



2001

Fata Morgana

Erin Rogers
Colby College

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FATA MORGANA

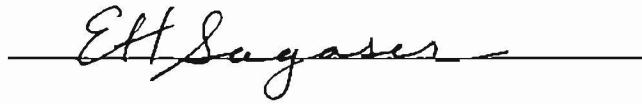
by

Erin Gunn Rogers

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the
Senior Scholars Program

Colby College
2001

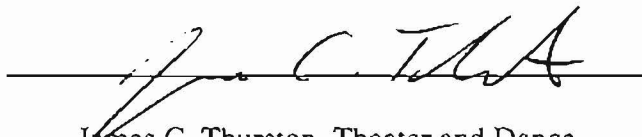
APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Elizabeth Sagaser", written over a horizontal line.

Elizabeth Sagaser, English

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Christine M. Wentzel", written over a horizontal line.

Christine M. Wentzel, Theater and Dance

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James C. Thurston", written over a horizontal line.

James C. Thurston, Theater and Dance

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Peter Harris", written over a horizontal line.

Peter Harris, Creative Writing

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paul Machlin", written over a horizontal line.

Paul Machlin, Chair of Independent Study Committee

Abstract

Fata Morgana began as *Traveling Light* in April, 2000, a Senior Scholars project exploring the performing arts of dance and poetry. I wanted to combine these two art forms into an interdisciplinary research project and, ultimately, a full-length dance work for a production incorporating set design, sound design, costume design, and lighting. During the months following the project's conception, I began to focus the background research on Arthurian literature and legend.

The 30-minute performance piece that emerged from this research is a retelling of Arthurian legend for the 21st century. The piece centers around the character of Morgana, described in Parke Godwin's *Firelord* as a Pict matriarch who is actually King Arthur's first love and first wife. The movement drama is set after Morgana and Arthur have separated and become rulers of opposing ideologies. They preside over territories on either side of Hadrian's Wall, a structure built by Dark Age Romans to keep Picts out of Southern Britain.

"Fata Morgana" means Morgan le Fay (Morgan of the Fairies) in Italian, and is also a phrase used to describe mirages seen at sea. My work plays with Morgana's association with watery illusions, her connection to pagan religion, witchcraft, and a questionable role as the catalyst for the downfall of Arthur's Camelot. The characters of Guenevere and Lancelot are also instrumental in *Fata Morgana*.

With a final script of original and collected poetry combined with contemporary dance, *Fata Morgana* was presented with four faculty works in the inaugural concert of Colby Dance Theater, March 15-17, 2001. It was also revised and recast for an outdoor performance on May 2, 2001.

Both productions of *Fata Morgana* provided an intimate and innovative look at Arthurian legend, dance theater, and the use of poetry in performance. As a choreographer and on behalf of my cast I will say that this project was a joy to plan, produce, and perform.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my casts for their selfless dedication to the project and characters of *Fata Morgana*. During the Colby Dance Theater production (March 15-17, 2001), the role of Morgana was played by Holly Labbe Russell (Guest Artist, Theater and Dance). Arthur was played by Eric Laurits '02, Guenevere by Sarah Badow '03J, Lancelot by Daniel Martin '01. For the outdoor performance of the piece (May 2, 2001), Stephanie Spitko '02 played Morgana and Mike Cox '03 played Lancelot.

I could not have created *Fata Morgana* without the support of the Department of Theater and Dance at Colby. I thank John Ervin, Technical Director, for his generous work designing and creating (with work study students and the TD 113 class) the set, recording and editing sound, and for providing the voice of Merlin. Thank you to Pamela Scofield for costume design and Lisa Caldwell for costume construction.

For designing a light plot sensitive to my goals as a choreographer, thank you to Chesley Davis '01, and to Sean Rinzler '01, for his help with fight direction and choreography.

Finally, I would like to thank my tutors, Professors Elizabeth Sagaser (English) and Tina Wentzel (Theater and Dance) for constant support and feedback. I also appreciate my readers, Professors Jim Thurston (Theater and Dance) and Peter Harris (Creative Writing), and the Independent Study Committee.

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Proposal (April, 2000)

Tutors: Tina Wentzel, Department of Theater and Dance
Elizabeth Sagaser, English

Readers: Peter Harris, Creative Writing
James Thurston, Department of Theater and Dance

What more could any individual want, than to "travel light" through his/her life, with none of the baggage of dysfunctional families, failed relationships and economic stress? How would our lives change without these elements, if all we needed was one lightweight pack on our backs, looking up, looking ahead, the whole world open to our eyes? I think a lot about this in my own life, how my journey has weighed me down. I think the phrase "traveling light" indicates the pursuit of an impossible ideal. When I prepare for my next vacation in Florida I will vow to travel light, but when I go, my bag will weigh me down without question. Just saying I want to travel light indicates that I haven't been able to do this in the past. Has anyone?

During this past year I have begun to pay attention to my dreams. I cannot come close to deciphering them sufficiently, but I have made one clear observation. My dreams always involve journeys-train rides, airline flights, road trips, even cruises. A Jungian psychoanalyst would inform me that these dreams are appropriate for my age, because the college years are a time of transition, movement, adventure. With this in mind, I have developed the concept for my Senior Scholars project, to be titled "Traveling Light."

"Traveling Light" will be an exploration into the dynamics of movement and verse, combining poetry and dance into a fully developed performance work to be

presented in the spring of 2001. The project's theme will involve seeing life as a journey, in which profound events occur every day. It will address issues of growing up and changing family dynamics, and suggest how difficult these elements are to survive, learn from, etc. The journey from child to adult is one through which it is not easy to travel light. Perhaps what we need is a light to follow us on our way, some reminder of glimmering hope, a "traveling light," so to speak (just another interpretation of the title). Or perhaps we need this light to shine on the path before us, guiding us ahead. These are the ideas that will inform the work of the project, though during its development I will frequently be modifying its thematic scope.

Throughout the summer I will be reading works by contemporary poets and studying Arthurian literature in order to form more concrete ideas about the structure of "Traveling Light," including the structure of the poetry I will write and the structure of the final manifestation of the project in performance. I refer to Arthurian literature because this is a genre that has been of significant interest to me in the past, and I feel its themes of growing up and the journey/quest (the quest for the Holy Grail) are especially relevant to my work as a poet. I plan to audit Professor Mark Hazard's course on Arthurian literature during the fall, to further inform myself of these thematic connections. During the summer I will also conduct research on dance artists who have experimented with text in performance, such as Liz Lerman, Jane Comfort, Simone Forti and Trisha Brown.

The artists listed above are not the only modern dance artists to explore text in performance. This type of production is clearly one not only of dance, but of performance poetry. Combining dance and performance poetry gives a production a variety of possibilities: performers can move to recorded text, move while reciting text,

or recite text as other performers move to it. Text can be spoken, chanted, or sung. I will most likely be incorporating each of these performance variations, although it is my preference to have all text spoken aloud in the space rather than being previously recorded. The performers I will seek for the work will not only be adept at movement, but in dramatic speech as well.

During the fall I will focus on composition, working with Professor Sagaser as I write poetry and with Professor Wentzel as I experiment with movement concepts for "Traveling Light." I expect these two aspects of the project to inform each other; my poetry will inspire movement and my movement will inspire poetry. An audition will be held on September 11 to select performers for the project; I plan to involve five individuals. These performers will be in rehearsal with me from September to the time the work is presented in the spring, for a minimum time of two hours twice a week (four hours per week). During October I will begin combining the poetry and movement elements of "Traveling Light;" I intend to have at least 15-20 minutes (anticipating a work approximately 25 minutes in length) of choreography complete prior to the semester break in December. The work will be performed on March 15-17 in Strider Theater in the Colby Dance Ensemble's debut concert. I also intend to perform "Traveling Light" in another venue, preferably the Colby College Museum of Art, on Thursday, April 5, 2001.

