologize to her, and finally qualifies his behavior as despicable. He says that he can not determine if should obey the call of chivalry or not. At this point, she decides to tease him about how exciting it will be when the people of Camelot search for her, and scoffs at his hesitancy about taking her away. This action throws Arthur off balance, as he is already enamored by her, and a great sense of inadequacy overwhelms him. In King Arthur's confusion, he talks of his teacher Merlyn who lives backwards. This completely confuses Guenevere, but she then realizes that if she reasons with him maturely she might accomplish her objective. She tries to be mature and plainly state that she can not go on to that castle, but then he begins to stare at her, and she tells him that it is rude of him to do so. He says his name is Wart, and she laughs at this, and then continues to reason with him about her situation trying to invoke pity. She explains the situation she has been in all day, and believes that he is falling for her "sob story." Once she thinks that she has "battered" him up, she directly asks him to run away with her. She obviously figures that if she excites him enough, he might really take her away. He still declines, and she becomes angry again, for she has always been able to get what she wants from guys most of her life just by batting her eyelashes and asking prettily. Her final tactic is to make him feel guilty about leaving her alone because she knows no one else in Camelot who can rescue her. At this point, Arthur's objective in the scene overrides her objective completely.

This entire scene is actually ironic because she does not know that he is King Arthur, whom she is supposed to marry anyway. He is simply delighted to run into her, but he has a lot at stake in this scene because of the treaty that he signed with her father.

Also, her beauty and personality captivate him, and he enjoys the challenge of trying to entice her to stay in Camelot. He sings “Camelot,” in which he describes how ideal of a place Camelot is for “happily ever-aftering.”^{cx} He captivates her with his glamorous description of Camelot, but when Dinadan and the ladies and gentlemen of Camelot enter they startle them. Chris Jorie directed Guenevere to look at Arthur with amazement because she is completely perplexed at the fact that she has been talking to King Arthur, the very man from whom she has run away.

Guenevere no longer believes that a marriage to King Arthur would be dull and boring, for he is the handsome knight of her dreams. His bright and shining personality and flirtatious way woo her to him. After he explains how he became king, he expresses how delighted he was to meet her and how she inspired him to become the “wisest, most heroic, most splendid King who ever sat on any throne.” With this statement she decides she wants to stay with him in Camelot. She sings a reprise of “Camelot,” exclaiming that she truly believes that she will find her “happ’ly-ever-after” in Camelot.^{cx}

Though, Guenevere is excited to go off with him, she confesses that the idea of marriage frightens her. He assures her that all will be well, and she asks what would have happened to the treaty if they had not married. He says that war would have broken out, and she says that war over her would be marvelous. They walk off the stage laughing.

The King's Study: Act 1, Scene 2

Five years pass, and Arthur is restless about the way he runs his kingdom. Chris Jorie directed Elizabeth and Michael St. Pierre to act this scene out with much vibrancy, passion, and energy. This scene is important because it is the audience's first glimpse into their marriage. Guenevere is a great support to him, and has been for the last five years. Her objective in this scene is to inspire Arthur to think "outside of the box." First, she flatters him by agreeing with him that he is the most splendid king who ever sat on any throne and tells him he is the greatest warrior in England. He says that it all seems like it has not been for any purpose. She then encourages him to walk around and think out loud, and compliments his cleverness in his line of thinking. He starts talking about how Merlyn used to change him into animals to teach him lessons, and she chuckles at this notion, but still asks him questions about what he discovered. When he asks why they have battles for no real reason at all, she tries to inspire him by talking about how knights love "charging in and whacking away," and assures him that it is reason enough for wars. When she comments about knights in armor he realizes that only knights are able to bedeck themselves in armor when they go "clod-hopping around the country." He then becomes weary of thinking, but Guenevere relaxes him and tells him he should continue thinking after they have a quiet dinner. However, Arthur has sudden idea, and Guenevere grows excited with him as he comes to his greatest discovery. She challenges his idea of knights peacefully talking around a table, but he explains that it would be – "might for right," instead of – "might is right." The idea sounds completely brilliant to

Guenevere, but she further challenges him and comments about the jealousy that would most likely occur between the knights. He realizes that it has to be a round table, and she becomes excited as she tells him that her father has a round table that seats a hundred and fifty that would be perfect. For a second, Arthur thinks the whole idea is really foolish, but Guenevere congratulates him and assures him that it is a marvelous idea. In order to make him feel more proud she sings another reprise of “Camelot” and proclaims that there is simply not in all the world a spot where rules a more resplendent king.”^{cxii} This scene reveals the great understanding they have of each other. Perhaps they have had a number of discussions about the business of the kingdom. He often asks her opinion in many situations, and she loves contributing to his success.

After watching Elizabeth Ariza and Michael St. Pierre perform this scene a number of times in rehearsal and performance, it seemed that Guenevere to match Arthur’s enormous energy in order to speed up the scene. In performance the lines moved at a fast pace with hardly a breath in between them in performance, as she was about to “bust” with him as he made each discovery. Overwhelming adoration for Arthur was felt as well as personal pride in being the wife of a great king.

In this scene Guenevere wears a lightweight sky-blue dress embroidered around the neck and sleeves. Originally, Chris Jorie directed Guenevere to be working on embroidery when the scene opens, but the embroidery ring does not actually have a needle and thread. She can not actually be doing an action. Activity in a scene is always more engaging for the audience than inactivity, and if she could actually be doing an activity, the scene would be even more engaging. In performance blocking that went all

around the stage minimized the problem of inactivity, and the lightweight dress gave the freedom to move quickly. However, a piece of cloth with a real needle might have improved the scene even more. The audience seemed to enjoy it anyway. The goal was to engage the audience as much as possible and make them really interested in the conversation that could have otherwise lost their attention.

“The Lusty Month of May”: Act One, Scene 5

“The Lusty Month of May” choral song opens up the scene. The song does not further the plot in any way, it is just a fun, crowd-pleaser. However, the lyrics of the song show the audience that Guenevere has not lost her fun side in the last five years. She sings of maidens and lads, as if she remembers well the thrills of flirting with various lads in her youth. She sings that it is a “shocking time of year, when tons of wicked little thoughts merrily appear...where everyone makes divine mistakes.”^{cxiii} These words and the remainder of the lyrics are ironic to the audience member who knows that she is about to make the biggest “divine mistake” of all the ladies in the kingdom by breaking her marriage vows to her husband. However, it seems that Lerner and Loewe wanted to give the audience a fun song before they introduced the first major complication of the story.

Chris Jorie directed Guenevere to come down the audience right aisle and up the steps onto the stage that is lit up like a bright spring day. The spotlight follows her as she runs down the aisle and Castor spins her. Then, she jumps up onto the stage, and

everyone bows to her. She wears a white dress with flowers attached to it and a crown of flowers on her head. As she sings, she dances a few of the steps with everyone else. The first two words that she opens up with “tra la,” are silly words, and she should sing them with a bit of a smirk on her face. She proudly sings about what everybody has been thinking. Chris Jorie directed her in the first verse to sing and ensemble to watch her as she flirts with each of the ladies and gentlemen on the stage and teases them about what has been going on in their heads. The smell of the forbidden fruit, she sings, is the perfume that is floating in the air. According to her, it is that time of year when “everyone throws self-control away” and does a “wretched thing or two.”^{cxiv}

Considering that Guenevere proclaimed how devout and pure she was in the first scene, this song is a bit of a contrast to her earlier personae. Though Lerner and Loewe inserted it in the first act as a crowd-pleaser, it really reveals more of Guenevere’s personality. She is not the naive young girl she was before, but a mature married woman now, who remembers the joys of going “blissfully astray,” and is about to go astray herself, but certainly not blissfully. Despite the song’s irony, it should be sung entirely playfully and teasingly. It is important for Guenevere to be completely relaxed and carefree as she enters because this is not a formal occasion. Picking flowers with ladies and knights is not a royal responsibility, but most likely one that she has made a tradition since she married Arthur.

One difficulty in singing this song is the length of the dress, which dragged a little on the ground behind. The length of the costume limited freedom of movement that would have made Guenevere appear even more carefree. The fabric of the cream-

colored dress is not a light, flowing fabric, as would have been best for the costumes of this scene, but a thick blanket-like weaved material. Ignoring this costuming issue and looking as natural as possible was the challenge.

Instead of presenting the song with the same regal, very upright posture that Elizabeth did, relaxing the arms and limbs more and loosening the head and neck more made Guenevere appear as if she was in her “element.” Soft, light steps made her look as if she was walking on grass and beds of flowers throughout the song. Movement in the song matched the silly, fun lyrics with quick, light hand gestures on the words “blissfully astray” and “merrily appear.” The objective in this song was to rouse the ladies and gentlemen to have fun and laugh.

After the song, Pellinore enters with his dog Horrid. Pellinore is extremely funny-looking with his rickety old armor and bent-up helmet. He immediately asks if anyone has seen a “beast with the head of a serpent, the body of a boar and the tail of a lion, baying like forty hounds.” He immediately amuses Guenevere. He asks for the second time if anyone has seen the beast. His description of the beast is grotesque, so she laughs under her breath as she begs him not to describe it again. Guenevere is not sure of his identity, so her first objective in this scene is to discover his identity, and her second goal is simply to make him feel welcome in Camelot. When he gets turned around and mistakes one of the other ladies for her, she realizes that he is a rather confused person, and tries to accommodate him even more. For the remainder of the scene with him, she enjoys his wit and laughs with the ladies and gentlemen at his ridiculous comments. Guenevere realizes that it would be nice to have him around because he is so gracious

and amusing, so she invites him to spend the night. She loves his excitement over sleeping in a real feather bed with down pillows. This scene is important because it sets up Guenevere's relationship with Pelly. There are several other scenes later in the play when she talks with both he and Arthur, and the audience sees that he has become like family to Arthur and her, and they love him dearly. Pellinore stays by Arthur's side for most of the remaining scenes in the play.

David Poirier, an equity actor and seasoned professional, creates a heart-warming and endearing Pellinore. He successfully stole this cute little scene in every performance with his genuine and natural responses. Portraying the role of Lady Anne and interacting with Guenevere and the rest of the ensemble in over forty performances provided the opportunity to carefully consider how to play this scene as Guenevere. The scene needed to not be acted with a serious tone and should not have any pauses. In performance the goal was to be very relaxed and vocally responsive to Pellinore's humor as well as keep up with his bubbling energy that moved him all over the stage. Fellow cast members later commented that this made the scene "fly" by. In addition, interaction with Pellinore was completely friendly, with no hint of condescension towards him. Laughing with Pellinore and chuckling at his witty remarks on a couple of occasions was natural and genuine. For example, after he said, "But I had a feeling he was mixing with some very funny bunnies," responding to him with an audible laugh was entirely natural. ^{cxv}

In the last half of scene 5, Arthur introduces Sir Lancelot. Guenevere is delighted to see Arthur, because he usually does not join her when she picks flowers. She only becomes interested in Lancelot because Arthur acts excited that Lancelot wants to join

the Round Table. At first she welcomes him, but then directs her attention back to Arthur because he is just another knight to her, and after all, she wants to include Arthur in her fun plans for the day. However, Lancelot turns the attention to himself by interrupting her conversation with Arthur. At first, she is not bothered by him interrupting her, and tries to be pleasant to him and respond graciously to his claim that he can be “called upon at any time to perform any deed, no matter the risk.” She finally becomes annoyed when he interrupts her conversation for a third time proclaiming that he is always on duty. She replies sharply, “Yes, I can see that.” She then asks Arthur if he can stay for lunch, he says yes, and this time Arthur directs her attention back to Lancelot because he wants her to hear of his new plan. At this point, she finds him overbearing, so she tries to maintain the control in the situation. When he asks Arthur if she would find the affairs of chivalry tedious, she reminds him that the Round Table is her husband’s idea. She thinks that Arthur’s idea is flawless, and does not care much about Lancelot’s plan to improve the Round Table. However, she likes the challenge of subjugating him because of his arrogance. Also, for Guenevere to really show irritation would not help her accomplish her goal. She should be calmly in control of the situation, and even smile and wink at the other ladies who are observing the whole conversation. On the other hand, Guenevere finds his mention of noble Christian principles astonishing because of his arrogance. When he says, “the refining of the soul is an endless struggle,” she says, “I daresay. I do daresay.” The subtext of this line is – “you do have a point there.” Then, he says that he has never been defeated in battle or tournament and it is highly likely that he ever will be. With this statement he has gone “too far,” so she tries to “corner” him by asking him if he

has come to grips with humility lately. She asks this question intentionally trying to get the “upper hand” in the conversation in front of the gentlemen and ladies, who also find Lancelot amusing. She succeeds in totally confusing Lancelot with this question, but Arthur quickly interrupts and says that they had better discuss the training program elsewhere. Arthur and Lancelot exit as Guenevere smirks with the rest of ensemble.^{cxvi}

Chris Jorie directed Elizabeth to cross Arthur a number of times, and her regal upright posture made it seem as if she was an attorney questioning a defendant. Her posture was similar to Lancelot who held up his chest and stood like a typical cartoon superhero. Instead of mimicking her posture in this scene, a relaxed and looser posture gave a greater contrast between the two personalities and did not make her appear rude and abrupt. Guenevere’s lines are funny as they are written and it is not necessary to play them intentionally for a laugh from the audience. For example, it was not necessary to feign sternness on the lines, “I’m much more interested in his spirit and his noble Christian principles. Have you come to grips with humility lately, Milord?”^{cxvii} When crossing right behind Lancelot to the other side of the stage on this line, it was natural to gain the eye contact of some of the ensemble members and see if they were equally amused. Laughter from the audience complimented all of these acting choices.

