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LERNER & LOEWE’S

Camelot

ABOUT THE PLAY

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

3
Time: 900 A.D.
Place: England

Our story opens on a group of revelers who have met on a hilltop to introduce the play’s setting: the kingdom of Camelot. In this opening moment, we discover that the valiant king Arthur, who bravely fought dragons and has led armies into battle, is absolutely petrified of getting married to the princess Guenevere the next day. The marriage has been arranged, and although Arthur is king, the fair Guenevere fears marrying a man whom she has never met.

Arthur and Guenevere enter the scene, each is oblivious to the other’s presence. While Guenevere prays for St. Genevieve to stop the wedding, Arthur overhears her and finally introduces himself. He is struck by her beauty and acknowledges that he has recently felt unsure of his royal position, but, after seeing her, feels that all will be right. She discovers his compassion and friendliness. The two fall in love and are married the next day, becoming king and queen of Camelot.

As a wise and gentle ruler, Arthur becomes frustrated with those who wage war over useless issues and wishes to prevent the most powerful knights from winning battles simply because they are the strongest. He proposes “a new order of chivalry, “where might is only used for right, to improve instead of destroy. And we invite all knights, good or bad, to lay down their arms and come and join.” Guenevere notes that in other courts, knights fight amongst each other to become the king’s favorite. In response, Arthur proposes holding their meetings at a round table, so that all who sit at it holds equal status.

Invitations to join Arthur’s round table are sent out to knights both near and far. Lancelot du Lac, a well trained French knight is among those who answer his call. Pure of soul, the dashing Lancelot meets Guenevere and the two secretly fall in love, unbeknownst to Arthur.

Time passes and Arthur continues to build his ideal kingdom, outlawing favoritism by decreeing that “disputes shall be settled in a court of law, by an impartial judge and jury, with dence-
evidence - and only evidence - as their guide.” As Arthur’s reforms take shape, Lancelot and Guenevere continue their affair undetected.

Mordred, Arthur’s illegitimate son arrives at Camelot. Now grown, he intends to destroy the kingdom. He learns of Lancelot and Guenevere’s secret relationship and convinces the other knights to choose jealousy and outrage over chivalry by seeking their own justice.

Arthur, worried about his kingdom teetering on revolt, retreats to the forest to clear his head. Mordred follows him and informs him of the affair. Arthur tells his son to return with a message: the king would not be returning for the evening.

With Arthur away, Lancelot acts on his desires and rushes to Guenevere’s chamber, knowing that they can finally be alone. Guenevere, overtaken with worry about the consequences of their actions, convinces him that acting on their passions will only lead to war and humiliation for Arthur, whom they both admire. Mordred and the other knights ambush the couple and charge them with treason, for which the king’s punishment is burning at the stake. Lancelot escapes, vowing that he will return to rescue Guenevere.

Arthur, unable to choose between killing his wife and upholding justice, is unable to carry out Guenevere’s sentence. With the king in a daze, Lancelot returns with his army and whisks the queen away to safety, killing half the knights of the round table in the ensuing chaos.
As Mordred flees, Arthur and his remaining men pursue Lancelot to the stronghold of Joyous Gard. On the eve of the great battle, Guenevere and Lancelot approach Arthur and offer to return to Camelot, face justice, and restore the ideals of the round table. Arthur refuses their offer, knowing that his ideal kingdom has already fallen.

As the battle begins, he is approached by a young boy who wishes to fight alongside the king. Arthur refuses to have young Tom participate in the fighting, but instead commands him to hide close-by and to pass on the story of Camelot and the round table so long as he lives. As Arthur rides off, the revelers from the opening moments of the play return to the stage to reveal the young boy as the 15th century writer Sir Thomas Malory, from whom all modern tellings of the Arthurian Legend stem from.
Chivalry

Originating in France, the concept of chivalry was an ideal set of ethics that knights in the middle ages were expected to follow in regards to their fellow knights or members of the court.

The English word “chivalry” is derived from the French word for horse, cheval. The French word for knight, chevalier, literally means horseman.

The romantic ideal of chivalry evolved throughout the middle ages as a way to civilize the brutality and violence that was experienced on the battlefield. Although these unwritten precepts originally applied to waging war, as time passed, they expanded to include religious piety and treatment of women (courtly love). Their popularity was spread throughout society through romantic stories, like that of King Arthur & the Knights of the Round Table.

Knights were generally expected to display and seek the following characteristics:

**Courtesy**

Refers to behaving as if one were ‘at court’ when meeting ladies or other knights on the battlefield. To be courteous, one must exhibit self-discipline, administer justice and mercy and never attack an unarmed knight.
Glory
Winning prestige for oneself or one’s family by displaying bravery in combat. Glory could also be won through pious donations or other good deeds, but warfare was seen as the most important method to obtain glory.

Honor
Keep one’s word, maintain one’s principles, and never betray a confidence or comrade. Defending the truth. This is what separated a noble person from a commoner.

Generosity
Give gifts and be as generous to other knights, ladies and vassals as one is able. Show hospitality to strangers.

Loyalty
Be faithful to God, sworn lords, the kingdom and one’s true love. Loyalty to one’s lord was considered of utmost importance. To betray one’s sworn lord was the worst crime a knight could commit.

Prowess
Includes courage, but refers mostly to learned skill with a sword, shield, armor and horse. Knights were expected to be well conditioned warriors that both commanded and fought on the battlefield.
Courtly Love

Unlike modern-day marriages, most weddings in the medieval period were arranged to broaden the social or economic position of families. Because of this arrangement, what modern society would consider “true love,” or “love for love’s sake” was rarely found in marriage.

In the middle ages, the concept of “courtly love” originally referred to the submissive relationship that a vassal has to a lord or noble.

As years passed, the idea came to refer to a “true love” that could only be found outside of an arranged marriage. In essence, a forbidden affair.

A relationship of “courtly love” can be defined by five main attributes:

Aristocratic
Courtly love could only be practiced by members of the noble class, such as knights and ladies.

Ritualistic
Couples routinely exchanged gifts and ladies often received songs, flowers, poems, and other favors. The lady need only respond with a small gesture or sign of approval, as the gentleman behaved as her lowly & faithful servant.

Secret
Courtly love was practiced in secret, perhaps only revealed to one or two confidantes.