"Traveling Light" will be an exciting culmination of my college career. I am an English major with a concentration in Creative Writing. I have also declared a minor in Performing Arts with a concentration in movement (dance). My creative work has spanned both fiction and poetry composition during my studies at Colby. Of the five

classes I have taken in Creative Writing, three of those courses include Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Fiction (EN 278, 378, 478), while the remaining are Beginning and Intermediate Poetry (EN 279, 379). Two of my poems have been published in the Pequod, Colby's literary magazine (Fall and Spring issues, 1999/2000).

In the realm of Performing Arts, I have taken three semesters of Advanced Dance (PA 255) and have also completed a class in Movement Composition (PA 259). During the fall and January of this year I was involved in Dreamwalk, an original dance production directed by Tina Wentzel, performed in the Strider Theater during February. I have choreographed works for the Colby Dancers' spring concerts "Moondances" (1999) and "Stepping Out" (2000), for the fall workshop performances of 1999 and 2000, and for the productions of "Eve be Tempted" (February, 2000) and "Dances with Improv" (March, 2000) in the Page Commons Room. Two of these works incorporated text in performance, the fall workshop performance of 1999 and the concert piece for "Stepping Out."

The outcome of this project will include several original and complete poems, a fully developed (25 minute) text-in-performance production (which will be documented in video), and a final paper discussing the ideas behind and the process of the work's evolution. The only costs anticipated are those of costuming the performers in "Traveling Light." These costs will be allayed by the Department of Theater and Dance's budget for the Colby Dance Ensemble's spring production, of which this piece will be a part.

I have chosen to produce "Traveling Light" because of the significance poetry and dance have assumed in my current life. While making plans for my senior year, I was

unable to select one art form over the other, and saw that combining the two would be an ideal manifestation of my work as an artist. The Senior Scholar program is the best curricular opportunity in which to create this work; "Traveling Light" will be a thoughtful cross-disciplinary project involving much more than just research and writing. The program will allow me more time than I have ever had to develop my creativity. It will give me the opportunity to focus specifically on a project of my own design, allowing for the best possible manifestation of my work as a poet and a choreographer.

Time Line, "Traveling Light"

- Summer: Research professional work involving text in movement, including (but not limited to) the works of Liz Lerman, Jane Comfort, Simone Forti, Claire Porter and Trisha Brown. View any available videotapes and read critical reviews of these artists' works. Research Arthurian literature and contemporary poetry for themes of growing up and the journey/quest.
- September: Audition performers on Monday, September 11. Begin rehearsing for two hours twice a week. Begin intensive work on developing poetry for the performance with Elizabeth Sagaser. Start meeting with advisors at least once a week, and have Tina Wentzel sit in on every third rehearsal. Rehearsals will involve not only developing movement, but experimenting with speaking text, moving to spoken text, moving while speaking text, etc.
- October: Continue rehearsal process and poetry composition. Begin introducing the poetry developed with Elizabeth Sagaser to performers. Finalize thematic concepts for the work, defining characters for individual performers if necessary. Complete a substantial amount of choreography (5-10 minutes) to be used in final work.
- November/December: Complete a plot for the final performance: determine music to be used, performers' entrances/exits, poetic works to be included. Plan fully the thematic scenario of the performance. Have approximately 15-20 minutes of choreography developed for final work. Design costumes for the performance and measure performers.
- January: Release performers from rehearsal schedule to allow for JanPlans away from Colby. Finalize plot of performance and revise poetry to be used in the production. Construct costumes if necessary.
- February: Complete all choreography and construct/purchase costumes by February 15. Rehearse with performers again twice a week for two hours; increase rehearsal time if necessary. Work individually with performers to perfect speech and movement to ensure the quality of final work.
- March: Continue refining performance in rehearsal; perform work on March 15-17 in Strider Theater. Begin writing analytical paper examining the project's content and evolution.
- April: Perform work again in the Colby College Museum of Art on Thursday, April 5. Complete analytical paper and compile poetry used in performance. View and, if necessary, edit video documentation of "Traveling Light."

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Mid-Year Report (December 8, 2000)

Over the past few months, the project formerly known as "Traveling Light" has, I believe, come a long way. What began as a self-exploration in dance and poetry is now primarily an exploration of Arthurian legend in dance and poetry. I have begun to compose a performance piece that is a 21st century revision of the Arthur story, leaving stories of my past and my family behind.

The project's changes have both excited and baffled me. Creative writing thus far has been to me an avenue of self expression, inspired by my personal life. What I thought I would do in "Traveling Light" was apply myth to my life, but instead myth has taken over and now I am creating a "new" myth for a new age. I have often feared this shift meant taking an easy way out. Since I couldn't really tell both the story of my life and Arthur's story at once, I decided to tell Arthur's story. Telling the story of a king who lived 1300 years ago, if he lived at all, seems obviously less risky than telling a story I lived through and continue to live through every day.

Yet, when I think hard about this, I realize that talking about my own experiences isn't all that difficult for me. Even though I am only a beginner in the fields of creative writing and contemporary dance, most of the work that I have done thus far in these art forms has been self reflective. Perhaps it is strange, for someone so young as I to be so concerned with the past, but then perhaps I'm not yet creative enough to give my work the mask of fiction. I am beginning to think choosing Arthur's story over my own was the more challenging decision for me to make, because the task of interpreting the Arthur texts is very difficult. So rich in characters and conflict, it is an understatement to say the

Arthurian myth needed to be pared down in order to suit a 30 minute movement drama. And, I want the drama to reach a general audience, not just a gathering of Arthurian scholars (though it would be fascinating to hear the reaction of such a group).

I grow excited as the piece continues to develop, because I continue to see connections between texts, history, and reality occurring in the work. I think and hope that the finished product will convey a 21st century (perhaps post-modern or feminist) approach to Arthurian legend. I also hope it will convey many of my own experience-based beliefs, values and aspirations. The piece is my own creation, and in creating it I am discovering ideals I did not know I possessed, and because of this I know I haven't taken the easy way out. Perhaps the revised myth I will present in March will convey more about my perspective than the original autobiographical "Traveling Light" could have attempted to convey. Isn't this what makes critical theory so fascinating—seeing how our fiction can mask even as it reveals our world?

My work on the still untitled project began over the summer, reviewing Arthurian texts such as T. H. White's *Once and Future King*, chapters of Malory's *The Morte Darthur*, Deepak Chopra's *The Return of Merlin* and Parke Godwin's *Firelord* and *Beloved Exile*. I attended two contemporary dance intensives, the Limón Summer Dance Workshop in San José, California, and the Allegheny Summer Intensive in Meadville, Pennsylvania. Movement concepts for the work began in the composition courses during these intensives. As the semester began, I started watching dance works by varied artists, reviewing Arthurian poetry (primarily Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, John Ciardi's "Lancelot in Hell," Sara Teasdale's "Guenevere"), and studying nonfiction works concerning Arthur and Celtic mythology (*King Arthur Through the Ages*, Valerie

M. Lagorio and Mildred Leake Day, eds., *Tintagel and the Arthurian Mythos*, Paul Broadhurst, *The Celtic Reader*, John Matthews, ed.). Works by the poets Charlotte Smith, Emily Dickinson, and several contemporary writers also influenced my work.