Considering the plot development of the story, it seems that this scene with Lancelot, Guenevere, and Arthur is full of irony. Though Lancelot’s arrogance completely annoys her, he also intrigues her. This is a common set-up in the typical American musical and in the real world – the “boy” has to get the “girl” who does not even like him at all. For example, in *The King and I*, Anna and the King initially can not

tolerate each other, but they later fall in love. Also, in *My Fair Lady*, Eliza Doolittle and Professor Higgins initially find each other irritating, but eventually become very fond of each other. It is easy to personally relate to the situation because it is not an uncommon experience for a woman to initially find a man arrogant and obnoxious, and later fall completely in love with him. Lancelot later on says that he knew the day that he met and walked away from her that he would fall in love with her. It might better be said fall “in lust” with her because they do not have the chance to become emotionally intimate before they confess their “love” to each other several scenes later. Years later after they have had the time to develop emotional intimacy their feelings for each other might truthfully be described as love (also with great passion), but in this scene it is passion only that they feel for each other.

“Take Me to the Fair”

To further subjugate Lancelot, Guenevere must prove that he has not achieved physical perfection. Dinadan, Sagamore, and Lionel, are the three best jousts in England, and she must manipulate each of them into challenging Lancelot to a joust. She knows that if she tells the knights that they are less skilled than Lancelot, they will want to prove their skill. She uses the same strategy on each of them by telling them basically the same thing - Lancelot will take their place accompanying her to various places because he is physically stronger and more capable of defeating her foes. Sir Dinadan is

supposed to take her to the fair, but “when a man is that stupendous” he by right should take her to the fair. Sir Sagramore is supposed to sit by her at the ball, but Lancelot du Lac is better than all the local henchmen and deserves the place. Sir Lionel is supposed to guide her to the show, but “young du Lac seems strongest ergo,” and should guide her to the cattle show. They all respond just as she expected – they vow to mutilate him and prove to her that he is not better than they are. At the end of each verse, after their first response, she questions them to make sure that she has heard them right. For example, to Sir Dinadan she asks if he will “bash and thrash him,” and he says that he will “smash and mash him.” With a smile she then quickly asks if he will “give him trouble,” and he says, “he will be rubble.” Even more delighted, she asks if he will give him a “mighty whack,” and he says, “his skull will crack!” She says, well, “Then you may take me to the fair if you do all the things you promised. In fact I’d grieve inside should you not take me to the fair.” ^{cxviii}

Guenevere’s strategy with the first knight works well, so she uses it two more times. She knows that they adore her, and she uses it to manipulate them by appealing to their ego. Chris Jorie directed Guenevere to progressively raise her energy with each of the questions at the end of each verse. This makes the song more comical, and incredibly cute because the more energy Guenevere exudes, the more engaging the song is for the audience. When performing this song it was natural to smirk on many of the lines in order to notify the audience that the attention from the knights is exactly the goal. For example, pantomiming the words “mighty whack,” sharply and with spunk magnified the energy Guenevere felt emotionally on the inside. The knights also energetically

pantomimed how they would “dice and slice him,” “vivisect him,” and serve him to their “heiness on rouchette.” In addition, smiling as much as possible throughout the entire song showed the audience how delightful it was to have so much attention from the knights. ^{cxix}

Act One, Scene 6

Two weeks pass and it is the day before the jousts. When Guenevere enters the scene she wears a simple, lightweight one piece beige-colored dress. Arthur, Pelly, and Lancelot have been conversing. She immediately taunts Lancelot by asking if while she was napping, she missed any improvements in chivalry. Lancelot is entirely immune to her rudeness, and politely says, “No, Your Majesty.” In order to try to “ruffle up” Lancelot again, she tells him that when he arranges things with God that evening to be sure and give them nice weather. Again he responds kindly, “No one could refuse your wish, Milady.” ^{cxx} Her first goal in the scene, to irritate him, is completely unsuccessful.

After Lancelot exits the scene, Arthur accuses Guenevere of “baiting” Lancelot. So, even though she was not successful in irritating Lancelot, she successfully irritated Arthur. She is pleased with her own cunningness. She tells Arthur that Lancelot deserves it because of his arrogant claims. He announced to the knights “clear as a bell that his purity gave him miraculous powers.” She wants to expose to Arthur the idiocy of this ridiculous statement. Pellinore joins with Guenevere to try and convince Arthur that

Lancelot is an arrogant liar. Arthur does not listen to either one of them, so Guenevere decides to let Arthur know that she is against Lancelot winning the tournament. She asks Pelly to tell the Chamberlain the order of jousts for the following day - Dinadan, Sagramore, then Lionel. Pellinore is pleased, and she loves having him on her side, but Arthur begins to fume with anger. She then shows the note of thanks that Lionel gave her for allowing him to carry her kerchief in the joust. Arthur can not endure her attitude towards Lancelot anymore, so he asks her if she would withdraw her permission from Lionel. She says that it would be rather awkward at this late a date. He then asks if she would promise her kerchief to Sagramore against Lancelot, to counteract the first decision, but she already promised it to Sagramore, and also to Dinadan. At this point Arthur is angry and about to boil over, but Guenevere teases him because she knows he would never be anything but gentle to her. Even if it looks as if she is championing Lancelot's defeat, they do not know that Lancelot will be defeated. She reminds him that Lancelot knocked him out, and he woke up his "bosom friend." Then, she jokingly says that if he knocks them out too, she may actually be helping the situation because they will all end up bosom friends. When he becomes exasperated she teases him further and says that she believes he is jealous of the knights and their attentions to her. He responds just as she expected, outraged that she would accuse him of this. At this point, she realizes that she must change her objective. She wants to firmly resist his control. She will only withdraw her permission if he commands her as king, but she will never forgive him for it if he does. Trying not to be stern with her, Arthur pleads for her to just do it as a favor, but she will not budge because she finds Lancelot overbearing and pretentious. She

calmly stays in control of the situation and tells him that the only way she will withdraw permission is if he commands her, and she knows full well that he would never command her because he adores her too much. ^{cxxi}

While the previous scene establishes that Guenevere and Arthur have a good relationship, this scene sets up a conflict. In scene 2 she fed his energy and encouraged his ideas, but now she does not take a second thought in completely disagreeing with him. Though she likes to taunt her husband Arthur, she also firmly believes that Lancelot deserves to be put in his “place.” She is quite sure that one of them will defeat Lancelot, and prove her right.

When performing this scene, the goal was to move it along with Arthur at a fast pace and remain steadfast in all negative opinions of Lancelot despite Arthur’s resistance. This is the only scene in which the two of them have a conflict, so it was necessary to play the objectives as directly as possible. The audience needed to sense the tension between Guenevere and Arthur before the balance of their relationship is upset in the next scene.

“The Jousts”

With excitement the ensemble sings the song as Arthur and Guenevere watch, dressed in their beautiful elaborately decorated garments and wearing their gold crowns. Guenevere wears a red velvet robe with wide open bell sleeves lined with gold fabric and

edged with heavy black velvet. Down the arm of the sleeves, around the neck, and the center strip of the dress are gold, red, and black flower shapes. The dress hinders much movement, but Guenevere only stands there and watches the jousts in the scene and takes a few steps down and at the end. In the middle of the song after Lancelot has already defeated both Sir Dinadan and Sir Sagramore Arthur humorously speaks in rhythm to Guenevere, “He did that rather well don’t you think, dear?” She sings, “That horse of Sagramore’s is too old.” Then he sings, “But felling Dinadan with one blow, dear,” and she sings, “Sir Dinadan, I am told has a nasty cold.”^{cxxii} It looks as if Lancelot is about to prove Arthur right about his physical perfection, so she acts as if it was not his skill that made him win, but just chance. This time Arthur teases Guenevere instead of she teasing her as she did in the last scene.

The third joust ends tragically and takes everyone by surprise. When they bring in Lionel who has just been run through with Lancelot’s spear, Guenevere’s entire demeanor changes. Now she feels very guilty for having encouraged the knights to fight at all. Arthur pronounces him dead, but to everyone’s surprise Lancelot kneels over Lionel and prays for him. Within moments Lionel breathes again, perplexing Guenevere. The whole situation, that was a joke before, takes a different turn for her now. She looks at Lancelot in amazement, and is completely enamored with him. She bows to him and he bows to her, and they slowly rise with eyes locked.

Chris Jorie directed Guenevere and Lancelot to come up from their bows very slowly staring at each other so that the audience sees their passion for each other. She is in awe of him because his purity truly gives him miraculous powers. She also feels

ashamed for wanting him to lose, and bows with humility to him as if to apologize for her rudeness to him. The rest of the ensemble bows to him, and the lights dim, ending the first act.

Act Two, Scene Two

Chris Jorie chose to end act one after the jousts instead of after the knighting, which the script designates. Act two opens up with Arthur and Pellinore talking excitedly about the miracle that Lancelot performed. Guenevere enters the scene wearing again the beige-colored dress. Pelly comments that it was quite a day and she agrees that it was. She sits on the stool and stares off, thinking about Lancelot. Arthur watches her, and comments that she seems tired. She says that she is tired, and Arthur apologizes that he has to put her through a formal affair that night because he thinks Lancelot should be knighted immediately. She agrees, and says that she will be all right. He goes over to her, puts his arm on her shoulder and suggests that she take Lady Anne to the Lodge for a few days to get away from everything for awhile. She does not answer him, but he kisses her on the forehead and exits to look for Lancelot. Chris Jorie directed Guenevere to cover her face with her hands because she is on the verge of tears, and then look up with desperation, “Oh, Lance, go away. Go away and don’t come back.” ^{cxxiii}

It is important in this scene that Guenevere is living a full emotional life inside

herself. All she can see is his face in her mind, and think of how she loves him. She feels disconnected from Arthur at this point, and is terrified of her feelings for Lancelot. Instead of trying to make it appear to Arthur as if there is nothing at all wrong with her, she allows her emotion to overcome her. She is afraid to say anything at all, because she does not want to break into tears in front of him. After he exits she sings with great emotion “Before I Gaze at You Again.”

“Before I Gaze at You Again”

Lerner and Loewe inserted this ballad the week before the opening of the show in Toronto, Canada. They felt it would explain Guenevere’s inner perspective and her desire to remain faithful to Arthur.^{cxxiv} During this entire song, she must hold the image of Lancelot’s face in her mind. She sings, “Before I gaze at you again, I’ll need a time for tears. Before I gaze at you again let hours turn to years. I have so much forgetting to do, before I try to gaze again at you.” Not much movement was necessary when singing, because the lyrics of the song are themselves an extension of the emotion inside her heart. In performance, the audience heard her heart through the passionate words sung. For example, “I’ll need a time for tears” almost evoked real tears, and the words “till the moment I awake and find I can smile and say” were sung more brightly with a smile.^{cxxv}

Lancelot then enters and says that he did not mean to disturb her, but he was told that Arthur wanted to see him. Trying not to reveal any sign of emotion to him, she says

that Arthur does want to see him. He is not disturbing her at all, for he is to be knighted. He humbly says he is not worthy of it, and Guenevere quickly exclaims that he could not perform any greater wonder. Arthur will insist on his knighting. In order to avoid anymore conversation that might reveal her feelings for him, she says that she must change for dinner and tries to exit the room quickly. He quietly says that he does want her to go, and she pauses anticipating that he is about to confess his love for her. He says, “Jenny, I love you. God forgive me, but I do.” Without turning towards him she says, “God forgive us both, Lance.” They slowly face each other, as Lancelot reveals that he has known that he would fall in love with her since he walked away from her the first afternoon that they met. Arthur abruptly enters the room and disrupts the moment by heralding Lancelot’s stunning achievement. He turns his back to pour them drinks and chats away about the impact the miracle will have on the country. Lancelot and Guenevere continue to gaze at each other. Arthur turns back towards them and continues talking feverishly, painfully, trying to ignore that they have locked eyes. Only once do they look away from each other in order to direct their attention to Arthur. They can not muster the strength to stop looking at each other. Lerner and Lowe’s stage directions in the script direct the actors playing Lancelot and Guenevere to lock eyes and Arthur to continue “talking, looking from one to the other, feverishly – painfully.” ^{cxxvi}

Guenevere and Lancelot’s intentions in this scene were initially baffling. Why do they choose not to hide it in front of Arthur? Don’t they know that Arthur would either be angered or heartbroken by their looks? The answer to these questions is simple – their selfishness outweighs their loyalty to Arthur. They selfishly do not deny expression

of their passion for each other. Self-centeredness is the major character flaw that causes her to fall into this love affair and upset the balance of the story. Lerner and Loewe might have made Arthur learn of their affair later in the story, but the plot choice reveals Arthur's inner strength and love for Guenevere and Lancelot. After the knighting, he gives perhaps the most brilliant soliloquy in the entire production. He says that he loves them both, but they torment him, and he knows that they betray him. ^{cxxvii}

“The Knighting”

The ladies and gentlemen of the court file in procession into the great hall, and the trumpets announce the entrance of Guenevere and Arthur. Guenevere enters from stage left and Arthur enters from stage right at the same time. They walk slowly with regal posture and solemn faces up onto the platform above everyone else standing on the stage. Guenevere stands by Arthur's side throughout the knighting and watches Arthur knight each man with the sword Excalibur. She wears the court bliaut much like the one described in the social analysis section of this document. The top half of the cream-colored dress is made of a wavy velvety material and the sleeves are taffeta with a satin flower pattern. The skirt looks as if it is separately attached and is a silky, satin material. Around the neck is gold jewelry with tiny jewels sewn onto the dress. The same gold jewelry also sits on the hips where the satiny fabric of the skirt begins. Over the dress she wears a long red velvet cape that drags behind and has gold-stitched interfacing and

gold embroidery on the edges.