Adulterous
The object of courtly love was to find an intimate relationship outside of one’s own arranged marriage, which was usually the result of a political or economic alliance. Although this relationship could be sexual, the main object was a true emotional closeness with another.
Literary Origins
This type of love was first depicted by traveling minstrels who spread songs, fables and literary romances throughout Europe (such as the tales of King Arthur). This idealized notion of romance was soon imitated by real-life lords and ladies, as it was woven into the cultural milieu of the period.

Chivalry & Courtly Love in Conflict
While the concepts of chivalry and courtly love were both accepted in medieval society, knights sometimes found themselves in conflict between the needs of his true love and that of his chivalric duty.
Introduction
When the knights of the round table pledge their allegiance to Camelot they each agree to follow the code of chivalry, a set of rules that governs their actions. Think of your own life. What are actions that you enjoy? What are the deeds that you find silly or undesirable? Come up with your own personal code and share it with the class.

Warm Up
Discuss the tenants of chivalry. Do students agree or disagree with each rule? Why or why not? Brainstorm exceptions to each rule - times when a person might break the code. Ask students if they think that the code of chivalry is hard or easy to follow.

Main Activity
1. Students will observe the tenants of chivalry and then brainstorm five personal rules that can be used as their “code of conduct.” Brainstorm situations in which this code might be disregarded.
2. Breaking off into groups, students will present their personal code and exceptions to their classmates.
3. After discussing each rule and it’s exceptions, groups will select at least one rule from each student’s code to establish a “master code” for each group.
4. Groups will present the master code to the class.
Introduction
King Arthur has very strong feelings about Camelot. He loves his kingdom very deeply and will do anything to protect it. Think about your home or your favorite place on earth. What are some things you love about it? Is it the big green chair in the living room? Or the blue azaleas that bloom in the spring? Be as specific as you can when you describe what you love about your favorite place on earth.

Warm Up
Print out the song lyrics for “Camelot” from the musical Camelot. Give a copy to every student. Play the song “Camelot.” As your students listen, have them read along with the song lyrics. Have them highlight or circle everything positive King Arthur says about Camelot.
After your students listen to the song, discuss the lyrics with them. What does Arthur think about Camelot? Do you think everything he says is completely true? What could be a hyperbole or exaggeration?

Main Activity
1. Write the word “Camelot” on the board. Have your students come up with adjectives that describe Camelot.
2. After discussing these adjectives have your students find or take a photo of what they believe Camelot would look like in their town. Challenge them to take a picture of a landmark or area that fits many of the adjectives found on the board. Have them write these adjectives on the back of the photo.
3. Have your students discuss their photos. Why did that area look like Camelot to you? What adjectives describe your picture?
4. After discussing their Camelot photos, have your students bring in a photo of their favorite place on Earth. It can be their living room, lake house, favorite city, Disney World, etc. On the back of the photo, have your students write adjectives that describe their photo.
5. Discuss the two photos with your students. What are the similarities between the two photos? Do they share some of the same adjectives? Are their similarities between the student’s favorite place and Arthur’s view of Camelot? What are they?
Why Arthur?

“Arthur’s magic is that he is a shapeshifter… changing his form to suit the needs of each new age.”

- Arthurian scholar Richard Barber

King Arthur Flour, the Toyota Avalon, Monty Python & the Holy Grail. From depictions in cartoons and comic books, to products that emphasize speed, strength and quality, the Arthurian Legend is thoroughly embedded in the English speaking mind.

Why has this legend endured, nearly 1500 years since its earliest known appearance? On the surface, the tale of King Arthur & the knights of the round table is ripe with pleasing archetypes: romantic adventure, where (in modern versions of the legend) chivalric warriors rescue and woo damsels in distress; a realm where the influence of magic is real; bold characters who, through their innocence and good nature, find a way to succeed where the strong have failed.

However, at its heart, the Arthurian Legend expresses our urge to be on the side of order, for civilization, and for righteousness. While each generation has added, subtracted and altered certain details of the story to fit their own sensibilities, Arthur’s belief in “right” over “might,” still shines through.

Despite his heroic idealism, Arthur’s optimism does not shield him from his own humanity. In all versions of the legend, his struggle for a just, orderly kingdom is undone by raw, human emotions like jealousy, mistrust and vengeance.

Legend has it that, following his final defeat, Arthur retreated to the mythical island of Avalon where he still resides. Known as “the once and future king,” it is rumored that he will return to us in a time of great need. In many ways, this “once and future king” has never left us, as the Arthurian legend has been kept alive through many generations.
Folktale, Myth or Legend?

Since the earliest human civilization, people have told stories that explained the past. These tales help groups of people to forge a cultural identity: a shared set of values and beliefs that bring people together.

Folktales, myths and legends are each types of stories that help cultures create a shared identity. Although closely related to one another, they each have distinguishing characteristics:

**Folktale**
A story that, in its plot, is pure fiction and that has no particular location in either time or space. However, despite its elements of fantasy, a folktale is actually a symbolic way of presenting the different means by which human beings cope with the world in which they live. Folktales concern people -- either royalty or common folk -- or animals who speak and act like people.

**Myth**
A sacred story from the past. It may explain the origin of the universe and of life, or it may express its culture’s moral values in human terms. Myths concern the powers who control the human world and the relationship between those powers and human beings. Although myths are religious in their origin and function, they may also be the earliest form of history, science, or philosophy.

**Legend**
A story from the past about a subject that was, or is believed to have been, historical. Legends concern people, places, and events. Usually, the subject is a saint, a king, a hero, a famous person, or a war. A legend is always associated with a particular place and a particular time in history.
Because the story of King Arthur is believed to stem from a historical person, centers on a noble leader, and is generally associated with the medieval time period, it is generally referred to as the Arthurian Legend.
Characters & Motifs

King Arthur
Arthur, in his youth, was brought up as a squire. He was teased by his friends and family and nicknamed Wart. One day, Arthur found a sword entombed in a stone. He didn’t know it at the time, but legend said that whoever pulled the sword from the stone would become the rightful King of Camelot. Arthur pulled out the sword and became king. During his powerful and merciful reign, he sought to put an end to the “might equals right” mindset, which pervaded the kingdom. As the founder of the round table, where no knight would hold a favored seat over another, he enforced fairness and rule of law throughout his kingdom. During his final battle, Arthur was hurt badly and legend states that he was sent to heal at the magical land of Avalon. He resides there even now, waiting to return to Britain and regain his throne.