I began composing movement for the project alone in the studio, and then with the assistance of Guest Artist Holly Labbe Russell. My advisers have met weekly with me to address the project's evolution. Elizabeth Sagaser guided me in composing a preliminary body of poetry for the work, continually undergoing revision. On October 10 and 11, auditions were held for Colby Dance Theater and I selected my cast. The cast consists of Holly Labbe Russell as Guenevere, Eric Laurits '02 as Arthur, Sarah Badow '03J as Guenevere, and Dan Martin '01 as Lancelot. Since October I have rehearsed with the cast or members thereof approximately three times a week (6 hours per week), and an extensive compilation of choreography has emerged. On December 1, 2000, this compilation was presented to the advisers and videotaped.

Further Work to be Done:

In January I will be on campus completing the text for my project. Rehearsals will be held for cast members present for the shortened term. As second semester begins in February, so will a rigorous rehearsal schedule. Sections of the piece still unfinished will be completed, and transitions made fluid. Costume designer Pamela Scofield will design costumes for the piece, while Professor James Thurston and Technical Director John Ervin will, I hope, help to create the set. Chesley Davis '01 will design lights for the piece. The final work will be presented in Colby Dance Theater's inaugural concert, March 15-17, 2000.

After the concert, the piece will remain in rehearsal. As the weather permits, an outdoor showing will be scheduled (late April/early May), and a performance will occur on the banks of Johnson pond and perhaps at another location on Maine's coast. This performance will be after (hopefully) a warm and beautiful sunset, in the half-light of evening. Performances will be documented on video, and I will analyze them in a written critical review.

Post-Production Analysis (May, 2001)

From *Traveling Light* to *Fata Morgana*

The original title of my Senior Scholars project was *Traveling Light*. Throughout the course of this year, my ideas and goals for the project have changed dramatically. The work was originally a personal coming-of-age story influenced thematically by Arthurian legend. Now, however, *Traveling Light* has become *Fata Morgana*, a work much more imbedded in the Arthurian period. My decisions to change the work are complicated, and are also discussed in the Mid-Semester Report included in this packet.

My original concept of *Traveling Light* involved themes of childhood, growing up, and eventual disillusionment. During a brainstorming session with Holly Labbe Russell last September, I described a piece with a 5-person cast, consisting of a king/father, queen/mother, knight/adolescent, page/child, and a wise man. The wise man was Merlin, a character who has lived through and come to terms with past and present. He could be seen as more of a spirit than a real person—an ever-present, overriding consciousness.

A goal of this piece was to reinterpret the saying so popular in relation to the British monarchy: “The king is dead. Long live the king.” This phrase indicates the process of royal inheritance; the old king dies, and immediately another king is crowned. The king’s position is different from the king’s person; the position thrives over centuries, the king himself is as mortal as any man. The phrase also indicates the belief in an afterlife. Though the king is dead, he will live on—in Avalon, according to Arthurian legend.

My piece would change this phrase, to read: “The child is dead. Long live the child.” As a person gets older, “grows up,” the child he/she once was becomes a victim of time;

every child must die and become an adult. We hope, however, the child will live on inside, as we begin to face the reality of life—hardship, betrayal, impending death. Adults have to keep some of the joy and innocence of youth in order to survive, and so this is our litany as we look back upon our lives: “The child is dead. Long live the child.”

I planned for the piece to begin with Merlin as a storyteller who introduces the remaining four cast members. The progression of the piece would reflect a changing family dynamic. Following a group piece, the father departs, then so does the mother, and the adolescent. Finally only the child remains. As the family dissolves, the child must face the most difficult trials life can offer, and so loses his/her innocence or naivete. The child becomes integrated with the role of Merlin; old age and youth are united in a sort of perfect wisdom, a perfect perspective marked by equal parts of wonder and knowledge.

What I have described is a conceptual outline of a work I still intend to make. My plans changed in part because this story was difficult to translate into Arthurian legend. There is no aspect of the Arthur story that directly dramatizes the plot described above, even though the image of a family falling apart is central to the legend. I consider making a movement piece based on legend to be a very difficult task; if the story doesn't substantially support the goals of the piece, the task begins to seem impossible. Taking my plot and placing it in an Arthurian world proved to be too extensive an undertaking, and so I decided to reexamine my goals for the work.

My project had reached an intersection; I needed to choose between an Arthurian drama and a drama of my own personal history. My goal had been to tell a story about my own experience of growing older and coping with change, while retelling the story

(or one of the stories) of Arthur. But finding this to be too complicated, I decided to emphasize Arthur's story instead of my own. When I do create the piece based on my life growing up, it will have a contemporary feel; the work will be influenced by Arthurian themes, but not defined or determined by them.

Thus I decided to recreate an Arthurian story from a post-modern, feminine perspective. Instead of demonstrating the barrier between youth and adulthood, I chose to demonstrate the barrier between male and female ideologies. This was a topic more concretely situated within Arthurian legend, and one I have been intrigued with since taking Critical Theory with Laurie Osborne (wherein we discussed the differences between patriarchal language and *écriture féminine*). My understanding of *écriture féminine* involves an open-ended, all-encompassing discourse, in contrast to patriarchal language, which demands focus--a central objective for all communication.

In many ways, King Arthur represents a bridge between what I consider feminine and masculine. He rules a kingdom caught between the old world and the new, the Dark Ages and the Renaissance, "primitive" and "civilized" ways of life, matriarchal societies and patriarchal societies. He arises from the era of transition in Britain from older Celtic/pagan religions to Christianity. If Arthur lived, he would not have been the king of courtly love and chivalry that we usually envision him as. He would have lived in the 6th or 7th century AD, following the withdrawal of the Roman Empire from Britain; he would have been a warlord during what is likely the darkest period in British history.

Early Arthurian texts like Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* and *The Alliterative Morte Arthure* are primarily chronicles of war. During this era, Britain was plagued with conflict. The Roman citizens of Southern Britain were still

separated into feudal kingdoms, and now lacked the protection of Roman legions. They had no unified system of defense, and the Saxons were beginning to invade. Moreover, the Southern Brits faced enemies to the North, and here I come to a major source for my development of *Fata Morgana*.

The Picts are considered "the darkest of the peoples of Dark Age Britain," according to Isabel Henderson (*The Picts*), and are associated with the equally mysterious Faerie people of Ireland. Refugees from Gaul, they began to settle in Northern Britain around 100 AD. At that time they were fleeing Roman pressure, but later were the ones to pressure Romans in Britain. The Romans built Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland (beginning 122 AD) to keep them out of Southern Britain. Parke Godwin's *Firelord* describes the Picts as a primitive matriarchal clan that herded cattle and wore animal skins. They were nomads, but by the Arthurian period were losing more and more territory to their southern neighbors. Though they suffered, the Picts were not powerless; Arthur's people harbored a considerable fear of the mysterious "painted" people. With characteristic blue tattoos on their faces, Picts seemed to travel with the mist, and their blue poisoned arrows flew from nowhere into the bodies of the faithful soldiers still patrolling the Wall.

Considered one of the most historically accurate accounts of King Arthur, *Firelord* provides a story of Britain during the true Arthurian era. The novel centers around the conflict between "civilized" and "primitive" ways of life. Before Arthur is crowned, he serves as a Centurion on Hadrian's Wall, and is kidnapped by a band of Picts. The son of a changeling, Arthur is half-Pict, and so is integrated into the clan as at first a prisoner,

then as an adopted son. It is as a Pict that Arthur comes of age, is renamed Belrix, or Firelord, and falls in love with Morgana, the young woman who will soon rule the clan.

Fata Morgana: The Story

The text of *Firelord* provides much of the background for my piece: Arthur was once Morgana's Pict husband and lover. As the piece begins, Arthur has left behind his experience with Morgana, though her memory haunts him. Since he has returned to the southern side of the Wall, he has been crowned High King of Britain and married to Guenevere, the daughter of an important feudal lord.