“If Ever I Would Leave You”

A few years pass, and Lancelot and Guenevere are on the main terrace of the castle. Guenevere wears an elaborate purple dress made of heavy cotton and taffeta with long bell sleeves and a train with a loop that goes over her left wrist. The weight of the dress requires all movement to be regal and slower than in other scenes in which she wore lighter weight dresses. This movement coincides with the mood of this romantic love scene. Lancelot opens the scene by singing a short ballad in French and English. When he finishes, she asks him if he wrote it. He says that he wrote it, and she asks why he always writes about himself and not about her. He claims that he loves her too much. He says that he should leave her and never come back, but he sings “If Ever I Would Leave You,” explaining all the reasons why he could never leave. Half way through the song, they move towards each other and start to kiss but one of the ladies enters the scene and interrupts them. At the end of the song, they lightly kiss, and Lancelot asks her if Arthur knows. She says, “Don’t speak of it, Lance. Of course he doesn’t. If he ever did, I wouldn’t want to live. And neither would you.” Lady Anne and two of the other ladies abruptly enter as Lancelot replies, and they feel as if they walked in on something that they should not have. Guenevere tries to make it look like it was nothing, and Lady Anne tells her that it is time to go. Guenevere explains to Lancelot that that afternoon

she will be giving the prizes at the cattle show. Lady Anne gives her the list of winners, and she exclaims that she is happy that the Aberdeed Angus won for a change.

Guenevere graciously thanks Lancelot for waiting with her, in order to throw off the ladies whom she assumes are already suspicious. The ladies exit from the down right ramp and go down the aisle. ^{cxxviii}

Since a few years have passed, Lancelot and Guenevere have become accustomed to concealing their love affair. They might have had several other close calls, and have made many people suspicious, but because the people of the kingdom know how much Arthur loves both of them, they do not blatantly accuse them. When performing this scene nervousness was felt the moment the ladies entered. Quickly shuffling off Lancelot does not dismiss their suspicions of the love affair. When they escort Guenevere off the stage they cast accusing looks in her direction.

Act Two, Scene Three

On the terrace of the castle Arthur and Guenevere have a conversation.

Guenevere wears another elaborate dress with a rust-colored bodice and a long sparkly brass-colored skirt with a train that has a loop that goes over her wrist. The bodice is lined with sparkling jewels and the skirt is lined with a thin strip of light-beige fur.

Attached to the inside of both arms is a long loop of fabric edged with fur. Arthur and Guenevere act as an old married couple now. Arthur says he feels old. Guenevere says

that is nonsense, and he should get more fresh air instead of spending too much time in his civil court. He says that he can not help it because he finds watching the court in session riveting. Guenevere worries about the jury because they do not know the parties involved, and are impartial. This statement is completely ironic to modern audiences because a jury full of partial people does not yield a fair ruling. In performance these lines brought a snicker from the audience because it was said so “matter-of-factly.” Arthur says, “But that’s the point...” Pellinore abruptly enters and interrupts him. ^{cxxix}

Pellinore enters ranting and raving about the trouble Mordred has been stirring up in the kingdom. Guenevere immediately says that she does not want to talk about Mordred because this is the first night in a month that he is not coming to dinner, and she feels as if she is going to a party. However, Pellinore has to make sure that Arthur knows exactly what Mordred has been doing. Guenevere is shocked when she hears that Mordred is trying to destroy Arthur and make his inheritance come faster. With great concern she asks Arthur if all of this is true, and he says yes. Arthur can not do anything because England is now under civil law, and they have no specific law to accuse him of breaking. Guenevere sees how angry Pellinore is, and Arthur does not seem to be able to calm him down. She assures Pellinore that a solution will be found for Mordred. ^{cxxx}

In a scene such as this one in which other characters talk for a while and one’s character is mostly just listening, it is easy to loose focus on the scene and begin to think of things unrelated to the scene and only speak one’s scripted lines at the right moments. In order to avoid loosing focus, actors often run an interior monologue in their head which is an inner dialogue that responds to the dialogue of the other characters speaking.

It can keep one's character very present and aware of all that is taking place in the scene. In this scene Guenevere must be listening to everything they are saying about Mordred because she fears that in his mischievousness he will discover her love affair with Lancelot and she and he will be burned at the stake for treason. In performance this interior monologue ran in Guenevere's head and entailed all of these thoughts. The audience should have been able to read Guenevere's great alarm at their conversation. However, after this dialogue she responds warmly to him with comforting words as his loving wife. The irony of the situation is that Guenevere does not know that Arthur is just as concerned about Mordred divulging their love affair as she is. He is worried that Mordred could wreck the peace of the kingdom. Mordred's actions anger her, but her terror of losing her life for treason and fear of hurting Arthur keeps her from saying much about the situation.

After Pellinore exits the scene, Guenevere immediately tries to comfort Arthur by telling him that he should not feel guilty about Mordred because she does not begrudge him for having an illegitimate son. In order to cheer up Arthur who is extremely sullen and pensive about the situation, she sweetly says that he is not the first king to have one of those "things" running around. He responds that he feels nothing for Mordred, and that he is an "appalling specimen." To lighten up the mood even more, she says, "The one thing I can say for him is that he's bound to marry well. Everybody is above him." He then asks Jenny if she ever wishes that she had not been born a queen. She responds with perhaps the most comical monologue in the entire play. In order to officially cheer up Arthur even more she launches into an explanation of what she would do if she were

completely alone in the castle. She says that she would take off all of her clothes and run stark naked from room to room. She would go to the kitchen naked, prepare her own meals naked, do some embroidery naked, and put on her crown naked. As Arthur lightens up and laughs at her ridiculous notions, she becomes more histrionic and excited about the idea. ^{cxxxix}

This monologue needs to reveal a side to Guenevere that the audience had not seen yet. Lerner and Loewe took a liberty to include this private conversation between husband and wife. In performance the goal was to remove the seriousness of the scene for a few moments and comically express her sexuality. Chris Jorie mentioned in rehearsal that in the last part of this scene they want to take their mind off their troubles because now their life is complicated, and they have lots of obstacles to their own happiness. Though frustrated because of the trouble in the kingdom, they try to escape their stressful thoughts for a few minutes.

“What do the Simple Folk Do?”

After Guenevere’s little speech about roaming around the castle naked, she says that being queen is a weary load, and that they could quite well do without Mordred. Arthur says that they can not escape the burden, and Guenevere asks why royalty can not escape such situations. She says that farmers, cooks, and blacksmiths seem to have ways and means of finding respite, and she asks Arthur if he has heard specifically what they

do. She sings, “What do the simple folk do to help them escape when they’re blue?” After the first verse of the song Arthur responds that he has been informed that they find relief by whistling. Guenevere begins whistling, and Arthur tries to join her, but he can not whistle, so they have a laugh together. She then sings the second verse and asks what else the simple folk do. This time Arthur responds that they sing to make their spirits rise. Arthur and Jenny sing a cute little phrase, with their heads up high, smiling, and forgetting their troubles. Guenevere then asks in the third verse what else the simple folk do, believing that they must have some tribal sorcery that he has not mentioned yet to help them forget their troubles. Arthur says that he has been told that they “dance a fiery dance and whirl til their completely uncontrolled.” He does a little heel toe step to the right and left once, and Guenevere joins him the second time. They do a couple more cute dance moves, and then Arthur proceeds to whirl Jenny around. They laugh with high spirits as they dance, and then finally Jenny asks one last time what else the simple folk do, and Arthur responds, “They sit around and wonder what royal folk would do.” Quite satisfied with the conversation, they turn towards each other and tenderly hold hands while grinning from ear to ear and locking eyes. ^{cxxxii}

From the moment that Guenevere says that Arthur should feel nothing about Mordred to the end of the song, there needed to be an enormous amount of energy. Initially in performance, Guenevere had a lot more energy than Arthur, but Arthur made his energy match hers as the scene progressed. The costume for the scene was made of a heavy fabric and long, heavy sleeves, but movement was light and quick while speaking and singing. The two are very comfortable with each other in their relationship,

requiring a looser posture in this scene than others. This scene and song establishes that they have been through a lot over the years, and though she has been maintaining a love affair with Lancelot for a few years, her adoration for Arthur has not died. The remaining scenes in the production are dramatic, so an attempt was made to make the scene light and fun so that the audience would fall in love more with Guenevere before they watched her downfall.

The audience might have intensely despised Guenevere for her betrayal of Arthur, but through the years she has still by Arthur's side comforting him and supporting him as king. It seems that Lerner wanted the audience to see that Guenevere is not altogether a bad person. She has been a positive influence in Arthur's life though she has been betraying him for years in an adulterous affair with Lancelot. However, she is about to reap the consequences for her selfish betrayal of the man who has had deep unconditional love for her for years. The lie that she has been living is about to be exposed, and the happiness she knew in her life with Arthur is about to fall apart.

Act Two, Scene Eight

Mordred discovers the love affair and schemes to catch them together and accuse them of treason. Lancelot comes to Guenevere in her chamber because Morgan Le Fay traps Arthur in the forest with an invisible wall. Guenevere sits on her bed wearing a white nightgown with jewels around the neck and sleeves and a long train that loops over

her wrist. Lancelot enters and she quickly rises and crosses to the opposite side of the stage and looks around and listens for people that might be outside of the room. She says, "Did anyone see you?" Lancelot responds that the castle is dark and he was careful, and she should not be afraid. She says that she is afraid, and Lancelot swears that they are alone because no one saw him enter and Arthur will not be back for awhile. In the middle of his sentence he stops himself ashamed that he justifies their betrayal of Arthur. She says that they are not alone, and he puts his arms around her and says that they are alone. She pulls herself out of his arms and says that they are not because the first thing they can think of is Arthur. At this point, her objective is to end their relationship, but her obstacle is her selfish desire to be with him. Lancelot says, "But you love me Jenny." Guenevere assuredly says that she does, and always shall, and has wished for him to come to her there for years, but now they are suddenly less alone than ever. He does not understand, and she explains that now all of the people are gone there is a shadow between them that is wider than the sea and fills the room. She leads into "I Loved You Once in Silence," with, "Perhaps it would have been better if we had never said a word to each other at all." ^{cxxxiii}

"I Loved You Once in Silence"

Guenevere sings, "I loved you once in silence, and mis'ry was all I knew." Chris Jorie directed Guenevere to stand in the downstage right corner and face out towards the

audience for the first part of the song, and then later go into Lancelot's arms, who stands in the upstage left corner. However, holding focus away from Lancelot while passionately singing of her love for him looks unnatural. The goal was to make this blocking feel natural. In the first part of the song blocking calls for Guenevere to stare out toward the audience and then slowly walk towards him on "the silence as last was broken." She has waited for him to come to her for a long time, so it was necessary to find the emotional point of view that would motivate this blocking and make it look natural. In performance it worked well to look away from him at first because if someone entered the room it would appear as if nothing was going on between the two of them. Then, with growing courage came the motivation to step closer to Lancelot. Finally, overcome with emotion, it became necessary to move into his arms and sing, "The silence at last was broken! We flung wide our prison door." ^{cxxxiv} Chris Jorie directed Guenevere to lay her head in the cradle of his arm and sing the last lines of the song. The beautiful white nightgown adds to the romantic mood of the scene because it is lightweight and easy to move in, elegant, and sensual.

