



Reviews

HENRY PURCELL, *King Arthur, or The British Worthy; A Dramatick Opera in Five Acts*. (Libretto by John Dryden). Directed for the Stage by Jürgen Flimm with musical direction by Nikolaus Harnoncourt. EuroArts Music International GmbH, 2005. ASIN: B00OAMMSFI. 2 Disc DVD. \$45.98.

Purcell and Dryden's collaboration, first performed in 1691, is partially a spoken stage play and partially an opera. This DVD is a live recording of the production of the work staged in Salzburg at the annual music festival 24–28 July 2004. Both Arthur and the Saxon king, Oswald, love the beautiful, but blind, Emmeline. To determine who will win her hand, the two kings go to war. Their conflict also pits the Christian Britons against the pagan Saxons and takes us into a world of enchantment that sets art against magic. After a series of trials, Arthur defeats Oswald in single combat, and Merlin restores Emmeline's sight. As is to be expected of a production staged at the famous annual musical festival in Salzburg, the acting, directing, singing, sets, costumes, and props are uniformly excellent and at times dazzling. Since *King Arthur* is rarely performed in full, this DVD offers an opportunity for a wider audience to have access to a unique seventeenth-century version of the Arthuriad little indebted to more well-known romance and chronicle versions of the legend of Arthur and his knights.

KEVIN J. HARTY
La Salle University

ARTHURIANA 16.1 (2006)