“Fata Morgana” is the Italian translation of Morgan le Fay, the pagan priestess of Arthurian lore. It is also the name given to mirages seen at sea. Originally, the phrase was used by Italian sailors describing images seen near the Straits of Gibraltar; now, a “Fata Morgana” refers to any illusion on the water. I use the concept of Morgana as a mirage at the start of my piece; it seems Arthur is only dreaming her image. Soon, however, his reverie is broken.

Fata Morgana begins with Arthur resting on the Wall, and Morgana moving stage left. He looks up and sees her, and addresses her as a mirage. His speech indicates the space that divides them; they belong to different worlds. After his monologue, Morgana performs a solo that demonstrates her strength, her circular vision, and a sense of longing. She is not “real” until she sees Arthur beyond the Wall, and runs to him. She leaps on him like a childish friend, and Arthur is startled. Now the mirage is real, but he cannot accept Morgana’s invasion of his territory. They struggle, and Arthur deposits Morgana onto the Wall, putting her in her place. During the struggle Arthur tears off Morgana’s

cape, and Morgana grabs Arthur's sash. Stunned, Arthur picks up the cape, examines it, and exits stage right. Morgana begins what I call her battle sequence (not to be confused with the later battle), responding with anger to Arthur's insult.

After Morgana communicates her frustration with Arthur ("You *left* me," she says, several times), she exits, and then Arthur enters with Guenevere stage right. Lancelot crouches stage left, and Morgana enters again, moving in her usual hovering walk. She begins to repeat her solo, but when she back-falls to the floor, she grasps Lancelot's face in her hands. She tests his strength; he is her slave, her monster, her creation. Lancelot is the only character in *Morgana* without a speaking part—his actions and feelings are pre-determined. Guenevere and Arthur perform a brief duet, leaning on each other and staring out at the kingdom Arthur rules. Then follows the quartet; the characters perform the "grail material" lined up at center stage. This moment is reminiscent of Christian ritual, and the need for a quest. The quest is disorienting, dizzying; all of the cast save Morgana exit at a run. Morgana remains at her bowl, downstage left, where she begins to wring and wash Arthur's sash.

Arthur enters from stage right with a torch, walking at right angles until he reaches downstage right and places the torch in its stand. As Morgana is washing her face, covering her eyes with the sash, Arthur is distracted from prayer (he is kneeling on a cushion with a cross on it) by the magnetism of the torch's light. He stares deeper into it until he is blinded. Staggering, clutching his eyes, Arthur crosses the stage and falls at Morgana's feet.

Here begins Arthur and Morgana's duet. Morgana washes Arthur's face and gestures about him, tracing a spiral "spell" and curing him of his blindness. Then he wakes, and

they move together, echoing Morgana's movement. She helps him to understand her vision of the world, then exits at a run and Arthur returns to his torch, picking it up and heading offstage. He gives the torch to Guenevere, who enters, contemplative and mournful.

Morgana leads Lancelot on stage left, and dresses him in a warrior's clothing. She introduces Lancelot to Guenevere, and Guenevere becomes easily dependent upon Lancelot, seeking comfort and to escape the world she knows is doomed to fail. Lancelot takes advantage of Guenevere's sadness to seduce her, and "unqueen" her, all as Morgana sits staring at the torch's flame. Arthur enters, sees the lovers, and Guenevere is undone. He puts her in her place just as he puts Morgana in hers during the first scene, but then realizes Lancelot is armed for battle. Morgana holds out a sword for Arthur; he and Lancelot fight and die, leaving the two women behind to clear the battleground. What follows is a duet between the women, who become like sisters despite their differences. Morgana shares her wisdom with Guenevere, and gives her back her position as queen.

What I have just described is only the basic structure of *Fata Morgana*. My choices for movement and text vocabulary add many layers to this plot. Every witness of the piece will have a unique interpretation of the characters' behavior; this is as I would prefer it to be. *Morgana* is full of allusions, some of which I planned deliberately, some of which were discovered by the cast. I believe art can take on a life of its own, and though *Morgana* was initially my creation, many people helped me realize it. All dance productions necessitate collaboration--between choreographers, performers, historical

texts, teachers/mentors (in my case both dance professionals and poets), costume designers, lighting designers, sound designers, set designers, etc.

Traveling Light took on a darker dimension as *Fata Morgana*; it became a retrospective of two past-lovers who have become the rulers of opposing ideologies. Morgana represents what I consider a feminine perspective, a sort of general acceptance of the world as a place where the boundaries between good and evil are not defined. In fact, Morgana's world lacks the opposition of terms such as good and evil, light and dark. She exists in shades of gray. Arthur, in contrast, pioneers the masculine (and Christian) idea of questing and self-depravity. He creates laws to demarcate what is right and what is wrong; he sends his knights out to destroy evil and search for ultimate salvation (the Holy Grail).

Morgana's world is one of vast, open spaces, long seasons flowing into each other, and an easy ebb and flow of night and day. Arthur, in contrast, lives in a castle with high walls built for defense. His world is either bright with artificial light, or as dark as a moonless night. I chose to cast Morgana as my primary character because she is the constant, the teacher in the work; it begins and ends with her image, floating up and down as if traveling on a wave. Arthurian scholars may recognize her as a replacement character for Merlin. But unlike Merlin, Morgana is aware of the flaws in Arthur's vision, and she does not try to prevent the fall of Camelot.

Some may interpret the piece as "Morgana's rage," claiming that she ruins Arthur because he has scorned her. I do not seek this interpretation, even though I consciously made her angry at the beginning and indicated her propensity for witchcraft. Morgana is angry when Arthur scorns her, and this shows that she is human and vulnerable. But she

does not deliberately destroy Arthur; she only allows him to be destroyed. She brings Lancelot to Arthur and Guenevere's territory and places Lancelot in Guenevere's path. But she does not tell Lancelot to seduce the queen or to kill Arthur. Furthermore, Morgana does not rejoice at the piece's end when Arthur and Lancelot die. She exhibits only a calm collection. Guenevere, however, cannot cope with the death of the king.

The differences between Morgana and Guenevere are fascinating. They both love Arthur and fear that his world cannot last. But when Arthur dies, Morgana wipes the blood from his face and moves on, while Guenevere remains paralyzed on the Wall. This disparity in personality arises from the fact that Morgana and Guenevere exist in different worlds. Guenevere comes from the masculine realm, a partner to Arthur in his quest for an ideal society. Instinct tells her Arthur will fail, and if he fails, so does she. She knows she cannot make right what is wrong, and so falls into despair. Morgana rules her own world and so will not suffer the consequences of Arthur's demise.

As mentioned previously, Hadrian's Wall separates North and South Britain, and was built in the Dark Ages by the Romans to keep out northern marauders. And so it is the perfect structure to symbolize the barrier between Arthur, High King (and Roman subject) of the Britains, and Morgana, a Pict matriarch. Hadrian's Wall is, literally, the set for Colby Dance Theater's presentation of *Fata Morgana*. John Ervin, aided by his Theater Production class, built the guise of a low lying stone wall that stretches almost the entire length of the stage. The backdrop for the piece is a projection of a photograph taken of Hadrian's Wall.

Morgana shows how different the worlds are, on either side of the Wall. Arthur's territory (stage right of the Wall) is a closed-in space—probably inside a complicated

castle. Morgana's space is larger, and fosters expansive, dramatic movement that indicates an outdoor setting, perhaps coastal. Morgana's "mist" and "wave" movement, in addition to several moments where waves underlie the sound score, help to associate her with the ocean. Yet Hadrian's Wall is not a coastal feature, so *Morgana* is not supposed to be set in a specific location in England.