At the end of the song they kiss, and Guenevere pulls away, but this time Lancelot tries to draw her back to him exclaiming that it is because they are in Camelot that everything is so wretched. He begs her to run away with him. He almost pulls her off the stage, down to the downstage right stairs, but she stops him and says that she has told him a thousand times that she will never leave Arthur ever. They should say no more about it. He suddenly proclaims that he wishes he could accept this situation so calmly like she, and she suddenly realizes that he does not truly understand the situation because

of his selfishness. In a short monologue she exclaims that she is in as much agony as he, but there is no way for her to leave Camelot with him without making Arthur publicly miserable and forcing him to declare war on him. Lancelot finally understands that they must end the relationship, and he moves to leave. However, grief overcomes Guenevere, and she asks him if they have no more tender words to say to each other. She sings the reprise of the song, and they kiss. As they kiss, Mordred enters with five knights, tells Lancelot to keep his hands off his dagger, and accuses him of treason. Lancelot calmly tells Jenny that if he escapes he will come and rescue her. If they kill him, she should send word to Joyous Gard and someone would come to save her from death.

In this climatic scene Guenevere's obstacle is her own physical desire. The perplexity of this climatic scene is the fact the Guenevere obviously wants to end the relationship, but then throws herself into Lancelot's arms after she tells him that he must leave never come back. Physical desire overwhelms them, and they lose all reasonable judgment. Ironically, had Lancelot left the second he said that he would never come back, Mordred would not have caught them together. The tragedy of the story is the result of Guenevere's major flaw – selfish desire. Lancelot honored her by saying that he would leave and never come back. She seduces him back with her words. They can not resist each other's physical touch, and it brings their downfall.

“Guenevere”

While the Greek chorus sings the song, a lady and one of the knights escorts Guenevere out on the stage. She wears a plain white linen dress. She has her hands tied behind her back. She does nothing but walk out, pause for moment and then walk off stage led by the guard and a lady. In the moments she walks on, she is greatly afraid of dying at the stake, but knows that she deserves this. She prays that Lancelot will come and rescue her, but believes that he may have been killed in the great battle that broke out. She is no longer the confident Guenevere, but a woman who hangs her head in shame.

In performance there was great anticipation and fear. The audience watched closely as she walked with a great weight on her shoulders and in her heart. Images flashed in her head of what would happen to her at the stake.

Final Scene

After Lancelot fled he came back to rescue Guenevere at the stake. It can be assumed that they both feel so much remorse for wronging Arthur that they decide to return to Camelot and try to make things right between them. On a battlefield outside of Joyous Gard, they find Arthur at pre-dawn when it is still dark outside. Arthur immediately asks if either one of them were injured in the escape. Lancelot says that

they were untouched, and Guenevere confesses to Arthur that they want to return with him to England and try to make things right. She begs him to let them pay for what they have done. The thought of Guenevere burning at the stake horrifies Arthur. He says that everyone has forgotten justice and wants revenge because the table is dead, and exists no more. Heartbroken beyond belief Guenevere exclaims, “What?” Arthur explains that over half of the knights are dead and war has officially broken out. He says, “But I can think no longer what to do but to ride the tide of events. Oh, what a blight thinking is. How I wish I’d never tried to think at all. All we’ve been through – for nothing but an idea!” At this point, Guenevere feels even more guilt for her actions, and realizes that she can not leave Arthur until she sees if he will forgive her for betraying him. She knows that she will not be able to live with herself if she has to wonder if Arthur has forgiven her. He tells her that she must go and she says, “I know. So often in the past I would look up in your eyes and there I would find forgiveness. Perhaps one day in the future it shall be there again. But I won’t be with you. I won’t see it.” On this line Chris Jorie directed Guenevere to hold Arthur’s hand next to her cheek gently and lovingly. Arthur looks at her tenderly with forgiveness, and his forgiveness overwhelms her as she gazes into his eyes for a moment. After walking in shoes of Guenevere for the length of the play, coming to full emotional life in this scene was not difficult. After this moment she leaves the scene with Lancelot and Arthur says, “Goodbye, my love...My dearest love.”^{CXXXV}

CHAPTER THREE: REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE JOURNAL

Audition

I auditioned for *Camelot* at the Orlando Broadway Dinner Theatre on March 2, 2004. Two weeks before the audition I had accompanist Tim at UCF play the accompaniment of four of Guenevere's solo songs, which I recorded on tape. After much deliberation and learning all of the songs, I decided that "The Simple Joys of Maidenhood" was best song for me to sing at the audition. The song's lyrics are rather comical to me, and out of all the other songs, it could be acted the most. I knew that the competition in voice talent would be great, and making strong acting choices in presenting the song would catch the attention of the directors.

The day of the audition I wore a red spaghetti-strapped dress and clear platform heels because I knew the more elegant I looked, the more the director would be able to really see me in the role of Guenevere. They took us back in a group of about 8 people, and as soon as we walked to the backstage area, Scott Carter, the production manager, said, "Cynthia Lowa, you're up first!" I was definitely happy about going first because it cuts down on my nerves! As I walked out to audition both Karen Good, the owner of the theatre, and Chris Jorie, the director of *Camelot*, said, "Hey! Cynthia! Great to see you!" Having been a member of the cast of *My Fair Lady* (which Chris Jorie also directed) there in September and October of last fall, and having auditioned for several other shows

at the theatre, they recognized me! The accompanist asked what I wanted to sing, and I said I wanted to sing “Simple Joys of Maidenhood.” He asked if I wanted to start from the melodic section of the song, and I said that I wanted to start from the beginning. I knew the beginning showed off my acting skills, and absolutely had to start here if I really wanted Chris Jorie to consider me for Guenevere. It went incredibly well, as I was able to execute the acting choices just as I had rehearsed for two weeks. Chris Jorie stopped me about 3 quarters of the way through the song and said that he wanted me to read a side with Guenevere that no one else had read! I was extremely excited, to say the least. I then worked on a scene with Mark Richard Taylor, who was reading for Lancelot. We had the chance to read the scene together several times, and then in a few minutes we both went out to read together. The read felt really good, and I felt really relaxed. Everybody else read, and then we all exited into the lobby area.

I did not hear from Karen Good until Friday, March 5 around 2:00 p.m. She said that Chris was thrilled to offer me the part of Nimue who sings the solo “Follow Me,” and Lady Anne the head servant to Guenevere. She said Chris also really wanted me to understudy Guenevere! I was taken aback at this really great offer. However, could this qualify for my MFA Thesis Role Project? I spoke to J.J. Ruscella on the phone, and he said that he couldn’t see why it would not be appropriate. I couldn’t reach my Thesis chair, Be Boyd, to talk to her about the possibility of using this performance as my thesis. I decided that it was such a great professional opportunity that it was best for me to accept the roles and hope it would be approved shortly by the Theatre Department for my Thesis Role Project.

Friday, April 2, 2004

Since I have only 8 days of rehearsal to journal about, I will journal a few days of my own personal rehearsal process. The lines have come rather quickly. Shortly after I received the script I taped all of the in-between lines from beginning to end on a tape. I've found that in the past, just memorizing the lines, without hearing the other character's lines that precede mine, is not a good way to memorize because often other actors do not quite know their lines right and it confuses me. If I have heard the other actors' lines over and over, I will be less likely to flub up because of their mistakes. In performance when it sounds like they have said what they need to say, then I say my line. Also, this is good acting practice. I have actually practiced sitting down and walking around in my room when working on the lines.

I have taken one scene at a time, and really learned it, and then gone back through all of what I already knew every day. I have been quite amazed at how quickly these lines have "stuck." It seems it is never been so easy for me to remember lines before since I have been acting. I believe this is because I have such a strong motivation to have the lines learned. I have a lot of pressure to KNOW these lines solid. I'm also afraid to go into rehearsal with the lines only half memorized. I do not want to have to learn all of Guenevere's lines during rehearsal after the show opens. That would be a headache I do not want to have. Now, I will not have to worry, and I can really enjoy rehearsal and the opening.

Monday, April 5, 2004

Today was the first day of rehearsal. Everyone is always pumped up this first day because you get to meet new people and work on a new grand project. I love the show already, regardless of what the cast is like. I absolutely love the music, and have fallen in love with the script over the last few weeks. I picked up my script about 3 weeks ago and pretty much have all of Guenevere's lines memorized as well as the words to most of the songs. So, going into today wasn't too scary. Also, I picked up my choral book and Lady Anne and Nimue book last Monday. My biggest frustration was learning the "Jousts" song because it appeared that everyone sang every line by the way our musical director Patrick played it on the tape. However, I wasn't too concerned, because according to the schedule we weren't due to do that song today.

Upon my arrival the cast seemed very cordial and laid back, and immediately very professional. There aren't as many young people my age in this one, which was actually nice to see, because I thought this meant Chris Jorie had cast a lot of very experienced actors, and as the day progressed, I saw that this was the case. I saw immediately that I was working with a very talented cast, just by watching the actors perform in the scenes rehearsed today. Lizzy, who plays Guenevere has a strong, gorgeous, perfect voice, King Arthur immediately commands the attention of the audience with his acting, the knights all have distinct and interesting personalities, and each of the other ladies are energetic, positive, and focused. I'm sure I have only yet to see how really talented the cast is.

The first thing we did was have an Equity/Non-Equity meeting, heard the rules of the association and of the theatre, and were introduced to the directors. Everyone was tremendously bright and cheerful, though I felt a little jittery just because of the excitement of starting to rehearse this beautiful musical with talented professionals. Next, we did a costume parade. I have four beautiful costumes. Upon entering the dressing room, to my surprise, was a costume for Nimue hanging on the rod. I couldn't believe it! Surely, they must have changed their minds and wanted me to be seen by the audience. The costume is absolutely gorgeous! It is different shades of green with long flowing sleeves. It looks very fairy-like. It needs to be taken in because it is too big at the top. When I came out with it on, they all decided that I definitely must be seen, instead of singing from a microphone backstage, just because they have the beautiful costume and don't want to waste it. I had a feeling that something like this might happen! I was really happy. God is looking out for me, and all things are working out for the good. The rest of the costumes are gorgeous. I'll be writing more about them later. Most of them need a little taking up at the top or down the sides. I anticipated that we would have beautiful costumes! How can you do a show set in the Middle Ages without having anything but extraordinary costumes? I'm delighted to wear all four of them.

We did end up working on the "Jousts" today for a bit. This helped out a lot, because I recorded our work on tape so I could learn the words better this evening. We learned the "Lusty Month of May" dance in about an hour. It's really a "piece of cake." I had no headaches at all learning it. Christy Hale, our choreographer, has made the

dance playful and simple. I like it a lot. Nothing extravagant is really needed, so I think that the choreography fits perfectly into the show. My partner is Sam Little, and a very good partner is he. He has a really good, bright, cheerful attitude all around. We had a good time learning the dance. We must polish it tomorrow.

Any time I wasn't actually on the stage learning blocking, I was sitting back watching Chris give blocking to Guenevere, and writing it down in my script. He seems to be approaching it from more of an organic place, which will make it easier to remember. I'm going to have to do this all week, jot down the blocking, that is.

What a peaceful day! I had no big worries at all. There was nobody yelling at anybody, which is a good start!

Tuesday, April 6, 2004

Today we drilled the "Jousts" and Christy worked with our stage positions for a while. The "choreography" is real cute, and kind of reminds me of "Ascot Gavotte." I mean, it's the same – a race with horses happening out in front of us as well sing and tell about who is winning. However, this scene is not so funny at the end because Lionel dies, and then Lancelot raises him back to life. It has been very tricky to learn the words, because some are spoken and some are sung. There are many rests and many high notes. I love the challenge, though. This time I recorded the entire cast singing all the words

with individual cast members shouting out assigned lines from the script. My assigned lines are: “Sagamore will open up his pate,” and “Whack him!” Both of these lines have to be shouted because the music is so loud. The cast is split into two parts on the left and right side, and angled in to each other. We have to look and point and react to lines such as “he’s astride,” and “oh, look.” When we sing “here comes the blow, here comes the blow,” we look at four spots in a line across the back of the theatre, with the last point being at the center of the back wall. The people on the left side move their eyes in toward the center from the left and the people on the right side vice versa. I am on the left side, so we are watching Lancelot trot forward. It should look really good, once we have learned all of the lines precisely.

We drilled “May” and “Jousts,” I think we will all have the hang of it by tomorrow. It was not an extremely eventful day. I spent a lot of the day watching Guenevere and jotting down blocking notes. I continuously recite the lines with her and try to remember in my head where she moves on the stage. Hopefully, this will help me to feel confident if I ever have to step on the stage as her.

Wednesday, April 7, 2004

Today didn’t really seem jam packed because we did a lot of waiting around. However, we went back to the greenroom and drilled the songs whenever we had a chance. Patrick worked with us on the specific notes for all of the different choral parts

– alto, soprano, bass, and tenor. Everyone seems to know the lyrics better now. It didn't seem like we could drill them enough. However, it gets rather tiring drilling too much because one's brain wants to check out because there are so many words to remember and 3,000 verses, or so it seems.

We finally worked on Nimue's song today. I am going to come from the audience right ramp and walk into the stoplight, stop and sing my first two bars, then walk forward on the platform to the right at the corner of the proscenium wall, and continue singing. I stay there for the next few bars, and then walk slowly backwards with my hand reaching out to Merlin, bidding him come with me to a sapphire shore.

