Camelot Encyclopedia Article

Camelot

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Contents

Camelot Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Camelot.....3

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Camelot, a musical by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe based on T.H. White's version of the Arthurian romance *The Once and Future King*, was one of the most successful Broadway musicals of the 1960s. The original production starred Julie Andrews, Richard Burton, and Robert Goulet. Songs included "I Wonder What the King Is Doing Tonight," "Camelot," "How to Handle a Woman," "C'est Moi," and "If Ever I Would Leave You." The 1967 film version featured Richard Harris, Vanessa Redgrave, and Franco Nero. Camelot contemporized the era of King Arthur and made the legend accessible and appealing to 20th-century audiences through the use of 1960s popular music styles, a skillful libretto, and well-known performers. The influence of *Camelot* extended well beyond the musical theater. It became a symbol of the administration of President John F. Kennedy, an era—like that of King Arthur—whose days were cut tragically short. The *Oxford History of the American People* (1965) even ends with a quote from the show: "Don't let it be forgot that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot."

Further Reading:

Citron, Stephen. *The Wordsmiths: Oscar Hammerstein 2nd & Alan Jay Lerner.* New York, Oxford University Press, 1995.

Everett, William A. "Images of Arthurian Britain in the American Musical Theater: *A Connecticut Yankee* and *Camelot.* " *Sonneck Society Bulletin.* Vol. 23, No. 3, 1997, 65, 70-72.

Lerner, Alan Jay. *The Street Where I Live.* New York, W.W.Norton, 1970.