In addition to being a story of Hadrian's Wall and the barriers that might separate a feminine perspective from a masculine one, *Fata Morgana* is the story of darkness falling on Arthur's Camelot. It supports the idea that an ideal world does not exist; like the flux of night and day, good and evil are inextricably entwined. For this reason, I indicate Morgana's ability to "see in the dark" or "see the dark falling." Arthur has created a world of light that is literally blinding, and so when he dies, dark falls on his world. Morgana's world has always had some darkness, so it is her role to ease Guenevere into this new existence. Connected to Arthur's ideal world is Christianity--Christian ideals are Arthur's ideals, and so *Fata Morgana* cannot escape being in part a criticism of this patriarchal religion. Morgana favors a polytheistic religion developed for an agrarian society, one with a more open-minded and nurturing philosophy.

While *Traveling Light* fostered the idea for a piece that culminates in the union of a child (young Arthur) and an aged man (Merlin), *Fata Morgana* culminates in the union of Morgana and Guenevere, two women from different worlds. Coming back to the image of the women united was a way for me to come back to reflections of my experiences growing up. As I watched my dancers develop this portion of the piece, I discovered the relationship between Guenevere and Morgana had begun to resemble the relationship between my sister and me. My sister is very much my father's daughter,

while I resemble my mother. As an adolescent, she feared she was growing up to become our father, who is often very ill-tempered and rough. She became suicidal, marked by a lack of hope for the future and a deep self-hatred. She blamed herself when my parents separated in 1997, while I had expected them to separate years before. Both of us suffered from the problems in our family, but I was always able to maintain a much greater level of emotional stability.

In recent years my sister and I have left behind what was once very a intense sibling rivalry. We support each other as we never could as children. After the turmoil of her giving birth, getting married, and getting divorced within one year—the same year our parents divorced—she has come to accept and admit her own neediness, and I have realized the significance of our relationship. So Morgana returns to her rival Guenevere at the end of *Fata Morgana*, and they forge a bond more lasting than that of any of the other characters.

My tutor Elizabeth Sagaser has repeated to me how she feels *Fata Morgana* is as much my story as Arthur's, as much my story as *Traveling Light*. She feels the piece is very much about divorce, and we laugh over the similar sounding words “marriage” and “mirage.” During the first months of the piece's development, I recall my tutor Tina Wentzel challenging me to face the darker side of my creative abilities, to choreograph something with an edge to it—an edge I had never demonstrated in previous movement works. After watching *Morgana* over and over again in rehearsal, and after discussing the piece with audience and cast members, I have begun to realize how many layers of interpretation exist within every movement and every word. I am happy to say that I think my goals for the project have been fulfilled.

Fata Morgana: The Characters

Morgana: a powerful but gentle woman, leader of a Pict tribe. The first wife and first love of Arthur. She may possess supernatural powers, but in general she is simply a woman with a wise view of the world, free of naïve idealism, recognizing the harmony of darkness and light. As Charlotte Smith calls the moon, Morgana is “soft Evening’s queen” (this was once a title I was considering).

Arthur: an innocent youth in charge of a newly-organized, newly-Christianized Dark Age kingdom. He wants, and believes it within his power to heal the world. He feels passionately for Morgana, but cannot comprehend unity between a pagan tribe and Roman civilization.

Guenevere: Arthur’s queen is a fine ruler, characterized by poise and outward authority. She is plagued, however, by her barren womb and the danger of Arthur’s ambition. She does not share Arthur’s naivete, yet her only reaction to her instinct is a fear of the future, and a belief that she is cursed. She is a fine queen, but this has made her a weak woman. Seeking to find her “womanhood” and escape trouble at court, she allows herself to fall for Lancelot.

Lancelot: kidnapped and raised by Morgana, Lancelot is a hollow man without a voice or a vice. Morgana is to Lancelot as Dr. Frankenstein is to Mary Shelley’s monster. He is her creation, but is not under her direct control. His love for Guenevere is honest, and his killing of Arthur is not vengeful; it is a result of his sharply-honed skill as a knight.

Fata Morgana: The Production

Text and Movement

My Senior Scholars project developed from my desire to explore text and movement. I wanted to combine dance and poetry into a single creative work, and the performance technique of text and movement provided an ideal place to start.

Fata Morgana uses text and movement in different ways: some text is spoken aloud with movement, some without. Some is recorded and played while the characters move on stage. I used recorded text for the piece's opening poem in order to give the impression of the voice coming from all angles—a godlike, omniscient voice. Shortly thereafter Arthur speaks his monologue on stage, making his voice (in contrast to Merlin's) real and vulnerable. Morgana's first words are also spoken on stage, but with movement; her entire body speaks her accusation: "You *left* me." All decisions for the usage of text in the piece were made for similarly deliberate reasons.

Costumes

Many who attended the performance of *Fata Morgana* during the Colby Dance Theater concert spoke to me in awe of the costumes. They were created specifically for my piece by costume designer Pamela Scofield and the Department of Theater and Dance's costume shop manager Lisa Caldwell. Pamela calls the look of the costumes to be pre-Raphaelite; she and I drew on several works of art to develop patterns for the garments.

I wanted period costumes—a medieval look—but did not want the costumes to be distracting. I planned for them to be simple and colorless, but with Pamela's input

they became detailed and beautiful. My singular apprehension about the costumes for *Morgana* were that they were too breathtaking, and this is why I changed the womens' garments for the outdoor performance (see "Beyond Strider Theater"). I enjoyed the luxury of having decadent costumes and then paring them down for a more minimalist performance. The costumes for the Strider Theater production of *Morgana* remain a work of art in and of themselves, as is shown in the video and the costume sketches.

Morgana and Guenevere needed long gowns. Morgana's has two layers--the first a very tattered gauze, the second a rough red homespun. Her neck is lined in fur, and her hair is a long, curly auburn wig. She begins the piece wearing a long red cape decorated with Pict symbols. From the Pict cape (the "strange mantle"—see "Arthur and the Strange Mantle" in *Works Consulted*) to the tattered dress to the unruly hair and bare feet, Morgana appears very much a woman of the earth. Lancelot, who also comes from Morgana's world, wears a beige linen shirt and a dark green tunic--a medieval costume for a common man. Arthur and Guenevere wear costumes denoting their royalty; Arthur's color is blue, and his sash is embroidered with gold. His leggings are flecked with silver, and he, as well as Guenevere, wears a simple crown. Guenevere's clothing is perhaps the most striking of the *Fata Morgana* costumes: she wears a beautiful purple crepe gown lined in gold lace, with balloon sleeves and a train.

Lights

Colby senior Chesley Davis designed lights for *Morgana*. Respecting my desire for a minimalist look that did not distract the audience from the text and movement, Chesley concentrated on dim side lighting that covered the performers, not the floor. She consciously avoided smothering the dancers in light. On the videotape of the performance, the darkness of the piece seems exaggerated; the tape does not do justice to the performance.

Set/Props

This piece marked my first opportunity to create a dance work with a set. I have already discussed the most important set element, the model and projection of Hadrian's Wall. Also contributing to the set was Morgana's bowl, a black basin marked with Pict symbols. Arthur's space is marked by his torch, denoting his search for "light" and giving his territory an interior setting. He also has a blue cushion with a cross painted on it, associating him with Christianity. Lancelot fights with a lance; Arthur with a sword given to him by Morgana.

What follows is a letter written to John Ervin describing my initial vision for the set of *Fata Morgana*. Only some of the elements discussed in this note were incorporated into *Fata Morgana*. The standing stone was removed, and the plan for the end of the piece (Morgana and Guenevere "marking" themselves) changed dramatically. This is included in order to show initial ideas; the video documents the final manifestation of the set.