I was not entirely unhappy with my voice today. My nerves acted up because it was the first time singing it for the cast. A lot of people said that it sounded really good. I know better. It has sounded in my own private practice time much, much, much more technically excellent. I wimped out on the last word of the first two bars – "sight," and didn't sustain it. I can sustain it, I always have, but today I didn't. Oh well, it doesn't matter. I'll get it tomorrow. I have no worries really, though part of me thought, "Gee, why can't you sing any better than this today." It's like I said, oh well.

Thursday, April 8, 2004

Well, "Follow Me" sounded tremendously better, which was probably due to the fact that I had to sing it rather softly because we rehearsed in the break room for the first

half of the day today. I was able to float the notes beautifully. Thank God, that's all I can say! After yesterday, I needed to feel better about my voice. I felt like an amateur yesterday, but today I felt like a professional. This is a good thing. It made the day feel better all together.

Chris worked on blocking some of the final scenes today in the breakroom. The rest of us pretty much sat around and watched. They worked on the final scene with little Tom of Warwick. What a cutie! He's a good little actor, too! Kids are usually so genuine when they act, unless they get into their heads, then they start "acting," and everything is overdone. These kids are not like that, neither Damien or Jeremy. They are as cute as they can be. They are fun kids, too. Damien is always cracking jokes, and playing around with the cast members. He's very friendly. I love kids so much. I can't wait to work with them someday in children's theatre. They are so ripe and want to learn so badly. I love that about working with them.

We ran "May" several times after our long lunch. I am getting all of the steps just fine now. The steps really aren't very hard, so we pretty much picked up the choreography very quickly. It's not so much of a dance to me, it feels more like a "frolic." Sam dances well, which is nice. It's truly a fun number.

Today Chris staged "The Knighting" that takes place in the great hall. The ladies come onto the stage in a processional and walk around in a circle, and cross the center point of the stage at one point, and then curtsy to each other. Then, we continue on, and the knights join us in our circle, and we all go to a V position on the right and left on the stage. It's a very large V mind you, because the audience has to see everything that's

going on. We ladies do a step touch, sort of like the “wedding march” at first, then we just sort of step drag the rest of the time. We will be wearing our large headpieces and beautiful court dresses. The train of the dress will be draped over our left arm, and we must carry our bodies very “up” with our chins up. Scott Carter, the production manager, who also used to be a professional dancer, helped to stage this scene, and as he says, we must “keep your heads up regally.” I feel very elegant and graceful. This song almost reminds of “Ascot Gavotte” again, especially because of the headpieces. We don’t really move much either. We walk and then stand in position and look pretty.

Oh, by the way, we did a complete “plow-through” today. That is, we trudged through the show slowly stop and going. Well, actually come to think of it, we did not get to the end of the show, but we got pretty far. The first part we did in the breakroom. It was very hilarious when Mark Taylor, who is playing Lancelot, had to sing in a softer voice. He has such an enormously huge voice to begin with, and he was chuckling when he sang “C’est Moi” because he has to pull back his volume so much. As a matter of fact, we all were chuckling. It was quite a laugh really!

I’ve been watching Lizzy very closely these last rehearsals, and trying to ingrain some of her blocking in my head. The ones that are the most tricky are “Take Me to the Fair,” and “Lusty Month of May,” because she moves around a whole lot with other people on the stage. I think that if I get the general feel of the song that’s all that will really matter if I have to step on stage as her for any of the performances. I came home and worked on almost all of the solos tonight. I really am falling in love with the songs, and I do pray that some miracle will happen and I will get to go on sometime as her. I

really long to play the role of Guenevere. You know, there's one thing to knowing all of the lines and lyrics when I am singing in my car with Julie Andrews on the Broadway C.D., but it's another thing all together to be walking around the stage and acting the songs out and getting the lines and lyrics correct! I think I'm doing pretty well, considering that I haven't worked even once as her with the cast. I moved around my room tonight and worked some of the acting bits in the songs for quite a while. I feel like I see so many acting moments differently than the way Lizzy plays them. There are some places where more personality could be added to make the scenes more lively. Lizzy has not had as much acting experience as I have, and actually said to me the other day that if I had any comments or suggestions, she welcomed them. I was really surprised to hear her say that, but I know I really can not say too much because I would be overstepping my boundaries. She "point blank" asked me today about "St. Genevieve," and how it looked. She told me she felt so stressed out about that song and that it is a real challenge for her. What's funny is, of all the songs this one is my favorite, and I have a particular picture of how this song should be played. I mentioned that she has to be really pleading with the Saint like she really does want an answer about why she can't have what she wants – the simple joys of maidenhood. I only said that because every time I've seen her perform the song, her objective hasn't been very strong, and her eyes wander a lot as if she is not sure what she wants. She knows exactly what she wants: knights pining so for her, feuds beginning for her, etc. etc. The song should actually be very comical and playful. For instance, "I'm over here, beneath this tree" is a really funny line. I mean, as if Saint Genevieve couldn't locate her! It's a funny moment

really. I see her going from a comical tone in the lines, “it’s Guenevere do you remember me,” to a serious tone for the lyric “you know how faithful and devout I am.” It goes back and forth, back and forth from serious to funny. On the lyric “shall kith not kill their kin for me,” I see her sort of slyly smiling and completely loving the idea. With this sort of attitude she sets up for the audience how she really feels about the whole idea of chivalry, which makes Lancelot’s line “wouldn’t your majesty find the affairs of chivalry rather tedious,” so ironically funny for the audience and the rest of the cast! And the fact that her lyrics in the songs foreshadow the future, I mean, “shall a feud not begin for me,” is a strategically placed line by Lerner, the lyricist, because an enormous battle does indeed begin for her at the end of this epic! Now, I am not meaning to tear apart all of Lizzy’s acting, for what she is doing will be fine, but I just have to really think about how I would play each individual song and scene in examining my character for this thesis project. The objectives of the songs are starting to become more clear and clear, especially as I practice the songs at home.

“Take Me to the Fair” is another “doozey”! The lyric is really tricky, but it’s one of those things – once I have it, I have it, and correct words in the correct order hopefully will not leave my brain. It has to become like clockwork. I feel like I should be running this song at least once a day until it is like second nature to me. The one thing that I would do if I were playing Guenevere is – build the lines that come in between the sung lyrics. She says, “You will bash and thrash him?” “You’ll give him trouble?” “A mighty whack?” I would totally build the intensity of each of these lines. Another important point is that she is manipulating the knights, just as Chris Jorie said

the other day and I wrote down in my script, and I believe that she really has to manipulate them. Her face should comment as she is singing that she knows that the knights will hate to hear her say that Lancelot is stronger and more skilled than them, because she already knows how much they find him overbearing and pretentious. Really, she is baiting them. So, in her face the audience sees her face pointed to them, knowing full well how they will respond, and reveling in the moments that they do respond with bravado. It's also a very comical, fun song. The knights have to really play with her, too. I mean, they have to really force the bravado and be genuinely irritated that she would dare ask Lancelot to take their place. This is fun stuff. I can't wait to just work on the song a time or two with the knights even just in a rehearsal for fun. I love these songs so much, so just doing that would be quite delightful. It really would.

Friday, April 10, 2004

We did not actually make it through the entire show today. We made it to the song "Guenevere," but did not make it to the Finale Ultimo where we sing behind the scrim. It wasn't too bad of a day. My Nimue scene was pretty decent; however, I got to think about it later on and know that I can add in a lot more dance-like motion into it. Especially with my dance training, why would I not want to add in as much dance as I possibly could! The more I do it, the more it feels like Nimue is floating through the air,

and I think that I should be floating my arms all around. I need to be really working on it before I actually step on stage.

Sunday, April 11, 2004

Today we did a work-through of the basically the whole show. Chris polished a few scenes with the principals that needed polishing. We worked a few of the scene changes today, which is usually not done until the official tech day. The scene changes were very simple, as are all of the scene changes for the entire show, according to Karen Good, artistic director/owner of the theatre. We did also put on all of our costumes today, which tends to throw off actors the first time they are used. This time, I really did not have any trouble, even with my Nimue costume. The headpiece is a little awkward, but it did not bother me too much.

Monday, April 13, 2004

The scene in which we walk in on Guenevere and Lancelot after he sings “If Ever I Would Leave You,” was very real. Chris explained it as if it was like one of those awkward moments when you walk in on something you shouldn’t have! He said, “I

don't know about you, but I've done that a lot of times in my life!" We all laughed at that statement! I have walked in on people at awkward moments, too, like when two people are talking intimately or are fondling each other. These are very awkward moments. This is an even bigger awkward moment. I mean, hello! She is the queen and she and the king's best knight are holding hands and intimately talking about the king! Also, in the middle of the song, E.B. comes in right before Lancelot is about to kiss her, and we always play it like she comes back and tells us what she saw! I am supposed to be the gossip of the court, anyway, or at least this is what Arthur thinks I am. (He tells Guenevere in the preceding scene that she should go take a trip with me away from everything because I will amuse her with the gossip of the court!) So, I am a gossip! This adds an interesting twist to my character.

Today they assigned each of the non-equity cast members scene changes. I pull the castle backdrop on and off in the first act a couple of times, and take on and off the wine table a couple of times, as well as page the curtain for E.B. who takes off the tree apparatus. These are very easy changes. The trick is not getting lazy backstage and remembering to come to the sides of the stage and do them. It shouldn't be too hard because everybody pretty much has an assigned task, all but the four equity actors and Lizzy. Naturally, Lizzy does not have any scene changes to do, even though she is non-equity. She has too many costume changes. She must change costumes like 8 times.

Tuesday, April 13, 2004

I sang with a bit more volume today. I tend to shorten “night” and “sight,” but today I sustained them more. I could stand to sustain them even more. It’s so funny because when I rehearsed it for weeks I never had any trouble sustained those notes, but as soon as I stepped on stage to sing, the song was really hard. This probably because I was not anticipating even being scene, so all I did was practice it vocally with no movement – in the car or in a fixed position standing. Now I have to add in all of this movement. Also, I have this costume on with these big, long sleeves and this sort of round awkward headpiece, and I wear a half-mask. I actually made this mask this weekend. When I saw the costume last week, I felt like I needed to add a piece to it, or paint my face or something. I decided painting my face would be a pain because I do not have that much time to get into my next costume, and from experience, I know wiping of lines and glitter from all over my face takes a few minutes. I definitely did not want to have to do that for 7 weeks of the production, so I went to Jo-Ann’s fabrics and bought a little half mask. My sister Susan’s friend Danny happened to be in town last weekend, and was bored, so he cut up the mask a little bit for me. The eyes needed to be a bit bigger, and I didn’t want the nose to be a part of it, so I had him cut that out. Then, I painted it with this clear/white glitter paint. It looks really pretty. Stephen, our costume designer, said that he kind of liked it, and I should just wear it for the scene, and see what Chris says about it. Well, Chris did not say anything about it at all, so I’m keeping it! I like it! I don’t want to look like Lady Anne at all when I am Nimue, so it’s perfect to sort

of disguise my identity.

David Preuss, our stage manager told me today that the spot that will be on me will be green. They weren't able to use it today for rehearsal, but for the opening tomorrow, it will be green. I think this will be very effective. Especially since my costume is green. Christy, our choreographer, gave me a note today, that I should make my arms even bigger than I am. I already felt this. It's hard with because the costume is big long too, and I still feel a little bit awkward in it. She said that the other day I did something really cool with my arms on Merlin's "I don't remember" line, but today I didn't do the same thing. She wants me to try and remember what I did. For the life of me, I don't remember what I did, I think it might have just been a sort of flourish with my arms. I'll try that tomorrow.

After our run, Christy also told us that in the "Jousts" we should step more into the center when they bring out the hurt Lionel, so that we have more room to step back after Arthur nods that he is dead. We also have to move out to the plug of the stage on the left as soon as Jenny and Arthur bow to Lancelot.

Wednesday, April 14, 2004

Today was opening day. How did this day come so quick? The last 9 days flew by like a whirlwind. Everything happens so fast. In some way it feels like we have been

here for a lot longer than 9 days, because we have had to do a lot in these days. The show is really not all that difficult to stage, honestly, but it could have been difficult with a lot inexperienced people. There are no inexperienced actors in this cast, so in many ways, the rehearsal process was a piece of cake for the ensemble. Now, according to Lizzy, she was a bit stressed out trying to learn all of the blocking so fast! She was especially on the days when the blocking changed a bit from the previous day's rehearsal. All I could do was assure her that she was doing a fantastic job, and that it would all come together. It will all come together. I've even seen where her acting has become "cleaner" and "cleaner," because of stronger, more confident acting choices. For a person who has had very little acting experience, but much vocal experience, she is doing a phenomenal job. I'm quite sure audiences will love her. Her voice is so captivating. Her emotion seems the most "grand" when she sings her ballads. You can hear the emotion in her voice. It's very gorgeous.