Queen Guenevere
Guenevere’s beauty and desirability is consistent throughout the Arthurian legend. She was married to King Arthur and loved him dearly, supporting his plans and leading Camelot alongside him. The two had no children together, although Arthur had several illegitimate children, the most famous being Mordred, the son of Queen Morgause. After her affair with Lancelot is discovered, she joins a nunnery.

Lancelot
A fierce warrior, Lancelot was the most famous of the Round Table Knights for his deeds on the battlefield, yet ultimately is remembered for his treasonous affair with Queen Guenevere. Despite their adulterous relationship, Lancelot strived for purity of the mind and spirit, especially while attempting to find the Holy Grail, the legendary chalice held by Jesus in biblical times. His quest ended unsuccessfully, as only the most pure and pious of knights could succeed. He conceived one illegitimate son, Galahad, who succeeded in finding the Holy Grail. As his affair with Guenevere began to crumble, Lancelot fled Camelot and became a hermit.
The Round Table

The Round Table was conceived by King Arthur to end fights between knights over power. Before the table’s construction, brawls would break out over the seat at the head of the table. Seeking to resolve these problems, Arthur created an order of equality. His knights became heroes and legends, remembered for their goodness and strength.

Merlin

Merlin was a sorcerer who mentored Arthur throughout his youth. Merlin’s magic helped Arthur pull the sword from the stone, and he wisely guided Arthur to seek out the sword Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake. This magical sword allowed Arthur to blind his enemies, thus taking control of a battle. The sheath had powers of its own, protecting Arthur from a loss of blood.

Mordred

Mordred was the son of Arthur and his half-sister Morgause. Shortly after his birth, Mordred was sent to Camelot. A sudden storm killed everyone aboard the ship, except for Mordred. The child was rescued and raised by Duke Nabur. Years later, Mordred became a knight of the Round Table, but chose to betray his father and kingdom. He hated his father, for reasons never stated, and ultimately ended Arthur’s rule.
Retold through History

Early Origins – A living, breathing King Arthur? (around 450-650 CE)
Although scholars have found no evidence of a real-life king Arthur, as depicted in the literary tradition, it is possible that a great Celtic or Roman warlord existed in the dark ages and defended Briton against invading Anglo-Saxon armies. Unlike the chivalrous noble Arthur of legend, this warrior-king was likely not chivalrous and would not match our image of a knight.

Oral History & Early Writings (600-1100 CE)
In early Welsh and Celtic literature, there are fleeting references to “an Arthur” with very little details except that he was a great leader. In the 9th century, Arthur is mentioned in literature as a great leader, as well as a fierce warrior, whose court attracted the greatest warriors of the land. Throughout this period, it is generally accepted that most accounts of the Arthurian legend spread through word of mouth.

The History of the Kings of Briton – Geoffrey of Monmouth (1130s CE)
Although the title of this work suggests a historic record of kings, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s extremely popular work of fiction was accepted as fact for nearly 300 years following its publication. Written by a controversial member of the clergy, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s depiction of a heroic Arthur as the paragon of courtly behavior was very well received by the public. Although it tells the story of other British monarchs (such as Shakespeare’s future muse, King Lear), nearly 1/3 of the book is devoted solely to Arthur – chronicling his adult life – and is the first record of Arthur’s sword Excalibur. The book’s immense popularity led to the Arthurian legend’s spread throughout Europe.

Five Arthurian Romances - Chrétien de Troyes (1170-1191 CE)
Following Geoffrey of Monmouth’s The History of the Kings of Briton, Arthurian stories spread throughout Europe as the great armies of England, joined by traveling minstrels, migrated to the Holy Land to fight in crusades. French writer Chrétien de Troyes built upon the legend by reimagining Arthur and his warriors as chivalrous knights, mimicking French culture.
writings are the first to: include the round table, introduce Lancelot and Guenivere as main characters & lovers, and are the first to call Arthur’s kingdom Camelot.

**Mort Darthur - Sir Thomas Malory (1485 CE)**
The source of most modern day versions of the Legend, as it was the first version to be mass produced using a printing press. It weaves together separate Arthurian tales that flourished throughout France & Europe: Merlin; Lancelot; The Quest for the Holy Grail; The Death of Arthur. Characters were ‘real people,’ eliminated overtly moralizing the story. Although Lancelot’s affair with Guenevere results in the demise of Camelot, he is portrayed as a hero throughout most of the story.

**Idylls of the King – Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1859-1885 CE)**
Drawing from many ancient Arthurian sources, although mostly from Mallory’s Mort Darthur, the Victorian Tennyson’s Arthurian poems leave out the circumstances of Arthur’s birth and death. Instead, it focuses on Arthur as leader. In the Idylls of the King, to follow Arthur is the highest law of the round table. As an agent of order and perfection, Arthur is blind to the emotional passions that lie in Guenevere, Lancelot and the other knights. Tennyson’s Arthur is often seen as the ideal Victorian gentleman – a bridge between medieval chivalry and Victorian manners.

**The Once & Future King - T.H. White (1958 CE)**
British author T.H. White began writing his adaptation of Malory’s work in the late 1930s, although it was not to be published in its entirety for another 30 years. This series of five distinct books chronicles Arthur from his youngest days as Merlin’s student, to the fall of Camelot. Often interpreted as a reflection on pacifism during WWII and the rise of facism in Europe, *The Once and Future King* presents an Arthur who respects knowledge and values all life. White’s treatment of the legend is also the first to present a humorous tone, especially in the misdirected magic of Merlin in *The Sword in the Stone* (later made into a Disney animated film).
Camelot - Lerner & Loewe (1960 CE)

This musical adaptation of T.H. White’s *The Once & Future King* by Alan Jay Lerner & Frederick Loewe (*My Fair Lady*) became an American sensation. Although this musical opened on Broadway during the Vietnam War and addresses the same themes as White’s novel, it is most synonymous with the Kennedy administration. After president Kennedy’s assassination, Jackie Kennedy revealed that her late husband was very fond of the Broadway soundtrack and had fallen in love with King Arthur since he was a little boy. The first lady is remembered as saying: “There will be great presidents again, but there will never be another Camelot.”

