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WEST PARK — In the neo-Romanesque chapel of Holy Cross Monastery, Kairos: A Consort of Singers presented a concert Sunday afternoon that featured "King Arthur," a semi-opera by Henry Purcell, as part of the Kairos series of offering Baroque masterpieces. The group of 16 singers, led by Edward Lundergan, features strongly layered soprano, tenor, alto and bass voices that give warm interpretations and dramatic nuances to the text at hand, in this case a charming retelling of Arthur's battles with the Saxon king Oswald and his endeavors to rescue his kidnapped fiancé Emmeline.

The opera is in five acts, and this version features a narrative written by Laurence Senelick in 1993 to render the libretto by John Dryden in summary form while leaving the choral and sung texts intact. David Tass Rodriguez gave the narration a lively, humorous reading while the singers sang with full force together and in a variety of solos, duets, trios and quintet. A 14-piece orchestra played the overtures and accompaniment with precision and energy. It was an unusual treat to hear this courtly entertainment performed with such skill and enjoyment.

After a melodic chaconne of strings soaring over lower bass, the Saxon chorus invoked Woden in battle with a pair of duets and a recitative by soprano Amy Goldin. The chorus called on "Brave souls" to seek honor, and tenor Glenn Knickerbocker urged them to toast their conquest. In answer, tenor John B. Hedges led the Britons to "Come if you dare" to the beat of the drum and send the Saxons flying.

After his victory, Arthur was warned by his spirit Philidel (soprano Shana Andrawis) against the evil spirit Grimbald (baritone Michael Saunders). They engaged in an antiphonal duel. Meanwhile, Emmeline waited for Arthur and was entertained by shepherds with pastoral strains. Sopranos Elizabeth Clifton and Patricia Marquez told the men to "leave decoying" and sing "marriage vows" instead.

Act 3 found Cupid (soprano Carol Lundergan) wearing wings and trying to warm Cold Genius (bass Donald Boyer) by the fires of love. The music shivered and shook; the voices chattered and melted. "Love was made for a blessing" and heated up the heart.

Two sirens (sopranos Andrawis and Clifton) invited Arthur to join them for a swim, but with another lovely chaconne and a choral "How happy the lover," he escaped seduction to embrace true love. The final act invoked the wind god Aeolus with bass Boyer and trumpet fanfares, followed by a "serene and calm" passage of recorders and cello of haunting beauty. Trios praised the glories of "British wool" and "English ale," and soprano Amy Goldin as Venus celebrated her "Fairest isle." The choral finale raised an anthem to "our sovereign" and "his sceptered subjects" in a patriotic flourish.

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