We received some notes in between performances today, which I expected. Karen Good had already said that we should treat these first four performances like final dress rehearsals. She also informed us that she banned all reviewers from the theatre until next week. She said the reviews will be better if we have the chance to work out the kinks in the first week. The reviewers will come next week, and I'm quite sure that the show will be spectacular by then, even though it is excellent now. Scene changes will be faster, and the general pace of the show will move forward faster.

The shows were just fine today. We had a great time. After our last show tonight, Chris took us out on the stage and showed us how he wanted David and I to

change the blocking for “Follow Me.” When I come down off the platform, halfway through the song, I need to face upstage diagonally and motion to him as I finish singing, then walk around the platform and lead him off stage. Chris said that Merlin’s big hair and costume completely blocks me off from the audience the other way. It felt strange today anyway. I feel like I am in dress rehearsal still, but that’s okay, I don’t mind. He even wants my voice louder. I’ll see what I can do.

Thursday, April 15, 2004

Today still felt a little like a rehearsal for me, because I had to adjust the blocking from what I did yesterday. I did the blocking as we discussed last night, and it felt much better than what I was doing before. Now, all I need to do is solidify it. The evening performance felt even more natural than the matinee, as I had already performed the song with the new blocking for the matinee. My voice was even larger, too. “Follow Me” is fifteen or twenty minutes into the show, so I have the chance to step outside the building and sing through it several times. I can be as loud as I want when I do this, and it is so beautiful outside right now. The sun was just going down when I was outside practicing, the temperature had dropped a bit, and there was a breeze. If we were doing this for film, this is the type of setting in which I imagine this scene would take place. It was very serene, and as I moved my arms around the wind blew my sleeves a bit! It was very

relaxing practicing out there, and it really warmed me up for the evening performance. I felt more “open” physically in the evening performance than I did in the matinee, too. Maybe it is because by that time, I felt really good physically – alive and really awake! The cast even commented on my backstage behavior – which was silly. I’ve been very focused and sort of quiet up until last night. I told them I did not want to get yelled at in rehearsals, so that’s why I am very focused and quiet during this period, but now I feel like I can be silly backstage, and it’s okay.

“May” is such a fun song. I like the costume, too. Stephen took it up for me, so now it doesn’t fall off of my shoulders. It dips too low in the front, but still it’s the most feminine and just plain pretty costume that I have. It just so happens that the knight that I dance with, Sir Lionel, is the knight whom Lancelot kills and raises from the dead in the “Jousts.” How perfect is that! This raises the stakes in the “Jousts” for me in the whole scene. I want Sir Lionel to beat Lancelot probably more than anybody else because number one, he’s my “boyfriend,” and number two I’ve been talking to my girlfriends about how I am so lucky to have the most skilled of knights in the kingdom take a liking to me! When we sing, “Sir Lionel is dead. The spear has run him through.” I’m just as heart-broken as the “teared-up” Guenevere. I mean, I love this Sir Lionel. This adds more motivation to my character of Lady Anne.

I think that I am really going to like this cast. Everyone is very kind, and supportive. When I’ve expressed a couple of times how I wasn’t entirely happy with my song, various cast members assured me that it sounded beautiful. This is really great to hear, because I think that sometimes as actors we think that our fellow actors are secretly

talking about how bad we are behind our backs, when most of the time this is not true. Now, sometimes it is true, but in this case, I don't believe it is, which is assuring. I am most own worst critic, in my ears, I can hear all the imperfections in my voice, but the cast really can't hear them!

David, who plays Merlin, plays such a grand character that I have to play a grand character, too. In other words, he and Nimue create the magical mood of the story in the beginning before the reality of the story progresses. Also, once we exit, all of the magic of the story sort of disappears until act two when Morgan Le Fay appears. The audience does clap loudly when we exit off stage. I grab his hand and lead him off stage down the stage left ramp out of the green spotlight. I'm sure it's looks "cool."

Sunday, April 18, 2004

We had the best audience we have ever had. This was probably due to the fact that Jimmy was in the audience, who used to be stage manager here at the theatre. He ought to be a paid audience member because he laughs so loudly and we love that! The energy that we gave the audience was phenomenal! This was because they gave us so much energy. They laughed at everything! They especially laughed at Pellinore in the "May" scene! He is hysterically funny, but they really loved him. They also really got into the "Jousts" with us. When E.B. screams, "Crack him!" and I scream "Whack him!"

The audience chuckled. I mean, I really whack Scott, and then realize that I whacked him hard and sort of half-apologize with my reaction. It's a cute moment, I think. The whole scene feels like a football game! That's the feel that Chris wanted it to have anyway. We have to act like there are fifty of us singing, too. I love the scene more and more. It definitely feels like "Ascot Gavotte" from *My Fair Lady* because we are referring to horses that are out racing out past the audience's heads. However, we don't have to be so stiff and regal. We can really have a good time with it, and really cheer on the knights. More and more, I feel like I would like to go see a real joust somewhere. I know that Medieval Times, a dinner theatre in the Orlando theme park area, has one. It would be great to see it. I'm sure it would change my perspective on the scene.

Wednesday, April 21, 2004

I must absolutely thoroughly warm-up before every show. This is a must, as I discovered today for the matinee. I did not warm-up all that much before the show, and "Follow Me" did not sound as strong. It wasn't lousy, because I did run through it twice outside the building, however, I could have had more volume had I really, really warmed up.

David, our stage manager told me today that there will be fog for "Follow Me," however, it was not there for the matinee. I was expecting it, but it never came out. I was

actually glad because it might have thrown me off vocally having to breathe that fog in. From experience, I know that fog can be a bit constricting to the voice. I wouldn't be opposed to them not using it at all, but I think that it would add a nice effect to the scene. I believe that this may be what is missing from the scene, anyway. I was originally supposed to be either off stage singing or behind a scrim singing. I'm not supposed to be from the real world, but from the magical world, and in some way, I feel that the way we are doing it now without the fog, gives the audience the feeling that I am from the real world. I look and sound more like a real woman, than a nymph or fairy. This is why I added the mask, too. I didn't want to look like a woman, or like a teenager, which I look like in the other scenes. I added some more gold glitter to the mask this weekend, and I'm sure that the audience can see it sparkle now. One more touch to add to the magical quality of the song. It must transcend reality, it really must.

Thursday, April 22, 2004

I've decided I don't need to worry about singing "Follow Me" so "legit." I don't like the way it sounds "legit," or more operatic-like. I do not think that it really matters either way. I said before that I don't usually sustain the words "night" and "sight," but I don't really think that it matters. I've never really had to sing true "legit" in any show, so why do I have to start now? Even the way I sing the Guenevere songs is not

completely legit, like Lizzy. She has been trained classically, but all I've ever done is musical theatre singing, except for an Italian aria here and there. These did help my voice technique, because singing classical songs improves a singer's technique, like Shakespeare improves an actor's acting technique. It did help me to develop a fuller sound, but I don't necessarily like the operatic sound all the time. The other day, when I was singing "May" in my car, I really realized that I don't sound like Lizzy. Now, she sings all of the songs beautifully, very, very beautifully, but I just have to be happy with the fact that I'm not going to sound like her if I go on as Guenevere. I have a different voice, and different personae, so everything will sound very different. I act strongly through the phrases I sing. My intentions tend to drive the song through from phrase to phrase. This is what I've figured out about my singing. I love to take a song and make it like a monologue, or make a duet song like a dialogue. That's why musical theatre is so fun for me. Lizzy was talking about how much she loves singing opera over singing musical theatre songs because musical theatre songs do not move her as much emotionally. I feel the opposite, I absolutely love infusing the detail of a character into singing, to present a fully alive, and living breathing person that develops and blossoms before the audience's eyes. I love that so much. That is why I fell in love with musical theatre. If I can be acting, singing, and dancing all in one production, then I am so very happy. This is my heart's passion, although I do love acting for film, too, and I don't mind occasionally doing a non-musical play. However, I wouldn't want to make a career of it! A combination of all these: musical theatre, straight theatre, and film acting is what I desire to do with the rest of my life.

Not only is this thesis project a study of the Arthurian characters of Camelot, is a study of myself, my skills, my strengths, and weaknesses. All of these things I am examining in my journal entries, because these discoveries are very, very important to my growth as I complete my Master of Fine Arts. At any rate, it is a “master” of fine arts, and this implies that I have some mastery of my own art, and it has been said that the greatest art is the soul. So, I guess I could say that this thesis project is not only a time to develop my singing, acting, and dancing skills, but a time to continue doing some deep soul searching about what I want focus on in my career once I complete my M.F.A. I’m sure there will be many more discoveries in the next 5 ½ weeks, which will bring me to a more narrow focus in my career.

I do hope that I have the opportunity to play Guenevere. Everything within me wants to play her a few times. I know the script well, but I have never rehearsed it with the other actors. I say many of lines backstage as I am listening to Lizzy, but I yearn (yes, that sounds dramatic) to step on stage as Guenevere a few times! I know this script. I feel like I am having ample time to really think about each scene, as I listen, and discover intentions, desires, and the heart of Guenevere, even as I recite the lines backstage. This is hard to explain, and I never anticipated that this would be the case, but at any rate, I am learning about Guenevere even though I have not performed the role. For example, in the scene in which she and Pelly are talking about the trouble that Mordred is causing, I’ve realize how much Guenevere must feel guilty because deep down she already fears that Arthur knows of her love affair with Lancelot. Hearing how destructive he has been frightens her, because if he were to find out about her affair with

Lancelot, it would be the end of her life. She is completely tormented and feels terrible for Arthur because she also can not control anything Mordred does, though she would like to wring his neck, but that is not part of the story. What's interesting is the fact that she can really not put Arthur at ease about the situation, because she is not at ease about the situation herself! She's absolutely terrified, so yes, truly "being a queen is a weary load," for sure. That remark is totally the truth, and almost ironic to the audience, because hiding her secret from Arthur is dreadfully more agonizing than any of the troubles that beset she and Arthur as king and queen.

Thursday, April 29, 2004

Well, today we rehearsed many of Guenevere scenes. Lizzy was more than willing to go over all of the blocking with me. At this point, she is very worn out anyway, and I almost think that in the back of her mind it feels good to know that I would be just fine if she had call in sick or something like that. Anyway, Michael St. Pierre, who plays King Arthur, rehearsed with us, and so did David, who plays Pellinore. Lizzy first went over the "May" blocking with me for the song. It's really a lot easier than I thought. I haven't really paid attention to what she does, except in the first part of the song where we all just stand there and react to what she is singing, then we dance and she is back behind us, so I've always wondered exactly what it is that she does. She actually

does the first part of the dance with us, which starts at the lyrics, “Whence this fragrance wafting through the air.” She and Andre stay over in the left corner and dance, and then he lifts her up on the platform and she “free forms” for a few phrases. She then comes down off the platform for the end of the song, and the guys lift her up on the last couple of notes. It’s a piece of cake, and not really that complicated. This takes a load off of my mind anyway. Then, we did the other scenes, in order, with Michael. Gosh, he’s great to work with! I’ve never had the opportunity to work with such an experienced actor in my life. He has done a lot of Shakespeare plays and all sorts of different roles over the years. He is really funny, too! It wasn’t stressful working with him, especially since he and Lizzy were joking about certain scenes! We had a good time, and I think I absorbed most of the blocking. Michael suggested that I watch all of the scenes that I could for the evening show because this would help to lock the blocking in my head after I’ve been through all of the blocking officially with them. Surprisingly, I didn’t really have any trouble with the lines, and I followed through with most of my intentions, even for this rehearsal. So, I was proud of myself. Studying all of the lines for so long has really prepared me. When we finished, Michael said, “Yep, you are in good shape.” This was really nice to hear coming from him because he’s been a professional for so long.

You know, I did not write down much of the blocking, because I’ve watched it so many times that’s better that I just memorize it by doing and watching. I did watch this evening as much of all of Guenevere and Arthur’s scenes as I could, and I think that I absorbed a lot of the blocking. There are many natural places that they cross each other,

so it's not difficult to remember the blocking. However, there are also a few places where the crosses seem unnatural and unmotivated. Lizzy says that she often can't find the motivation for some of her blocking. I've thought the same many times, but I think it has to do with acting choices. The intention has to be really pursued, or if the movement looks unnatural. In other places, like in the "May" scene there are several times when she crosses Lancelot and it just looks completely unnatural, and I do not think that it has anything to do with acting choices. This makes me want to really watch Lizzy in this scene the next time we do the show. I'd like to figure out what the problem is, especially in this scene. Also, I think that even though I have not run through the blocking of this scene with Arthur and Lancelot, that I just about have the blocking memorized because I've seen it around 20 times now, as I sit on the stage and observe as one of the ladies in waiting.

Saturday, April 30, 2004

I was able to watch the first part of scene 2 with Arthur and Guenevere today. I just stayed in my Nimue costume and went up into the wait booth and watched through the curtains. The scene is really cute now, and establishes nicely the relationship between Arthur and Guenevere. Lizzy makes stronger choices than she did in rehearsals. She seems more engaged in the conversation and like she is sincerely trying to inspire Arthur to think. I did tell Lizzy that tonight, how entirely cute and sweet that scene is. I

absolutely love the energy that Michael St. Pierre brings to the scene. He becomes more and more excited as the scene progresses, and his energy feeds Guenevere and she become excited also.