“Don’t let it be forgot
That once there was a spot
For one brief, shining moment
that was known as Camelot.”

*President Kennedy’s favorite Camelot lyrics*
Timeline of Arthurian Legend

First mention of Lucius Artorius Castus, the man believed to be the basis for King Arthur

184

Period of Arthur’s “twelve battles”

c.485-96

First mention of the Round Table

1155

Completion of Morte Darthur by Thomas Malory, a huge influence on later Arthurian works

1469

Gothic revival inspires authors such as Tennyson and William Morris

1850-1900

“History of Briton” is released, the first publication stating Arthur as factual war commander

c.501

Battle of Llongborth

c.496

First mention of the

1155

Legend of St. Goeznovius mentions Arthur as King of Britain

c.1019

Battle of Camlaan; supposed death of Arthur

c.542

c.465

Possible birth of King Arthur in literature & oral history

Chretien de Troyes writes five Arthurian stories and introduced Lancelot and the Holy Grail

c.1160-90

“Merlin” (TV series)

2008

Spamalot (Stage Musical)

2004

The Mists of Avalon by Marion Zimmer Bradley (Book)

1983

Pendragon Series by Stephan R. Lawhead (Books)

1987

Monty Python and the Holy Grail (Comedy Film)

1975

The Sword in the Stone (Animated Film)

1963

A Connexticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court by Mark Twain (Book)

1889

Idylls of the King by Lord Alfred Tennyson (Poem)

1859

Popular works based on Arthurian Legend

2005: Avalon High by Meg Cabot (Books & Film)

2008: “Merlin” (TV series)
Additional Terms

**A-Maying:** a celebration of the first of May (May Day); as a celebration of the return of spring festivities would include the gathering of flowers, the weaving of branches, and the crowning of a May king and queen.

**Quest:** a long and difficult effort to seek or accomplish something; in Medieval romances these often involved an adventurous journey.

**Cavalier:** a man trained on horseback; a knight.

**Heralds:** an official announcer or messenger; in Medieval times heralds were sent out to deliver messages to people or towns.

**Joust:** usually a recreational fight between two knights on horseback using lances (long pointed weapon); performed as part of a tournament or competition.

**Joyous Gard:** Sir Lancelot’s castle.

**Knighthood:** an honor granted to a man once he showed chivalry and the qualities befitting a knight; given the title of “Sir” (i.e. Sir Lancelot or Sir Gawain).

**St. Genevieve:** patron saint of Paris.

**Squire:** a young man who helped knights, usually wanting to become a knight in the future.
Pre-Show Activity

OUR CURRENT LEGENDS

Subject: English, Theatre, History
Goal: Understand how legends are created and passed down; apply the concept to current events
Objectives: Students will...
- Understand the concept of legends
- Identify themes and main ideas in a newspaper article
- Apply this understanding by creating a legend from a current event story

Introduction/Warm Up
King Arthur’s stories have been around for hundreds of years. They have been passed down by each generation orally, through books and literature, as well as contemporary media. With each retelling, the legend changes slightly from its original story. How does this happen? Brainstorm other legends and identify how they fit the definition.

Main Activity
After your students understand the concept of legends, they will create their own.
1. Separate your class into groups of 4-5. Find newspaper stories about a current event and make a copy for each group. The article can be about anything, but the activity will work better if it covers a current event.
2. Have your students read the article in their groups and pretend that they are a neighboring town (town #1). Pull out the themes/main ideas of the article.
3. Remind students that legends generally build from facts and are placed in a specific time and place (although not necessarily the same time and place that they are originally set in). Instruct your students to create a myth to explain the current event they have read about in the newspaper.
4. After the students finish their legends, trade with another group so that each group has a new story. Have each group pretend that they are another neighboring town (town #2) and alter the legend to their tastes, while keeping many elements of the story. Feel free to exaggerate and have fun!
5. Students will prepare presentations on the stories they wrote as town #2. Teachers will read the original article, and each group will tell their subsequent versions of the legend (one for town #1 & one for town #2).
6. Discuss which elements of each story changed and which are consistent. Have the main themes changed, or did they stay the same?

Reflection
After the students have presented, discuss their myths. What were the themes of the article they chose to focus on in their myth? How did they create their myth?
Post-Show Activity

BEING LEGENDARY

Subject: English, Theatre, History
Goal: Understand themes and ideas from Arthurian legends and apply this knowledge into a condensed summary
Objectives: Students will...
- Read and analyze an Arthurian myth or legend
- Condense the legend through an understanding of the themes
- Apply this understanding through a performance of their condensed version

Introduction
Lerner and Loewe’s musical Camelot is based on T.H. White’s book “The Once and Future King.” However, there are several other variations of King Arthur’s tales.

Main Activity
1. Divide the class into groups of four or five students each. Tell the class that each group will have to devise a dramatic scene to act out during the next class.
2. Have your students visit the following website (http://sacred-texts.com/neu/trt/index.htm). This site lists multiple Arthurian myths and legends. Each group will pick one of these legends and read it together.
3. The students will create a five-minute script from the legend they have read. Tell students they should divide the work evenly. Encourage students to brainstorm and storyboard, share their ideas as a group, and write down all their ideas, before they start writing the scene. Remind students that in the final presentation, each person should have at least a small part to read, even if just a narrator.
4. When students have discussed their scene, they should begin the writing process. Walk around the class during the students’ writing process to support their work, and answer any questions they might have. If students are having difficulty coming up with ideas, ask them questions such as:
   - What do you think was the most interesting part of the Arthur story?
   - Which of the characters did you like the best?
   - What made you like them?
   - How would you behave if you were in a particular character’s position in life?
5. Make sure that each student leaves class with a copy of the script from his or her group’s scene. Tell students at the end of class that they do not have to memorize their lines, but they should try to become as familiar with them as possible.
6. When students enter the class, the next day, tell them they have 10 minutes to look at their scripts and speak to the other people in their group about any last minute questions.
7. Have each group act out their scene. After each scene is finished, invite a discussion with the rest of the class about the scene. Ask students: What issue was explored? Did they agree with how the characters handled their conflicts? Did the characters behave honorably or dishonorably? Would they have behaved similarly or differently toward each character?
8. As a concluding activity, encourage a group discussion about what has been learned in the lesson overall. Students should reflect on the motivations of their characters in both the story and their script. Were they the same? Different? How did they choose to scale the story down into a five minute script?
LERNER & LOEWE’S
Camelot
OUR PRODUCTION
WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE
Scenic Design

What does a scenic designer do?
A scenic designer creates the environment (the set) that a play takes place in. As a member of the artistic team, the scenic designer works under the director, and collaborates with other designers (costume, sound, light) to create a unified look for each production.

