

Film

Excalibur
Starring Nigel Terry,
Nicol Williamson, Nicholas Clay
Directed by John Boorman
Mayflower Theatre

Let's face it kids, swords and sorcery will never fail to excite us. The King Arthur legend is full of the basic stuff like love and honor, war and peace, hate and passion, life and death, spirit and flesh. We know the story, it's only a matter of how well it's rehearsed.

Brace yourself for *Excalibur*. Director John Boorman's version throws all the themes, all the story elements together with such shameless earnestness that you can almost hear them come smashing into the fray, like the clash of armor.

Excalibur has lots of style, but only a

certain amount of class. At times this film is hokey: the men dripping with machismo (they often speak in shouts), the women radiating with glowing glances (they seldom speak at all). One is tempted to laugh, but Boorman is so sincere, you have to take him seriously: he wouldn't kid you about something like gallantry and honor.

Yet *Excalibur* should not be judged too harshly; its purity of purpose gives it great appeal — even if the path to that purpose is sometimes muddled. Boorman rides a balancing beam between fantasy and reality. His portrayal of the times illustrates well all the political scientist Thomas Hobbes' notions of life being poor, brutish and short.

The jousts and battle scenes (of which there are many) are jumbles of

mayhem and blood — like you would expect to see when people are hacking and goring each other.

But, there is such a thing as subtle savagery. While the battles are furious, they are also under Boorman's firm control. The screen is filled with such elaborate, and yet casual detail that you forget it was purposeful.

The imagery captured by cinematographer Alex Thomson is dazzling enough alone to be worth the cost of admission. Despite its graphic realities, a mystical air is maintained by carefully contrived lighting and use of color.

The vestiges of Arthur's reign in this brutal world gleam like the sword Excalibur itself. Silver-plated knights sit radiantly around a reflective gold Round Table. Camelot itself seems to shine from afar.

At times Boorman seems to rely on his glittering visuals to sustain the film. *Excalibur* gradually manages to drift off course, getting too wrapped up in mysticism and mumbo-jumbo. The knights go off in search of the Holy Grail which will redeem the lost honor of Camelot.

The Grail may restore Arthur's kingdom but it doesn't restore in the audience a good sense of what's going on. The problem is that Boorman tries packing his film with too much; sometimes leaving it so schizophrenically subplotted that we're not sure what the main plot is... and the characters get lost along the way.

Nevertheless, *Excalibur* is an outstanding achievement, and a worthy addition to the lineage of Arthurian tales.

— Richard Laliberte

More coming events

• University of Oregon Music School free events April 17-23 include:

On Friday Kenneth Finch presents his senior cello recital 8 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall.

Kathleen Lacey sings works by Bach, Milhaud, Schumann, Sondheim, and Strouse Saturday at 8 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall. Also on Saturday, Beth Emmons will perform pieces by Damase, Bach, Jolivet, Stravinsky and Castlenuovo-Tedesco on flute at 8 p.m. in Room 198.

On Sunday organist Annagret Grabenhorst presents her master's degree recital at 4 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall. She will perform works by Pierre Du Mage, Bergamo and Widor. Also on Sunday, composer Robert Thompson will present his recital at 8 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall.

The University Brass Quintet performs at 8 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall.

On Tuesday faculty musician Guy Bovet will play organ and harpsichord at 8 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall. Compositions include those by Strozzi, Frescobaldi, Gabrieli, Banchieri, Vivaldi and others.

Margery Fitts' senior harp recital will begin at 8 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall. Works to be performed include Handel, Faure, Tedesco, Tailleferre and Debussy.

Next Thursday (April 23) A "Musical Smorgasbord" will be performed at 12:30 p.m. in Room 198. Also on Thursday, Randy Heyd will perform his senior trumpet recital at 8 p.m. in Beall Hall. Works include those by G.P. Telemann, Halsey Stevens, Paul Hindemith and others at 8 p.m. in Beall Concert Hall.

• *Betrayal* continues Wednesday through Saturday. *Betrayal* is a drama that begins in the present and ends in the past. Bonne Harris (as Emma), Andrew Roy Ivy (as Jerry), and James Lundstrom (as Robert), play members of a love triangle caught up in a game of deception, betrayal and emotional expression. (See page 7B for review).

Curtain is 8 p.m. in the Arena Theater on the first floor of Villard Hall on campus. Tickets are \$4.50 for the general public, \$2.75 for university students and senior citizens, and \$3.50 for other students.

• Lane Community College Oregon Daily Emerald

Main Theatre opens Saturday with *Twelfth Night*, by William Shakespeare. Director Tom Laswell promises a play in the Elizabethan style, designed to make the audience laugh. The play will be presented on the Lane Community College main stage at 8 p.m. Each performance will be preceded by singing and dancing "on the green" at 7:45 p.m. in front of the theater. Reserved seating is available for all performances at \$4. Remaining tickets will be sold at the door. Reservations may be made by telephone (726-2202), or in person at the LCC box office, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The play runs April 18, 19 and 22-25.

• *A History of the Beatles* part two, will be shown in Geology 150 on Friday night. The film consists of two hours of amazing rare concert performances, studio rehearsals, interviews, TV shows and more. Showtimes are 7:00, 9:00, and 11:30 p.m. and admission is \$2.50. For more information call 686-3761.

• A meeting of the Western Oregon Filmmakers, first Monday of every month at 7 p.m. in South Harris Hall, 125 East Eight Avenue. The meetings are casual showings and critiques of each filmmakers' latest work and are open to anyone who dabbles in film. For more information call Dan Starnier at 937-3056.

• April 24 is opening night for *Buried Child*, a Sam Shepard play which won the 1979 Pulitzer prize for drama. A gothic comedy, the show centers on a family driven to extremes of eccentricity by guilt.

The play will be staged at 8 p.m. in the Robinson Theater at Villard Hall, on April 24, 25, 29-30 and May 1-2. Reserved-seat tickets are \$2.75 for university students and senior citizens, \$3.50 for other students and \$4.50 for the general public. To order tickets, please call the box office at 686-4191 from noon to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

• The Eugene Ballet presents Jon Sutton's *Pinocchio* and Pagni's *Pas de Quatre* April 24 at 8 p.m. and April 25 at 2 and 8 p.m. at the South Eugene High School Auditorium. Tickets range from \$1.50 to \$7.50. For further information call 686-9342.

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