2-12-01

Re: set design for "Fata Morgana"

Hi John,

The Arthur piece finally has a title, as you can see. I'm almost finished with the movement choreography. From this Sunday on, my rehearsals will be all-cast, and we'll be trying to put the piece together into one work (right now it's in sections). My set ideas are pretty specific, but they're definitely not "set."

I want to create the guise of a primitive British landscape. The piece is loosely based upon a conflict between pagan (northern, Pictish, feminine, "uncivilized"--Morgana) Britain and Arthur's (southern, Christian, masculine, "civilized") Britain. The stage left area is Morgana's territory; stage right is Arthur's. I'd like for the set to reinforce this separation between the two worlds.

Perhaps the most important set element I'm thinking of right now is a wall between stage right and stage left. This wall would be a representation of an actual place, Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, Great Britain. Hadrian's Wall was erected in the Dark Ages to protect the southern Brits from the old race of Picts--an elusive and dangerous tribe of pagan wanderers. I'd like it to look like a long, meandering wall that stretches from just downstage of center all the way back. I don't want it very tall--only about a foot and a half, though its height would probably vary to give the space depth/perspective. It would look like a wall constructed of rough gray bricks. Perhaps some would actually be "bricks," so that during the piece the wall could be damaged--bricks could fall off. One place on the wall has to be able to bear weight, because Arthur deposits both Morgana and Guenevere on top of the wall.

My first concept of a set consisted only of an object center stage that could bear weight. I pictured a standing stone or monolith that had some sort of protruding structure in front

that could be used as a table/bench. Arthur could set the women on the structure, and they would be framed by the standing stone. I also liked the idea of the standing stone having all sorts of pagan symbols carved into it, symbols that would be echoed in Morgana's costume.

So, I've abandoned the standing stone idea because the wall gives more of the impression of the characters inhabiting two separate regions. Also, the stone would really effect sight lines. But I still kind of like the stone idea, and I think it may be possible to still have a stone set somewhere in Morgana's territory, where it wouldn't be an obstruction. I want perhaps the effect that Morgana's region is outdoors--kind of a vast, barren landscape, while Arthur's area is closed-in, perhaps even indoors. If we had a stone in Morgana's territory, perhaps Arthur's could something to balance it out--a flag or banner? Or something else?

I hope this gives you a bit of an idea what I'm thinking about. I also need to talk to you about a couple other props. I want Arthur to have something that looks like a torch. He carries it on, then sets it down (so it needs to be free standing, or have a holder). Morgana needs a water basin--just a big black wooden bowl, I guess. It will have water in it during the piece. I also want Arthur to have a broadsword and Lancelot to have a "lance," and the women need knives...the piece ends with Morgana and Guenevere marking themselves with knives--Tina and I had talked about stage knives that leaked blood? I also was hoping to use fog? Is that possible?

I know most of this stuff probably sounds really whacko, but maybe it will seem more reasonable when I explain it in person. All my ideas are subject to change, of course, depending on what you think is realistic. Can we meet sometime to talk about this? My schedule is pretty flexible this semester. My only daytime commitments are to CDT and the Writers' Center on Monday mornings. Thank you for all your help (in advance)!

Erin

Sound

Fata Morgana could have been performed in silence; the movement I created was composed independent of music. However, I enjoy Celtic music and so was eager to incorporate it. The cast spent a lot of time “auditioning” the compositions I came across. John Ervin designed and compiled the sound score, placing sound effects (waves, drums) with music and text, recording and editing text, placing text over music, etc. John’s work helped everything fade together into a seamless presentation, both for the version of *Morgana* presented in Strider in March and the outdoor presentation in May. The music used in both performances is cited in the Bibliography.

Beyond Strider Theater

On Wednesday, May 2, 2001, I presented *Fata Morgana* outside, by the Hillside picnic tables near Johnson Pond. This final performance began after sunset, enhancing the theme of evening so often mentioned in the text. I recast the role of Morgana with Stephanie Spitko, the understudy for the piece. I later recast the role of Lancelot with Michael Cox, a Colby Dance Theater apprentice. The original Lancelot, Daniel Martin, tore his hamstring during a track meet the weekend before the performance.

For the outdoor presentation, Hadrian's Wall was removed from the set. This version of the piece had fewer boundaries separating Arthur's world from Morgana's. A fire was built in place of Arthur's torch, and Arthur poured water from Johnson

Pond into Morgana's bowl; the piece literally returned to elemental form, framed by earth, water, wind and fire.

The original costumes created for Morgana and Guenevere were not used in this performance; the characters dressed in simple, dark earth-tone garments. I wanted this presentation to have a more primitive Dark Age feel. The performers danced in bare feet, and much of the text of the piece was omitted. I was pleased to hear the reactions of my peers and professors following this presentation. Most of the audience members enjoyed witnessing the piece outdoors--some even more than within the confines of the theater. Strider, like most contemporary theaters, is designed with a proscenium arch that frames the performers and separates them from the audience. I moved the piece because I wanted a more intimate relationship between the cast and the audience. Furthermore, the proscenium style is Roman. As my piece dramatizes the conflict between Roman and pagan Britain (and eventually that the pagan culture prevails), it was even more necessary to remove *Fata Morgana* from the Strider stage to Johnson pond. Morgana became even more of a central identity for the work.

Script (March, 2001)

FATA MORGANA

*marked elements were omitted for the outdoor performance

1 *PROLOGUE

We hear a voice. Waves and drums throughout.

(voice of) MERLIN

I am an infant in this dark
age, this shadow space
at the end of time.

Or is this the beginning?

I can tell a story of love,
family, house, city, nation,
built in blocks by a boy
with visions of feasts and falconry.

Pax Romana, Camelot, the Age
of Chivalry, Enlightenment.
He pushed back Picts, Scots, Saxons,
even had Romans running.

This boy king, with his
Goddess queen,
her lover knight, and Morgana,
the faery-woman who rules us all.

Our story is not golden.

We are foster princes,
princesses, who learned
loss in the womb. We
inherited the masks we used
to seduce a country and pay
for our City of Light. Dark
are our dreams.

2 MORGANA SOLO with ARTHUR

Waves and drums continue. Morgana is moving slowly stage L corner in undulating light. Arthur rests on wall, "sleeping." Sees Morgana, gets up, moves, and addresses her from stage R space. Morgana moves further on stage, holding her cape on her shoulder, walking slowly.

ARTHUR
(Morgana isn't "real")

Sometimes I see you,
when water trembles in fire-light.
I see my lover pacing the shore
near where I first killed a man.

A means to an end,
I told you, that man's death,
and many more after.
No, you said; there is no

Means, and no end, to the blood
that seeps into the soul of this island.
Your song still makes me weep,
though I left long ago.

I knew then, and now,
the song you sing you sing
alone, for the moon and sea
But for no aspiring slave-king

like me. You belong
to no world of mine, no Camelot,
no kingdom where oceans tremble
in my city's light.

Morgana reaches down quarter stage L, pauses, music begins (Tapestry #5). Dances. Rolling on floor, she sees Arthur, gets up, runs, jumps on him. She is now real. They struggle. Arthur removes Morgana's cape; Morgana takes Arthur's sash. Music ends. Arthur deposits Morgana on wall. Exits stage right, picking up Morgana's cape, contemplative and guilty. Morgana, angry, grasps sash and performs stomping sequence. At the end, she speaks and moves:

MORGANA
You left me alone,
husband, summer lord, firelord,

The Beltane pit is cold.
You left me.

Our child-wealth is grown.
He asks for you.
What is this tallfolk word, *witch*?
Why do they beg me to burn?

We burned once, as Queen of May
and lord of summer, we danced
a Planting Moon into the black sky
gasps of fire showing the way.