What is the function of a theatrical set?
A set is a slang term that refers to a theatrical production’s setting. Sets should suggest the style and tone of the production (comedy or serious), create mood or atmosphere, give clues to the time and place of the action, and offer creative possibilities for the movement of actors. Some designers choose to hide the backstage area with black curtains, while others leave it exposed, depending on the artistic needs of each production.

How does a designer create a set?
While each designer’s process is slightly different, all designers start by reading the play numerous times. During this process, the designer will take notes on the number and quality of furniture, rooms, movement of characters, time of day, location of action, season, historical period, and transitions between scenes. Designers will research the historical period, with emphasis on architecture, art, and other visual elements. After preliminary meetings with the director and artistic team, scenic designers create rough sketches, and ultimately a 3-D miniature model. Finalized drawings are submitted to the production staff and construction begins.

Tools of the trade
Scenic designers consider the following elements when creating a set:
1. Line - straight or curved?
2. Mass - large or small?
3. Composition - the arrangement of set components; crowded or spread out?
4. Texture - rough or soft?
5. Color - dark or light?
Scenic Design
Michael Yeargan

Can you explain the process behind this design?
"The way that it usually works is that I start by doing lots of research. With something like Camelot, there’s the research of other productions, to see how it flowed, how one scene went into another. There’s the endless research of all the Arthurian material. Camelot has a very contemporary language to it, so alot of the historical material doesn’t quite fit in with the way that the show’s being approached. It seemed that there were alot of dark wood tones, and I said “wait a minute, Westport Country Playhouse resembles a wooden barn.” So it seemed that we could encompass the existing architecture of the theater and take it in to the world of the show, with shapes that begin to conjure up imagery of England and the gothic period, without doing the whole “Notre Dame.” And it leads to conversations with our director & team about what each scene means, what we need for each scene, how to transition between scenes without needing a break. I then make a model, and the scene shop gets drawings to make up construction plans.”

What type of tone were you looking to express?
“It goes back and forth, from a dark, fire-lit world at the beginning to the brightness of the comic moments later on. The interior castle scenes are very enclosed, but then we can open up to a very beautiful view of the classic castle exterior as the background. It’s nice that it’s not one world because in the end, it is a very dark show. It’s not all lightness and froth.”

Michael Yeargan’s set designs for plays and musicals include Seascape, the Light in the Piazza, South Pacific, Awake and Sing, Ah, Wilderness (originally designed for the Yale Repertory Theatre), and Joe Turner’s Come and Gone (which also originated at the Yale Repertory Theatre), all on Broadway, as well as numerous productions Off-Broadway and in regional theatres throughout the United States, including five or more at Long Wharf Theatre.

Yeargan designed his first opera production in 1970—La Bohème at the Nevada Opera Company. Since that time his opera sets have been seen at the Metropolitan Opera, the Seattle Opera, the LA Opera, the San Francisco Opera, the Houston Opera, Glimmerglass and the New York City Opera, as well as the Royal Opera at Covent Garden in London, the Welsh National Opera, the Scottish Opera, the Théâtre musical de Paris, the Frankfurt Opera, and Opera Australia.

Michael Yeargan’s set designs have won the 2005 Tony Award for The Light in the Piazza and a Tony nomination and Drama Desk Award for Awake and Sing. He is the resident set designer at the Yale Repertory Theatre and is a long-time Professor of Stage Design at Yale School of Drama.
Can you find these images in the set design?

The area surrounding the Westport Country Playhouse stage is constructed with stained wood. Yeargan’s design takes advantage of this architectural feature by matching elements of the set to the theater’s color, so that the venue itself becomes a part of the scenery.

This real-life round table hangs in Hampton, England on the wall of Winchester Castle. Created in the late 1200s, Henry VIII had the massive table repainted in the 16th century. He depicted himself as King Arthur and placed the Tudor Rose in the center to associate himself with the popular legend.

Yeargan recalls that much of his early design was in black and white, so he used this historical image of a jousting tournament to add elements of vivid color.
Set Design Notes & Sketches

1. **SLIDERS X CROSSED**
   - TOY CASTLE
   - POT OF FIRE CENTER
   - MASKS
   - ARMOUR
   - CROWNS
   - THRONES
   - MOON / ROUND TABLE

2. **MAKE TREE SHAPE WITH STICKS**
   - TREE CUTOUT COMES IN
   "SNOW FALLING"
   - ARTHUR REVEALED
   "I KNOW WHAT MY PEOPLE ARE THINKING TONITE -"
   - HIDES ON LADDER BEHIND TREE
   - GUENEVERE ENTERS SITS?

3. **SIMPLE JOYS OF MAIDENHOOD**
   - ARTHUR FALLS FROM TREE/LADDER
   "IN CAMELOT"
   - SNOW
   \[X\] CROSS SLIDERS AS SNOW CHANGES TO FLOWER PETALS
- Guinevere + Arthur in regal bed -
  - Arches frame in

- Us wall in battle ments -
  - Scene about Roundtable -
  - Guinevere (dressing table?) -
  - Something to hide Lancelot -

Us wall splits to reveal

Guinevere + Arthur split revealed in center

- Bleed thru scrim reveal distant Camelot

"C'est moi" - Lancelot

- "DAP" enter dragging wounded knight
  - (Arthur)

- As Lance + Arthur + page exit

May pole + ribbons fly in -

- Lusty month of May -

May pole

- Flower petals still on floor

"Garden near castle"

- Napole - garlands (8 people) -
  - Chairs or benches?