Well, I noticed about half way through the matinee today that Be was sitting in the audience! I knew that she was supposed to come today, but thought she would come to the evening performance. It was a good show for me. My voice isn't quite as grand for Nimue in the matinee as it usually is by evening, but nothing to worry about, for I sounded fine. David, our stage manager, did forget to pre-set the fog machine, so there was no fog. My entrance is rather boring when there is no fog. I love the fog, for it makes my entrance more dramatic and magical. Oh well, it was just one of those things.

May 12, 2004

It's been a little while since I've written because no major discoveries have been made. A little over a week ago, however, I did call Karen Good, the owner of the theater, and asked her if there was a possibility that I might do a show as Guenevere on perhaps a Wednesday or Thursday night when the crowds are small. She said that she is not able to pay the actors for a "put-in" rehearsal, but she will think about it. I don't really know what to expect at this point. I have to not keep my hopes up too high, but just enjoy what I already do in the show.

I am seeing many more specific choices that I would make differently in some of the scenes, many of which I am writing about in the analysis section of this paper. Be Boyd told me to not worry about playing Guenevere, that I should go ahead anyway and write about perhaps how I might play the scenes differently. I think this is a good idea, but I by no means, want this paper to become a critique of Lizzy. She and I are becoming good friends, and I do not want to criticize her. So, any comments I make in this paper are not intended to look down upon her talent or choices, but to tactfully examine how I would make some different choices than she. I love her voice so much and enjoy watching many of the scenes, but I do certainly have a different perspective on many of the scenes even before rehearsals began. Some of the acting choices that she makes, are a reflection of Chris Jorie's direction. With this fact in mind, I realize that I will be commenting on Chris Jorie's direction when I write of different choices I would make. As a professional, this should not bother me, but as a person who greatly respects Chris Jorie, I feel a little odd doing this. However, being able to specifically distinguish and dissect these scenes is all part of mastering my craft. I must have an opinion on the way actors play scenes, because acting is all about specifics, and choices, choices, choices. I will have to make many, many specific choices when I direct some day, and I think that I may actually choose to direct this production some day. The more I think about it, the more I think I would absolutely love to do this. Especially after writing my M.F.A. thesis on *Camelot*. I will sort of be an expert on *Camelot* by the completion of this thesis anyway. In the future when I direct shows, even if it is not until later on in my life, I would like to really dissect each scene and think about the specifics of every scene

for every actor, just as I have had to do for my this project. I did this in my graduate acting classes, and I feel that learning this process in graduate school is going to put me ahead as both an actor and a director. Knowledge never hurts the development of a character any way, and there is a lot to be learned about this story.

Guenevere is such a complex character, and I can see why there are books written solely about the legendary characters of Lancelot, Guenevere, and Arthur. Lancelot's character is not really developed in this production, but Guenevere's character is, more so than the average American musical ingenue. This is what I really love about the show. I think that Lerner and Loewe certainly did create a legendary piece for American musical theatre. I've fallen in love with it.

Today I realized what stage cross in the "May" scene that seems unnatural. She says, "I daresay. I do daresay," after Lancelot says, "...but the refinement of the soul is an endless struggle." There really is no real need to move there, in my opinion. She crosses in several other places that don't seem to fit well. I guess Chris' reason for doing this is to open her up to the audience as much as possible, but can't they just stay nose to nose a lot longer and just talk? I personally think she would be more amused at Lancelot, and not aggressively confrontational or sharp with him. She corners him humorously, and is rather amused and also perturbed by his arrogance, but it seems unnatural for her to crossing him so much. The way she crosses him astutely makes it seem like she is an attorney questioning the defendant. Anyway, this is just an observation.

May 20, 2004

It's funny, but the more I don't really care how my singing sounds, the better I technically sound! Seriously! Dr. Chicurel mentioned it the other day, that it is anticipation that keeps us from singing not as well as we did in rehearsal or in our own private room. I've quit anticipating notes, and just sing now. I think that playing Nimue was a good way for me to get my confidence back in my voice without "killing" myself trying to carry the role of Guenevere for 7 weeks. I feel now at this point ready to take on the challenge of other leading lady roles, that I wouldn't have felt ready for two months ago. This is a really good improvement for me, too. Occasionally, I'll hear from someone who saw the show that my voice sounded beautiful, which is nice to hear, because I judge myself pretty harshly. There have been days when I've felt like – "gee that was a little off today," and other days when I feel like "that was excellent." For example, today my allergies were bothering me, and when I was outside warming-up I couldn't get much volume at all because I didn't have as much resonance in my head because my sinuses are draining. However, when I went on stage, I sounded better than I have in awhile. It's funny how that works. So, like I said, when I don't anticipate the high notes that are coming, I sound better. I have to give my voice the benefit of a doubt. Well, what I mean by that is...that I have been training for quite a few years, and have established good technique, and if I just relax I naturally sound good.

David and I are going to videotape two of the Guenevere's solos on the stage tonight after the show. It is a perfect night to do it because they have to leave the stage

out for the *Annie* rehearsal tomorrow morning. He is so very generous and kind to help me out with this. Sam Little is letting me borrow his video camera. I definitely need to have something to show my committee of me playing Guenevere. It is not possible to do a showcase or a pre-arranged performance so this will make it feel like examining the role of Guenevere wasn't completely a waste because nobody ever saw me perform any of the songs or scenes. My thesis committee can see that I can actually put in to action what I have analyzed in this paper. I hope it goes well. I'm sure it will. I will sing "The Simple Joys of Maidenhood," and "Before I Gaze at You Again."

May 21, 2004

We taped the two songs tonight, and I was actually rather surprised at myself. The costume did not interfere with my performance for "Simple Joys of Maidenhood," and I thought it would because the fur is so heavy and cape drapes over my arms. I was so focused because I only really had one shot at taping it, that I did very well. I felt like I "nailed" most of the moments I analyzed in my paper, so I was pleased with my performance. Perhaps my committee will be able to include comments in their performance reports about my performance in these two songs as Guenevere. What a relief to have the chance to do that. I know have a record of my performance for a keepsake, too.

May 29, 2004

The first scene with Arthur felt really great! “Simple Joys of Maidenhood” felt fabulous. My voice actually surprised myself. Of course, right before I ran down the to sing the song, my heart was about pounding out of my chest, but this rush of adrenaline actually made my sound better. In other places just plain nerves kept me from sustaining notes that should have been sustained, but I don’t feel badly about that because of all that was going on. I mean, I was thrown into this without a full rehearsal, and I did not have the opportunity to go through a full run-through in costume. I was not directed, really either, so many of my acting choices were not the result of Chris Jorie’s direction, but my own personal perspective of the scene. I did, however, make a myriad of discoveries, of which I will detail in the analysis section of my paper.

I felt like the lines could have snapped more. There was air in between lines occasionally due to the fact that I had a brain “burp” for a moment or two. There was a lot of pressure, but my adrenaline kicked in really hard and made up the difference, especially with the singing. I surprised myself at the end of “Lusty Month of May” and “Take Me to the Fair” when I hit the high note in great volume. They did not end up lifting me at the end of “May,” which was probably better because we did not have the chance to run the song with the three guys in rehearsal. A lift might have made it difficult to sing the last couple of notes.

When I came out for “Lusty Monty of May” I felt like I didn’t really know what I was doing with the blocking, but I did not care. I just had fun! Truly I did. It’s a cute

song, and I enjoyed being able to walk around and “free form” for the first verse. I could see where if I had the chance to play Guenevere for the full run, how I would find little moments to add in different expressions with the words. It felt different from what I’ve seen Elizabeth do because I did not deliberately move to various positions on the stage. In that case, not knowing what I was doing made all of my actions not so deliberate, which is a habit that I fall into when I am acting. All of my acting was rather raw. When I moved, I moved because I sort of took the hint from my scene partners who had just counter-crossed me or moved in to me.

There were several acting moments that felt amazing. Because I have never had the chance really work these scenes with Arthur and Lancelot, many moments were so very real for me. One of them was when I came up from my bow to Lancelot after he miraculously healed Lionel and looked up into his eyes. He was suddenly a different person to me. In the “May” scene he was a big buffoon, but he was suddenly handsome to me. I don’t think the audience could see what was going on in me because it was all in eyes. Now, had there been a camera on me, it would have been a terrific moment. It just so happens that many of the great real acting moments that I had were those moments that would have read really well on camera. I believe this is because when my emotional perspective comes clearly through my eyes, I am entirely there in the scene. Yes, my body movements and gestures are bigger, but there’s no reason why my eyes should not be full of emotion. It could be easy to fall into repetitive patterns with gesturing and such after doing it night after night, instead of really being emotionally connected. The audience might or might not know the difference, but an actor could make it look like

they were full of emotion, but truly not emotionally be connected. Since I've studied acting more vigorously in graduate school, and know the difference between doing and being, I won't be likely to ever fall into these bad habits as an actor. I will also demand it when I direct. Focus is a must. Anyway, another really great acting moment was when I was looking up at Arthur in the final scene and he had forgiveness in his eyes. This broke my heart, and I came to the most full emotional life that I've ever come to on the stage. I felt like I was crying, but the tears actually did not come out of my eyes. It's hard to explain, but I felt very connected to him and full of regret and guilt for what I had done to this man who loves me so much. I thought I might actually sob on stage because the other day when I was intensely looking at the script and adding some details of analysis to my paper, I starting sobbing over King Arthur's soliloquy and this final scene. The forgiveness that he has in his heart for Guenevere is magnanimous. He could have been resentful and pushed her away from him, but he forgave her on the spot. Even though I do not believe that he could live with her as his wife ever again, he forgave her with his whole heart. When I looked in his eyes during this final scene, there was forgiveness in his eyes. Michael St. Pierre, is a pro, he knows his craft. This topped all of my other acting experiences in my lifetime combined. Honestly. This was not a fluff musical requiring "cheesy" acting. No, it required strength of focus and depth of heart to play this role. This was a glorious opportunity given to me by God.

On "What Do the Simple Folk Do" I could not whistle, which was hilarious! We had to improvise this little section. It was kind of embarrassing, but I knew that it was going to happen about like that.

I felt my projection slip in various moments. I spoke more in the volume I would for “film” for those moments. I think I could be heard, but still I am really adamant about every word being understood by the audience, so I noticed my volume and articulation slip at times.

Since I had been writing the paper from the point of view of “if” I had the chance to play Guenevere...here’s how I would play Guenevere..., I have to now tweak what I’ve written in certain places. I was indeed able to apply much of the details of the analysis that I’ve already written. I found the more I focused on what my scene partners were saying, the easier the lines came to my memory. I so loved the scenes with Arthur, all of them. He is so great to act with! I’ve never had the opportunity to act with an actor of his caliber! Wow, what a difference that acting with amateurs. I barely feel like a professional at this point. This is only the beginning for me. I have not had to carry a production in a leading role for five years! That’s a long time! I’ve only had minor roles, which have been very fun, but not as taxing as this one. The experience was certainly exhilarating, though. The cast was wholeheartedly behind me. Every time one of the cast members saw me before the show, they smiled and said something like, “you’re gonna be great” or “I’m excited for you.” I really can not believe how incredibly supportive they were. Michael St. Pierre was perhaps the most supportive of all of them. I realized this during the curtain call when he whisper in my ear that he wanted to bow first and me second! Wow, did that “floor” me! I felt so entirely honored that I about teared up. What a noble thing for him to do. It was truly noble and humble.

CHAPTER FOUR: PERFORMANCE REPORTS

Belinda Boyd

I had the pleasure of watching Cindy Lowa portray the roles of Nimue and Lady Anne in the musical *Camelot* performed at the Broadway Dinner Theatre in Orlando, FL. There is a great amount of effort that goes into performing any role, but the difficulty of playing multiple roles is especially challenging. Cindy performed both of these roles with ease, sophistication and skill. Her energy and talent contributed to an enjoyable matinee performance.

Cindy states in her character analysis that the character of Nimue helps to provide the magic of the play. Our introduction to Nimue is first heard by her operatic aria. The aria has a haunting quality that immediately puts one in a non-realistic place. Although Nimue is a creature from another world, she should be perceived as a protective energy for Arthur. If the voice that is heard is strident or strained, we get the sense that this is not a safe environment for Arthur, but a dangerous one, perhaps the world of Morgan Le Fay instead. Cindy handled these notes with effortlessness and expertise. I had not heard Cindy sing until this performance. I did not even realize this was her voice until I saw her. Her voice had strength and purity. Her tone was pleasant and inviting. I was pleased with this portion of the performance and was sorry the song was so short. I wanted to hear more of her solo work. Having heard her sing, I understood why she had

also been cast as Guinevere's understudy: a role that is also vocally demanding and requires proficiency.