There was no dark, that night,
but darkness ever since,

You left me.

Morgana exits stage L with hovering walk.

3 QUARTET

Music: Hope and Despair #7. Guenevere and Arthur enter stage R. Lancelot crouches, center stage L, unseen. Morgana enters from upstage L, same walking sequence as in solo. We hear her recorded voice:

*MORGANA

A dark theme keeps me here,
Though summer blazes in the vireo's eye.
Who would be half possessed
By her own nakedness?
Waking's my care--
I'll make broken music, or I'll die.

Ye littles, lie more close!
Make me, O Lord, a last, a simple thing
Time cannot overwhelm.
Once I transcended time:
A bud broke to a rose,
And I rose from a last diminishing.

I look down the far light
And I behold the dark side of a tree

Far down a billowing plain,
 And when I look again,
 It's lost upon the night--
 Night I embrace, a dear proximity.

Morgana continues solo material until she back-falls to floor. She slides back and grasps Lancelot's face in her hands. They move together; she is his master. He crouches; she holds his head in her hands; they freeze.

Arthur and Guenevere pace stage R, dance. When they begin to walk toward center, Lancelot picks Morgana up and carries her toward center. They line up center stage, dance grail material. All but Morgana exit toward corners; Morgana makes her way to the basin.

4 MORGANA AND ARTHUR DUET

Morgana sits down stage L, washing Arthur's sash in a basin of water. Arthur enters stage R with a torch and the cape, pacing in right angles. He stops when he reaches stage R apron and sets the torch and cape down. Morgana is wiping her face with the sash. Arthur stares into the torch's light, mesmerized, leaning closer and closer into it. Morgana brings the sash to her eyes. Arthur is blinded, brings his hands to his eyes and stumbles toward stage L. He falls down beside Morgana. She wipes his face with the sash, performs a "spell" and cures him of his blindness. She lays down behind him; he wakes and we hear his recorded voice:

ARTHUR

I knew you only
 by the glint on the water, reflected
 off some deeper, moving thing.
 I could not see you.
 I saw only the vacant waves, opening
 and slamming shut, slamming shut some
 floating door. and then from nowhere
 your palm, cool
 on my forehead, closing softly
 like the last word.
 Then I didn't know
 which side we were on--the water calm,
 too close to see or else too far--
 as if you'd wakened me
 from my dream, into yours.

They dance (Tapestry #15). Morgana jumps into Arthur's arms; they spin. He lets her down, and she exits stage L at a run. Arthur returns, contemplative, to his torch. We hear Morgana's recorded voice:

*MORGANA

I loved you once,
loved the way you
saw your world, a light
in dark towers.
You built your Camelot,
bright with this torch's light.

But when evening comes,
what will you do?
Will you hold this torch
out to me, or high above your head,
Above the heads
of those who follow you?

Will they be able to see
this light? Or is it just
a beam that blinds
them, burns them?
I can see in the dark, my lord.
I can see the dark,
falling.

5 GUENEVERE AND LANCELOT DUET

Guenevere enters, exchanges the torch with Arthur. Arthur exits; lights up on a mournful Guenevere on apron with torch. Morgana and Lancelot enter stage L; Morgana dresses Lancelot in battle clothes, then brings him to the Wall.

MORGANA

She is your queen. Bow

(Lancelot bows to Guenevere, but is still standing; Guenevere is oblivious. Morgana moves with her)

to her and accept
her accolades, her blessing,
maybe your curse. Oh,
her grace, she moves

in the chamber, on
the bed, like the breakers
on the shore at night.

Not quite silent.

(Guenevere is on the floor before Lancelot, grieving.)

*GUENEVERE
(to Lancelot)

I know my womb is barren.
I know all I ever loved
was delivered to me in a sac of blood.
Where is your Holy Grail?
What kind of alchemy is this?

Lancelot kneels before her. They dance (Legacy #10). Arthur enters while they are in a "guilty" position. Morgana stares away from the scene, toward the torch--stage R apron.

6 ARTHUR AND LANCELOT DUEL

Guenevere is put in her place by an angry Arthur. Arthur and Lancelot stare at each other. Lancelot takes up his lance. Morgana, as her recorded voice is heard, takes Arthur's sword and holds it out to her side.

*MORGANA

I sit by a low fire
Counting the wisps of flame, and I watch how
Light shifts upon the wall.
I bid stillness be still.
I see, in evening air,
How slowly dark comes down on what we do.

Arthur takes his sword. Series of fighting images.

7 GUENEVERE AND MORGANA DUET

Guenevere and Morgana are left onstage with the men's bodies. Guenevere is grief-stricken, staring and moving around the bodies. Morgana is calmly taking it in—she

puts on her cape, turns off the torch, wipes the men's faces, and joins Guenevere on the Wall.

MORGANA

(calm)

Far on the sands, the low, retiring tide,

GUENEVERE

(mournful)

In distant murmurs hardly seems to flow;

MORGANA

And over the world of waters, blue and wide,

GUENEVERE

The sighing summer-wind forgets to blow.

MORGANA

So sinks the day-star in the rosy West
and begins our long awaited night.

They dance (Tapestry #10), Morgana leading Guenevere, helping her.

MORGANA

We should mark the cursed,
So the people know. Why
do men come to us,
dreaming? As if dreams
come true, fast and sure
as blood in war.

After the fight is done,
the blood soaked in
or wiped away, we remain
in the play of light and dark and dreams
of kingdoms that sink into the sea.

Ends on apron, Morgana and Guenevere. Morgana repeats washing face material with Guenevere (sound fades to waves). Morgana rises, performs hovering walk to back away from the "sleeping" Guenevere, in same undulating light as beginning scene. Fade to black.

Costume Sketches

Costumes for *Fata Morgana's* première performance in the Colby Dance Theater Concert (March 15-17, 2001) were designed by Pamela Scofield, a professional designer from New York who works regularly with the Theater and Dance Department at Colby College. The garments were constructed by Ms. Scofield and Lisa Caldwell, Theater and Dance Costume Shop Manager. The sketches on the following pages were drawn by Ms. Scofield.

1. Morgana
2. Guenevere
3. Arthur
4. Lancelot

MORGAN

~~DATA~~ MORGAN



LACED UP
SIDE

COARSE RAGGED
SKIRT
UNDER



Image resized at a lower resolution.

C.D. 2084
COSTUME DESIGNER

SIGNATURE *Kimberly [unclear]*

FATA MARGANA

GUINEVERE



DROPPED WAIST
SEAM

LACE PANEL
F&B

Image resized at lower resolution.



C.D. 2084
COSTUME DESIGNER

Don Kahl

MORGANA

ARTHUR



LEG WRAPS
SLEEVE
LEGGINGS

Image resized at a lower resolution.



C.D. 2084
COSTUME DESIGNER
SIGNATURE *Carolina Schmit*

"FATA MORGANA"

LANEUT



Image resized at a lower resolution.



C.D. 2084
COSTUME DESIGNER

SIGNATURE

Samuel S. S. S.