- "Corridor -
  - Guinevere - Lance us
  - Praying

"How to handle a woman" -

- Lance + Guine"
3) SLIDERS OFF BANNERS
- FLY IN
- ROPE ACROSS FRONT OR
- FABRIC RAILING -
- HASCOT GAVOITE, TOUSTS

- STRETCHER IN, LIONEL
  - TRANSLUCENT PART OF
  - FABRIC GLOWS, RAYS OF LIFE
  - ON BANNERS -

- CLOSE CORRIDOR

- DS CLOTH BORDER OFF
- BANNERS STAY FOR

"BEFORE I GAZE AT YOU
AGAIN"
- DO WE SEE LANCE THRU SCREW
- BANNERS?

10) THE GREAT HALL
- "CORONATION OF NAPOLEON STYLE"

11) ACT I FINALE
- ENORMOUS MOON
- BEHIND ALL

12) BANNERS FLY UP
- ROUND TABLE FLATTENS

INTERMISSION
CAMELOT - ACT I

1. OPENING - REVELLERS,

- SLIDERS X CROSSED
- TOY CASTLE - POT OF FIRE CENTER
- ARMOR
- CROWNS
- THRONES
- MOON/ROUND TABLE
- MAKE TREE SHAPE WITH STICKS

3. TREE PANEL FLIES IN

- "IN SLOWLY FALLING"
- "ARRIVE BEARLY"

- KNOW WHAT MY PEOPLE ARE THINKING TONITE -"
- HIDES ON CADDIE BEARLY TREE
ADD A BENCH?

-GUILEVER ENTERS-
SITS?

SIMPLE JOYS OF MAIDENHOOD

ARTHUR OPENS DOOR IN TREE PANEL & EAVESDROPS, STUMBLING ON LADDER & COMES AROUND PANEL

ALTERNATIVE LOOK: REAR PANELS COULD OPEN TO REVEAL CASTLE WITH TREE
PAGE 3

A. CAM 6 LOT 

US SLIDERS OPEN FULL TO REVEAL CAM6LOT
- REVELLORS ACT OUT WEATHER IN SONG

- SNOW-
- US PANELS CLOSE IN TO CREATE INTERIOR FEELING
- MOON PLES IN US AS BACKING
- FLOWER PETALS, SNOW STILL ON FLOOR

BED IN 2 PIECES
- Scene about Round Table - Move back up to become round table mage

- Something to hide, Lancelot

- Arthur's bed splits, round table flies up and US panels open revealing Lancelot

- Then wider (lower image) for "Crest Mot"
- Tree out revealing bath & gauze curtain
- Arches in

Candles everywhere

- Gauze panels
- Back up (banners?)

"I loved you once in silence"

- Silhouettes of knights appear behind - mordred in center -

- Guenevere "at trial" - cross of crowns
- Guenevere "at the stake"
- Lance lot "saves Guenevere"

Some sort of structure
- Us of scrim
- Flame effect - lights?

- Battlefield - smoke, devastation
- Tent 8?

Red China silk
Covers all

- Arthur, Lancelot, Guenevere -

Then final scene w/ Tom + Excalibur +

Dreadful

38
THE JOUSTS - FABRIC WITH SHIELDS COULD BE VELCROED TO PORTAL LEGS

8) SLIDERS OFF
BANNERS FLY IN - 2 LINESETS
- FABRIC RAILING -

- STRETCHER W/ LIONEL
- TRANSLUCENT PART OF FABRIC GLOWS -
SOMEHOW LIT FROM BEHIND
DS RAILING STRIKES
BANNERS FLY OUT
-DS ARCHES ON
-DURING BEFORE I GAZE...” US PANEL
OPENS REVEALING LANCELOT WASHING

THE GREAT HALL
-ARCHES OPEN AS BANNERS FLY IN
-THRONE ON DAIS PUSH ON FROM SL
-ULTRA STRONG HMI BACK/SIDE LITE LIKE
DIAGONAL CORRIDOR BETWEEN BANNERS
TRANSITION OUT OF GREAT HALL

- ROUND TABLE/MOON FLIES IN AS BANNERS FLY OUT AND THRONE PULL OFF

ACT I FINALE - MOON TURNS TO ROUND TABLE

- FLOWERS ON FLOOR LIT WITH RED TO PRESAGE END?
Pre- & Post-Show Activity

DESIGNING CAMELOT - SCENERY

Subject: English, Theatre
Goal: Utilize understanding of theatre design to collaborate with others
Objectives: Students will...
- Understand the basic roles of a scenic designer
- Apply this understanding to conduct research into a historical time period
- Synthesize their research to construct a design sketch; explain their choices

Introduction
Scenic designers create an environment in which a play takes place. This environment is crafted using the play’s themes, time period, & mood. Read the Camelot synopsis provided in this packet, then identify and discuss the main characters and themes.

Main Activity
1. Guide students in researching three images of medieval England that they feel most identify with the themes identified in the Camelot synopsis. While students can explore images that appeal to them, the activity will work best if they discover photos of structures from the middle ages, drawings from the period, or other appropriate samples.
2. Ask students to write down a description of each image by describe the line, mass, composition, texture or color of each image. Ask them to look at each image for 30 seconds without looking away. Then write down an emotional response to each image - how would they feel if they were a character inside each? Do their responses correspond to the identified themes?
3. Using their images, students will create collage drawings of their ideal setting for the play. Students are free to express their creativity, but must be prepared to justify their choices by explaining their use of line, mass, composition, texture and colors to create the setting.
4. Students will present their sketches in groups or in front of the class, using their original images as evidence for their choices.
5. Once students have attended a performance of Camelot, ask them to write a short response to the scenic design using the design concepts that they have learned (line, mass, composition, etc.). After conducting their own research, was the Camelot set conceptually different from what they had originally envisioned? Was it similar? Did it reflect the themes of the show? Why or why not?
Introduction
The musical Camelot came out in 1960. But a lot has changed since then. Our production is adapted by David Lee. This means that David Lee changed some of the lines and scenes in the show to make Camelot more modern. A show that is changed in this way is called a revival.

Discuss the concept of "revival" with your students. Do they know any revivals? There are several on Broadway right now (Color Purple, Les Miserables, Chicago).

