

review

Tim Estin steals the show in Camelot



Jeannie Walla plays the part of Queen Guinevere.

by Mary Eshbaugh Hayes
King Arthur was the lead character in the Kingdom of Camelot.

And Tim Estin is the lead character in the Aspen Community Theater production of *Camelot*. He walks away with the show.



Karl Brinkman is Lancelot.

Camelot opened last weekend and will be presented again this weekend, Thursday night through Sunday night, Nov 4-7, with the curtain rising each night at 8 pm in the Aspen High School Commons.

Tickets are \$7 for orchestra seats and \$5 for general admittance. Tickets are available at Aspen Drug on the Hyman Ave Mall and Sundance Drug in Snowmass and at the door.

Unsympathetic Parts

It's not that Jeannie Walla as Guinevere and Karl Brinkman as Lancelot are not good in their parts (the other two leading parts in the musical production).

Their singing voices are probably better than Estin's.

It's just that their characters as written for the musical are weaker. *Camelot* is the story of King Arthur, and Tim Estin is a wonderful Arthur.

He is the thoughtful boy called "Wart" who grows into the king with the dream of a better world, a place called Camelot. It's a world where right is more important than might and where might is only used to make things right.

Estin is a superb actor, conveying meaning to all his lines, catching the audience up in Arthur's dreams.

Great English Legend

The story is one of the great English legends.

Arthur does bring about the creation of Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table, only to have Guinevere, his queen, and Lancelot, the most beloved of his knights, fall in love and betray his trust.

The legend gave Guinevere and Lancelot unsympathetic parts in history. Lerner and Lowe wrote them unsympathetically into their musical of *Camelot*.

Guinevere is all too human in the midst of Arthur's dream. She underlines the tragedy of the story, the age-old story of what human frailties can do to great dreams.



Brad Moore as Merlin consults Tim Estin as King Arthur in the Aspen Community Theater production of *Camelot*. Photos for this article by Andi Berry.

Walla handles her sad role well, and one wishes she had better songs to sing. The memorable songs in the musical are "Camelot" and "If Ever I Should Leave You" and they are sung by the male leads.

Brinkman as Lancelot seems downright uncomfortable in his role as the pompous and righteous, the all too pure and glorious knight in shining armor.

Brinkman has a strong and sensational singing voice, but often speaks his lines too fast, as though they embarrass him and he's trying to get them over with.

Nasty Boy

Willie Moseley, as Arthur's son, is the perfect "nasty boy." Scheming and plotting and playing upon the human weaknesses of everyone, he brings the glory of Camelot to an end.

William Gilbert is a surprise in

the role of King Pellinore. Never seen before on an Aspen stage, he is remarkably good.

Terra Lynn Vestrand as the invisible Morgan La Fey is eccentric and very funny as she exhibits her human weakness (for chocolates).

The part of Merlin, Arthur's teacher and mentor, is played with great dash and fervor by Brad Moore.

Very Large Knight

One of the most wonderful things about past fall musical productions by Aspen Community Theater was that there was usually a "cast of thousands" of locals.

Camelot suffers from the lack of this community involvement; the exuberance isn't there. But remember, it's really a sad play, it's not like *The Sound of Music* or *The Music Man* that burst at the seams with good cheer.

The other people who do appear on stage do a credible job of providing background for the lead characters.

Phil Weir and Dan Rosenthal make good and loyal knights and David Parker should be especially mentioned for making a loveable character out of Sir Lionel, a very large knight.

Michael Kennedy is a loyal Squire Dap to Lancelot, Adam Hewey and Charles Chaffee are young and handsome pages of the court (as pages in the story books are always supposed to be).

The Orchestra and Direction

The orchestra, under the direction of Ray Adams, is wonderful and melodious...but it is too loud.

Jeannie Walla sings one song without any accompaniment and you relish hearing the whole range of her voice, and the words.

Michael Burns, long known in Aspen for his acting in dramas and musicals, has done a fine job of directing this musical, which in the last analysis is really a superb and moving piece of drama.

Someone to Watch

David Burson is someone to watch. Young as he is, he has a presence. As Tom of Warwick, he represents the future.

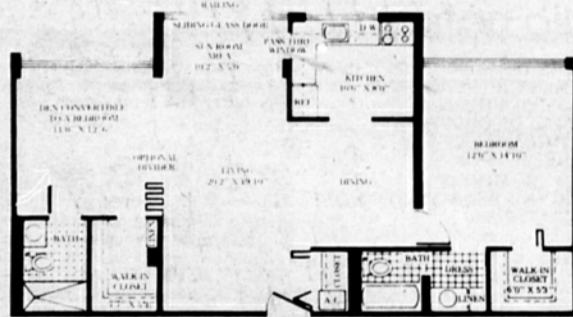
He represents a future that Arthur hopes "won't let it be fogot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known...as Camelot."

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