The actor who plays Nimue can expect to have to wear a costume that portrays a creature from another world and therefore may need to be handled in a unique way. In this production, Nimue's costume had the added requirements of a mask and additional fabric to give the arms a sort of "breezy" effect. This meant that Cindy could not rely on facial expressions to create this character, nor could she rely on the traditional gestures that other actors typically employ. Cindy gave the character physical distinction through fluidity and nimbleness so that the creature appeared to be swimming through water. She used her head and neck in a way that resembled a reptile. Through length in her arms, she demonstrated her desire to transport Merlin to a different location. Her energy suggested that she cared for Merlin. It was a very nice moment in the play because as an audience member it felt very much as if Merlin was being spirited along by a mother figure. This image seems very appropriate for the character who is the Lady of the Lake.

Although apparently there was some technical snafu with the entrance on the day of my attendance, the performance was not hindered by this challenge. In a very short amount of time, Cindy created a character that was magical, memorable and effective.

Her Lady Anne was equally as engaging. In a musical such as *Camelot*, where the focus is so heavily waited toward the main characters, it is easy to lose one actor among a crowd. Although Lady Anne is technically a chorale member, Cindy gave her a presence and significance that made her stand out. Making use of every moment, she created a character that was a living individual.

Without pushing or becoming artificial, she was an intrinsic part of the action at all times. She created real relationships and actually appeared to care what the other characters were saying to her. She developed a sense of urgency in her gait that added an excitement to a moment. During the song “The Lusty Month of May”, when spring is in the air as well as romance, she crafted a charming relationship with her male dance partner. Through clear intention and a physicality that showed her interest, she demonstrated real attraction. This was not the case with all of the couples. Some of them did not even look at each other, let alone, generate interest in each other.

In her scenes with Guenevere, she seemed genuinely interested in her happiness, actually concerned for her safety and authentically betrayed by her indiscretions. Cindy’s authenticity helped to define a real environment for the inhabitants of Camelot, who were truly affected by the lives of the major characters.

Cindy obviously put a great amount of thought into her performances. There was detail and consistency in each entrance. There were nuances in her face and body that kept her performances interesting and alive. Time and energy had been spent in developing characters who did not just pass through, but added depth to the moment and layers to the story. I particularly enjoyed watching her move from the wraithlike qualities of Nimue to the sophisticated, elegant, charming, innocent, but purposeful Lady Anne. In this production, Cindy not only shared her talent with us, she shared her imagination as well.

Chris Niess

I witnessed Master of Fine Arts degree candidate Cynthia Lowa perform the roles of Lady Anne and Nimue in the Broadway Dinner Theatre production of *Camelot* on Saturday, May 8, 2004. The cast was comprised of a combination of guest artists with substantial performance credits, and area and regional artists. The production also included a cohesive costume design, an adaptable set and well thought out lighting design; all of which framed the production appropriately in this professional dinner theatre setting.

Ms. Lowa performed well within this ensemble, matching her choices both as Nimue and as Lady Anne to the directors' concept. Her physical choices as Nimue and her reactions to the action onstage as Lady Anne were personalized and appeared to have been contributed by Ms. Lowa. None of her acting moments onstage drew undue focus, nor did they demonstrate a lapse in energy or activity so as to make her 'invisible' amongst the ensemble.

Noted challenges that were met through this performance include a degree of naturalness that surrounding the characters' interactions with others onstage. The actor appeared to have a greater awareness of the entirety of activity onstage as opposed to intense concentration on the microcosm of a single gesture or facial expression, and as such was able to present a performance that convinced the audience that she was 'living' in the same world. Another related challenge presented in her period of training was one

of unlabored projection of vocal and physical energy. In the majority of her time onstage Ms. Lowa achieved the same level of ‘presence’ as her fellow actors in the ensemble.

As she continues her journey as actor and/or instructor, an area of interesting continued study would be to focus on where her movement, vocal and acting choices go beyond a level of carefully studied craft and are freed to a level of seeming spontaneity (and indeed elements of them can be absolutely spontaneous). I believe it is this pursuit that will hone a skill that shrouds the ‘work’ of the character from the audience and gives the perception of totally living in the action onstage.

Finally, Ms. Lowa’s performance in this production is commendable, reflective of her studies in the MFA Performance program, and in my opinion meet the practical requirements for her thesis role.

J.J. Ruscella

On a sweltering May evening in an old staple theatre once called the Mark II a seasoned yet eager crowd enters into the doors of the struggling performance venue called the Orlando Broadway Dinner Theatre. The house fills to about 1/6th of its capacity and the lights dim to the well-known musical opening of *Camelot*. In its final weeks of performance, tonight’s show is unlike prior performances in one very special way, the lead role of Guenevere is to be played by UCF graduate student and understudy,

Cindy Lowa. Her performance is natural, her character is consistent and the solos flow from her voice as if the body has delivered them nightly since the beginning of a rehearsal process begun more than two months earlier. Ironically this is not the case. Miss Lowa was not only performing this for the first time but had never had the simple luxury of rehearsing the role with the cast. With this in mind, the ease and delivery of her performance was more than impressive.

Having had the triply unique perspective to have directed Cindy in her first semester as a graduate student, to have worked with Cindy as my teaching assistant over those next two years and to have hired Cindy as a coordinator and instructor for the New York Film Academy, I have seen her grow from a mousy fearful novice to a self-reliant young actress. It is this internal gauge which carries her through the nearly insurmountable circumstances of this performance. The role of Guenevere is no small task.

At talkbacks many of us have heard the almost comically inferred question, “How do you remember all those lines?” I found myself, a seasoned professional, asking that same question while watching Cindy execute a seamless yet unrehearsed performance. More than the lines, the songs, note for note, came unimpeded from her mouth without the halting, stilted behavior that comes from intellectualized content. The hours that Cindy had to have spent working alone must have been astounding. It reminded me of how much I wanted that first major role that I was cast in. Cindy would comment to me later that it seemed to the stage manager that the lead might have purposefully called in on the show to give Cindy an opportunity; if so, good for her. She is lucky that it wasn't

a football team with a first string quarterback too injured to perform on the field, because the team might have found themselves with a new leader.

I have watched Cindy struggle with truth. Like many young actors her work in the beginning was focused on the delivery of lines instead of the life of the play around her. This was not the case of the living breathing Guenevere I watched on the stage before me. She stepped onto the stage as an arrogant, short sighted spoiled princess sent to marry the famous King Arthur. Her mistaking him as a subject seemed obvious and predictable for the self-involved human being that walked through the forests of Camelot. We liked to dislike her even as she grew to love her king. We were titillated by her attraction to the wanton Lancelot, whose love for her king we hoped would succeed his attraction. Despite the fact that we already knew the end of the age-old legend, we still had hope. When discovered together and accused of infidelity the audience found itself wishing for her forgiveness. Unfortunately forgiveness never comes for this queen who so recently had gained our hearts, and the feeble attempt at a happy ending by the author could not redeem this tragedy.

Knowing Cindy as a plain conservative, unpretentious young lady, I must say I was surprised to see the beautiful, charismatic Guenevere seize the stage. Despite director Chris Jorie's mechanical blocking with the rest of the cast, obvious with its geometric and rhythmic structure, moving patterns and tableaux, Cindy's organic connection and movement brought energy and much needed life to the show. Her counterparts, visibly experienced and talented, were captured in their relationships with Cindy. She held them with her gaze and addressed the nuances of their behavior like an actress who understood

the importance of relationship even in the all too often presentational style of the American Musical.

Prior to the performance of the play I was concerned with the thesis choice that Cindy had made. As an MFA Acting Student her decision to use a musical for her thesis role seemed inappropriate not only to apply her newly acquired skills but also because it seemed unfair to expect her thesis committee to judge her work with some standard of quality, simply because she wasn't a musical theatre student. These fears proved unfounded, as Cindy illuminated her character, relationships, and the world of the play with her connection, commitment, and specificity. From her moment of genuine surprise at the discovery of King Arthur to her tacit love/hate relationship with Lancelot, her behavior rippled with the details of honest emotional point of view.

As it turns out, Cindy had taken the opportunity during graduate school to take additional private voice coaching and this paid off for her in "Camelot". I wonder how her understudy in the role of Nimue felt assuming Cindy's shoes. If the effortless beauty in Cindy's performance of Guinevere was reflective of her presentation of Nimue, the young lady must have felt at least somewhat intimidated. I surveyed the audience while Cindy extolled the age old songs that most in the sparse audience knew by heart, watching them smile at each other at certain romantic lines or elbow each other during those ironically dramatic moments. It was obvious that Cindy's portrayal of the archetype we have come to know as Guenevere was no less than what the audience had come expecting, even as she made it uniquely her own.

Perhaps one of my most pleasurable moments in the play, and one that filled me

with great pride, happened during the bow. As Cindy ran on stage to receive her accolades, the audience stood for her performance. It wasn't, however, the ovation which struck me as an indicator of Cindy's talent and character. It was the faces and the smiles in the eyes from cast members who were genuinely happy for her. You could see that they had been cheering for her and that she had accomplished all that they had hoped. I wondered if anyone in the audience knew what they had just witnessed; the product of a team, the beginnings of a career, and a young lady claiming ownership of herself and her craft. I knew of course that more than one audience member had perceived the significance of that evening. Both of Cindy's parents had driven for hours at a late notice early that day when informed that Cindy would be assuming the lead role of Guenevere that night. Their pride was only outshone by Cindy's awareness of her personal success.

All in all Cindy's performance was a diamond in the rough. The theatre's interior was a bit "loungy" with architecture built like the designs of a community theatre. The directing was static and uninteresting. The actors seemed burdened, potentially by the union issues that had come up with Equity during the run of the play. The house's energy struggled if only because of the sheer number of empty seats. The music was hollow, seeming barely in stereo as it played from an audio tape through what appeared to be a 30-year old sound system. However, like the most consummate of professionals, Cindy performed as if she stood in the center of Carnegie Hall. She had earned her place on that stage, my respect as an actor, and the degree of Master of Fine Arts from the University of Central Florida Conservatory

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the challenge of playing the characters of Nimue, Lady Anne, and Guenevere in a production of *Camelot* at the Orlando Broadway Dinner Theater. Unlike other musicals with original plots, *Camelot*'s story originates from an historical Arthurian legend, with the legendary character of Guenevere known by readers all over the world. For this reason, a careful historical analysis of the legend of King Arthur is in the forefront of the examination of playing these multiple Arthurian characters. Pertinent information on the period that surrounded the development of the legend explains the legendary nature of each of the characters in *Camelot*. This information specifically informed portrayal of Guenevere and helped create a Guenevere in performance that lived truthfully within the framework of the play.

In addition to the expansive historical research, social analysis practically informed acting choices in each of my character roles. Information pertaining to the customs and laws of medieval society and the socialization of medieval women was especially helpful in creating the life of the characters outside the pages of script. An understanding of women's familial role helped to determine Lady Anne's relationship to Guenevere, and vice versa. Further information on marriage law and women's rights helped to understand the nature of Guenevere's relationship with King Arthur, and the consequences that would follow her adulterous affair with Lancelot.

Plot and play structure analysis gives a basic understanding of the framework of

the play. Analysis of the character of Nimue includes information on the nature of fairy characters as well as an examination of the variety of roles Nimue plays in Arthurian legends. Knowledge of Nimue's relationship to Merlin in Arthurian literature specifically informed movement and voice choices in portrayal of her in the song "Follow Me." This knowledge helped determine Nimue's goal and the tactics she used to achieve her goal of enchanting and leading away Merlin in the scene. Also, entries in the rehearsal and performance journal discuss the challenges of the scene and developments in character in the seven weeks of performance.

A scene-by-scene analysis of Lady Anne entails her goal in each scene and her relationship with other characters. Information learned in the social analysis section was clarified proper behavior for her as a young maiden in "The Lusty Month of May," "The Knighting," "The Jousts," as well as her duties of preparing the queen's chambers for bed. Lengthy analysis of the ensemble scenes as well as specific rehearsal and performance journal entries chronicle the development of the connection between the character of Lady Anne and other members of the ensemble. The character analysis explains her significance as a minor character and her connection to the principal characters throughout the play.

A scene-by-scene analysis of Guenevere's goals, obstacles, tactics, and relationships greatly informed acting choices when the role was performed once onstage in the 7th weekend of performances. Directors of the production did not provide a full rehearsal to run through the role of Guenevere on stage with all the music and other characters. The challenge of learning the role without this rehearsal required great

commitment to observing performances of Elizabeth Ariza portraying the role, as well as continual practice of each of Guenevere's songs. This challenge of learning the role without numerous rehearsals and a formal director was one not met before as a professional.

Playing the minor roles of Nimue and Lady Anne in the seven-week production run was not the greatest challenge of the performance experience. The greatest challenge was understudying the leading role of Guenevere while also playing these minor roles. This production required an intense level of focus and commitment to successfully bring to life all three of these characters. Meeting the challenge with success proved that graduate school training was what this performer needed to rise from mediocrity to excellence, and become a master of the fine arts as desired.

CHAPTER SIX: ENDNOTES

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