Main Activity
Let your students try their hand at reviving. Instruct them to insert a song they know into the following scene from Camelot. The scene can be found on page 56.
1. Have your students read the scene. What are the characters feeling? Distress? Happiness? Love?
2. Write a list of these feelings on the board.
3. In the show, this scene leads into the song “If Ever I Would Leave You.” Have your students listen to their song.
4. In another column on the board write down the feelings and emotions Lance-lot feels in the song.
5. Have your students find a song they know to replace “If Ever I Would Leave You.” Make sure their song fits with the emotion of the scene.
6. After the students find their song, discuss their choices. Why did they chose their song? What emotions do their songs convey?
7. (Optional) Break your students into group of 2-3. Have each group perform the scene with one of their songs at the end. After they perform, have the rest of the students discuss the emotions. Did the emotions in the scene match the ones in the song? Why or why not?
Mark Lamos, a resident of Sherman, Connecticut, is a director of plays, musicals and opera. The New York Times has called him "a poet of the theater," and his work receives a chapter in Samuel L. Leiter's "The Great Stage Directors: 100 Distinguished Careers of the Theater." Born and raised in Chicago, and educated at Northwestern University, Mark began his career in the theater as an actor, first in Chicago and then on Broadway and in regional theater, most notably the Guthrie and the Old Globe. Mark spent 17 seasons as artistic director of Connecticut's Hartford Stage, for which he accepted the Tony Award in 1989. He made his Broadway directing debut with a transfer from Hartford Stage of Our Country's Good, for which he received a Tony Award nomination as Best Director. His other Broadway credits include Cymbeline, Seascape (Tony Award nomination for Best Revival), The Rivals, the world premiere of A.R. Gurney's The Grand Manner (Lincoln Center Theater); and The Gershwin's Fascinating Rhythm and The Deep Blue Sea (Roundabout Theatre). His extensive work in opera includes new productions for the Metropolitan Opera, numerous productions for New York City Opera, and new productions for San Francisco Opera, Glimmerglass Opera and the opera companies of Santa Fe, St. Louis, Seattle, Washington, Toronto, Portland, Dallas, Los Angeles, Gothenburg and Munich. Mark was named a Beinecke Fellow at Yale School of Drama in 2007 and was a visiting adjunct professor in the Department of Theater at the University of Michigan.
Reveler/King Arthur - Robert Sean Leonard

Robert Sean Leonard most recently appeared on stage as ‘Atticus Finch’ in To Kill a Mockingbird at the Barbican Theatre in London. He has performed in the Broadway productions of The Invention of Love (Tony Award); Long Day’s Journey into Night (Tony nomination); Born Yesterday; The Violet Hour; The Music Man; The Iceman Cometh; Arcadia; Candida (Tony nomination); Philadelphia, Here I Come!; The Speed of Darkness; Breaking the Code; and Brighton Beach Memoirs. His Off-Broadway credits include Prodigal Son, Fifth of July, Sally’s Gone, She Left Her Name, The Beach House, You Never Can Tell, and When She Danced. He also appeared in the West End revival of Our Town with Alan Alda at London’s Shaftesbury Theatre. Regional credits include King Lear, Pygmalion (The Old Globe), Long Day’s Journey into Night (Huntington Theatre Company), Dead End (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and The Glass Menagerie (Center Stage). Born in New Jersey, Mr. Leonard began acting at age 14 at The Public Theater in New York. At 19, he made his film debut in the acclaimed Dead Poets Society. His film credits include Much Ado About Nothing, The Age of Innocence, Mr. & Mrs. Bridge, Swing Kids, Tape, Chelsea Walls, and Whit Stillman’s The Last Days of Disco. He appeared for eight seasons on the Fox medical drama “House.”

Reveler/Guenevere - Britney Coleman

Westport Country Playhouse: Flyin’ West (Script in Hand playreading), Sing for Your Shakespeare, Into the Woods. First National Tour: Beautiful: The Carole King Musical. New York: Pope! An Epic Musical (NYMF), Cheer Wars (York Theatre), Stop the Virgins (St. Ann’s Warehouse), Brush Up Your Shakespeare (92Y). Regional: The Two Gentlemen of Verona (Old Globe); Camelot (Two River Theater); Dreamgirls (North Shore Music Theater); Dreamgirls (Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre); Ain’t Misbehavin’ (Milwaukee Repertory Theater); The Last Days of Judas Iscariot (Stage 773); Tarzan, Hairspray, State Fair; Big River; All Shook Up (Wagon Wheel Theatre); Goddess (Eugene O'Neill/NMTC). YouTube: A Very Potter Musical/AVPS/AVPSY:AVP3D (Starkid Productions).

Reveler/Lancelot - Stephen Mark Lukas

Broadway: The Book of Mormon (Elder Price). National Tour: The Book of Mormon, Little Women (Laurie). Favorite regional credits: Joe Hardy in Damn Yankees (Goodspeed Opera House, CT Critics Circle nom.); Curly in Oklahoma! (Finger Lakes Musical Theatre Festival and Reagle Music Theatre, IRNE and Broadway. com award noms.); Spike in Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike (John W. Engeman Theater); Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella (Ogunquit Playhouse); Lucky in Little Me and Lt. Cable in South Pacific (New Orleans Summer Lyric). TV: “Gossip Girl.” Graduate of NYU/ Tisch. Proud member of AEA. Instagram: @smlukas.

Reveler/Mordred - Patrick Andrews

Westport Country Playhouse: Red. Regional: The Iceman Cometh (BAM, Goodman Theatre); Red (Goodman Theatre, Arena Stage); American Buffalo (Steppenwolf Theatre, McCarter Theatre); The Actor (Goodman Theatre); The Book Thief (Steppenwolf Theatre); The Normal Heart (TimeLine Theatre); The Pride, The Homosexuals, Stupid Kids (About Face Theatre); Escape, The People’s Temple, Speech & Debate (American Theater Company); Do the Hustle (WritersTheatre); Cabaret (Drury Lane Theatre); West Side Story (Walnut Street Theatre); Saved! (Kansas City Repertory Theatre); Into the Woods (Marriott Theatre); Willy Wonka (Chicago Shakespeare Theater); The Snow Queen (Victory Gardens Theater); Dorian, The Sparrow (The House Theatre). National Tour: Fosse. Film: Henry Gamble’s Birthday Party. Television: “Chicago Code,” “Chicago Fire.” Select Choreography: Cherrywood (Mary-Arrchie Theatre), We Three Liza’s, Queertopia (About Face Theatre). Mr. Andrews is an ensemble member of American Theater Company, an artistic associate with About Face Theatre, a member of the Goldmine Collective, and a member of the queer-electronic-art-pop band BAATHHAUS (baathhaus.com).
Reveler/Lionel - Brian Owen

Off-Broadway: Lisa and Leonardo (New York Musical Festival), Never Have I Ever (TinyRhino at Joe’s Pub).
Regional: Sweeney Todd, Peter and the Starcatcher (Playmakers Repertory Company); South Pacific, Both Your Houses, The Matchmaker, Things We Want (Asolo Repertory Theatre); Sense and Sensibility (Actors Theatre of Louisville). He’s been in A Midsummer Night’s Dream a lot. Film/Web: Never Caesar: Make Rome Great Again, Stages of Stanley, Cinnamon Roll. His favorite role is husband to his wife Nicole. MFA: FSU/Asolo. Proud member AEA and Team Boals. @bistrowen  www.briandouglasowen.com

Reveler/Sagramore - Jon-Michael Reese

National Tour: Doctor, The Book of Mormon. New York: Cordelia, King Lear (EPBB); Paul, when last we flew (Fringe Encores, GLAAD Award: Best Off-Off Broadway Play). Regional: Edward Adu, My Heart Is the Drum (Village Theatre, Gregory Award Nominee: Outstanding Actor); Seaweed, Hairspray (Drury Lane Theatre); Matt, The Fantasticks (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park). Various play and musical workshops at Manhattan Theatre Club, New York Theatre Workshop, The Public Theater, New Dramatists, National Black Theatre, The Move-

Reveler/Dinadan


Reveler/Squire/Dap/Young Page - Michael De Souza

Off-Broadway: Once Upon a Mattress (Transport Group), NYC Theater: Boys Who Tricked Me (Dixon Place), Corpus (Midtown International Theatre Festival). Regional: A Little Princess (Sacramento Theatre Company), Lysistrata Jones (Meadow Brook Theatre). Readings: The Visitor (The Public Theater); Vestige, Boys Who Tricked Me (Musical Theatre Factory); A Diamond as Big as the Ritz. Opera: The Magic Flute (Bay View), The Elixir of Love (University of Michigan), Rockland (Pine Mountain). Improv: Member of indie team Uncle Taft.

Tom - Sana “Prince” Sarr

Downtown Cabaret: Bye, Bye Birdie; Black Rock School: Shrek, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
Theater Glossary

Theater is a collaborative art form, meaning that many people have to work together to get the show ready to be performed. While onstage only the actors are seen, there is a whole crew working behind-the-scene, usually months before the show opens.

**Actor:** portrays characters on stage and present them in a truthful way to an audience. In a musical, actors sing songs that reveal aspects of the story and their character. Actors generally rehearse their characters with a director, who offers input and helps select emotional intention, movement, and diction for each character. A group of actors that perform a play are referred to as the “cast” or “ensemble.”

**Choreographer:** directs actors and dancers in stylized movement onstage.

**Composer:** a writer of music. In the theater, it specifically refers to someone who writes the music-only portion of a play, and works closely with the lyricist to build songs.

**Costume designer:** controls each piece of clothing worn by the actor. They must ensure all clothing reinforces the director’s vision, the time period of the play, and the nature of each individual character.

**Director:** in charge of all artistic aspects of a theater production. Works collaboratively with designers, actors, musicians, and contributing artists to create a finished piece.

**Dramaturg:** analyses scripts, advises directors and works with playwrights on new pieces. In a production, a dramaturg is charged with researching and relaying themes and historical concepts, to directors, designers and the production team.

**Playwright:** writes plays, also referred to as dramatist. The term is spelled with “-wright” (instead of “-write”) to indicate a craftsperson or builder. Much like a “shipwright” constructs a ship, a “playwright” constructs a work for the stage.
Properties designer: person who creates any physical object held or handled by the actors (i.e. cups, ashtrays, umbrellas, etc).

Librettist: writes the book (script) for a musical. In charge of constructing the spoken portions of a musical.

Lighting designer: using a series of lights hung above or placed on various portions of the stage, the lighting designer provides visibility, helps focus the audience’s attention, creates mood, and establishes time and place by selecting color, intensity, shape and direction of each light.

Lyricist: writes words to be sung (lyrics) for a musical theater piece. Works closely with the composer to build songs.

Scenic designer: creates the physical environment for a play; responsible for the visual world in which a play unfolds (colors, shapes, visual style).

Score: the written melodies and musical notations that are sung by the performers and played by the orchestra.

Sound designer: arranges and orchestrates all the auditory aspects of a production. Sound effects can be pre-recorded or live. For a musical, the sound designer decides on the number and type of microphones to be used in order to best hear the music and actors on stage.

Stage crew: works backstage to ensure the smooth flow of each performance. Duties include placing props, assisting actors with costume changes, controlling the lights and sound, and moving pieces of the set.
**Stage manager:** organizes the entire production by coordinating the communication between actors and all members of the artistic & production teams. In rehearsal, stage managers notate blocking (positioning of actors onstage), help actors learn lines, and assist directors in the day-to-day operations of a rehearsal. During a performance, stage managers call all sound, lighting, and other cues and are in charge of the play’s flow once it is in front of an audience. Quite literally, stage managers run the show!
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Encyclopedia Mythica: http://www.pantheon.org/articles/j/joyous_gard.html

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Source Material for “Activities” provided by:
Lincoln Center Theater: http://www.lct.org/explore/education/resource-guides/
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GUENEVERE
Lance this has got to stop. There is too much talk in the court already. I feel as if we are being watched day and night. What if Arthur finds out? It would kill him.

LANCELOT
Jenny, he knows.

GUENEVERE
He couldn’t.

LANCELOT
He knows! Why else would he change the law?

GUENEVERE
It’s your guilt. It’s causing you to imagine…

LANCELOT
Listen. Disputes will no longer be settled with swords but in court with a judge.

GUENEVERE
So?

LANCELOT
So in court there must be evidence. And Arthur can make sure there is never any evidence against us.

GUENEVERE
But how?

LANCELOT
By making sure that one of us is with him at all times. We will never have a night alone again. Never.

GUENEVERE
Oh, God. Lance, you should leave and never come back.

LANCELOT
I’ve said the same to myself day after day. But how can I?