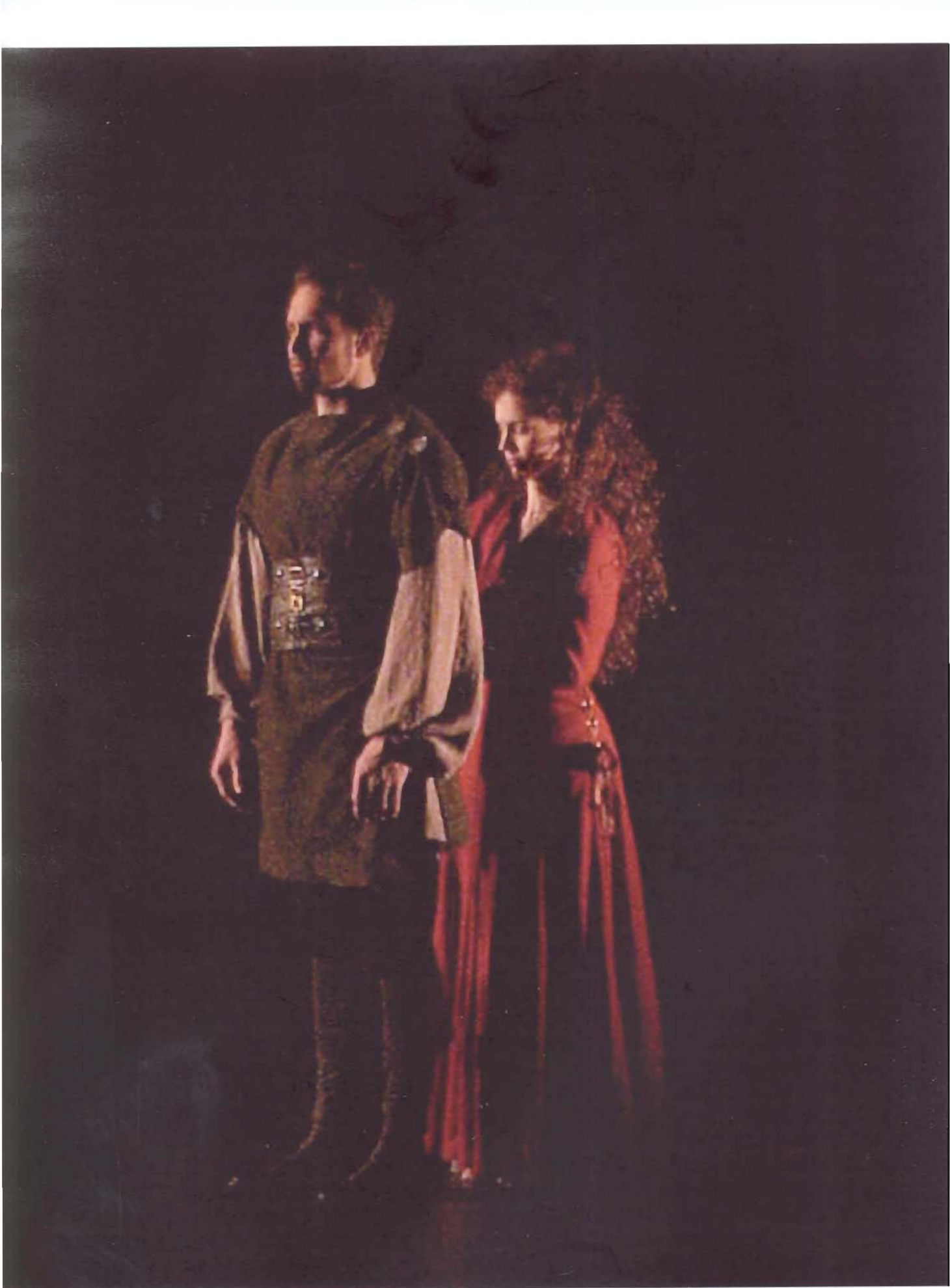
Archival Photography

The following photographs were taken by Professor Jim Thurston during performances of *Fata Morgana*, on the Department of Theater and Dance's digital camera. Plate 15 is a photo of Hadrian's Wall by Ian Britton, printed off the internet site <http://www.freefoto.com> during May, 2001.

5. Morgana and Lancelot
6. Guenevere at Torch
7. Morgana Dressing Lancelot
8. Guenevere Joins Lancelot
9. Guenevere and Lancelot on Wall
10. Arthur Takes His Sword
11. The Battle
12. After the Battle
13. Morgana Crowns Guenevere
14. Morgana and Guenevere
15. Hadrian's Wall





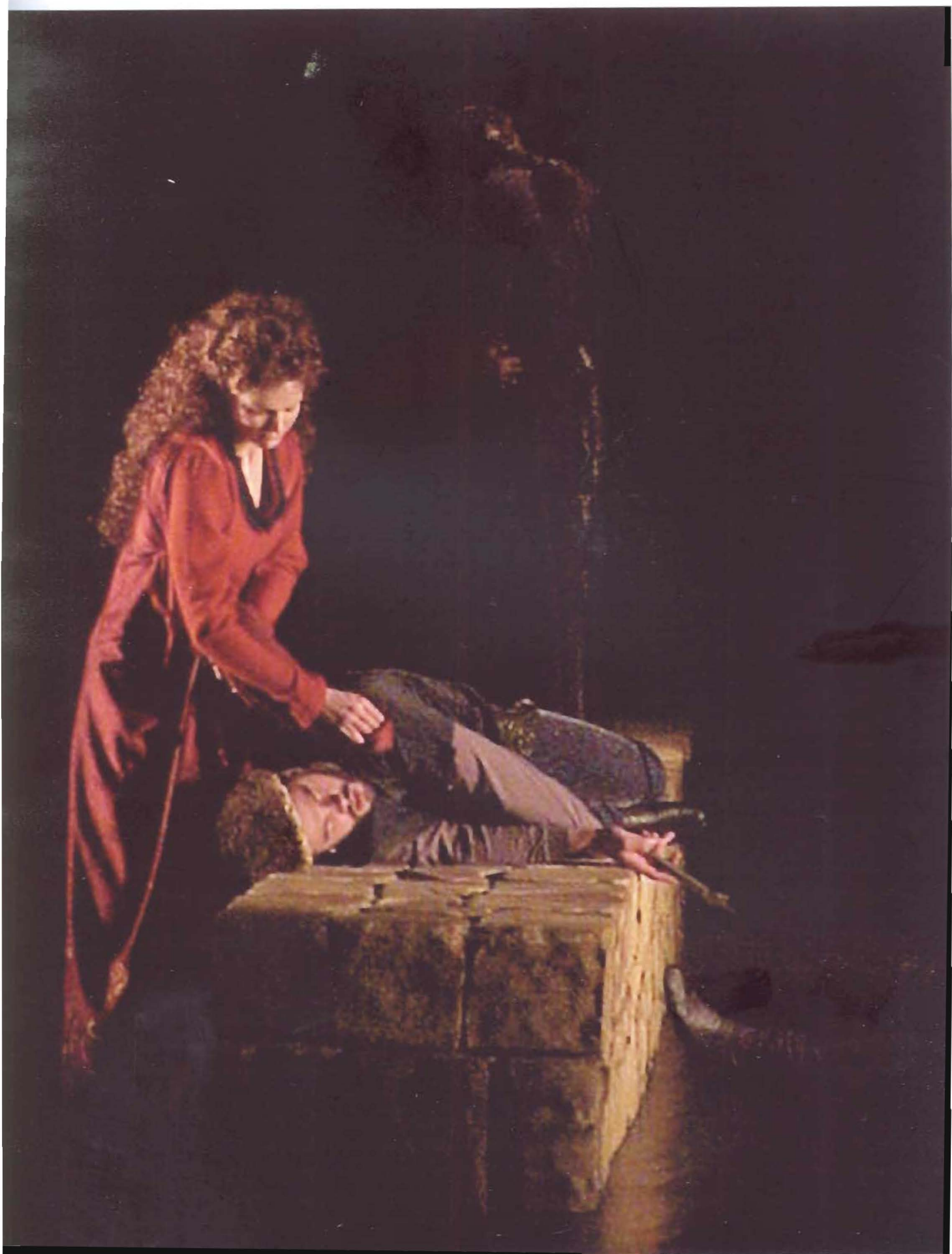


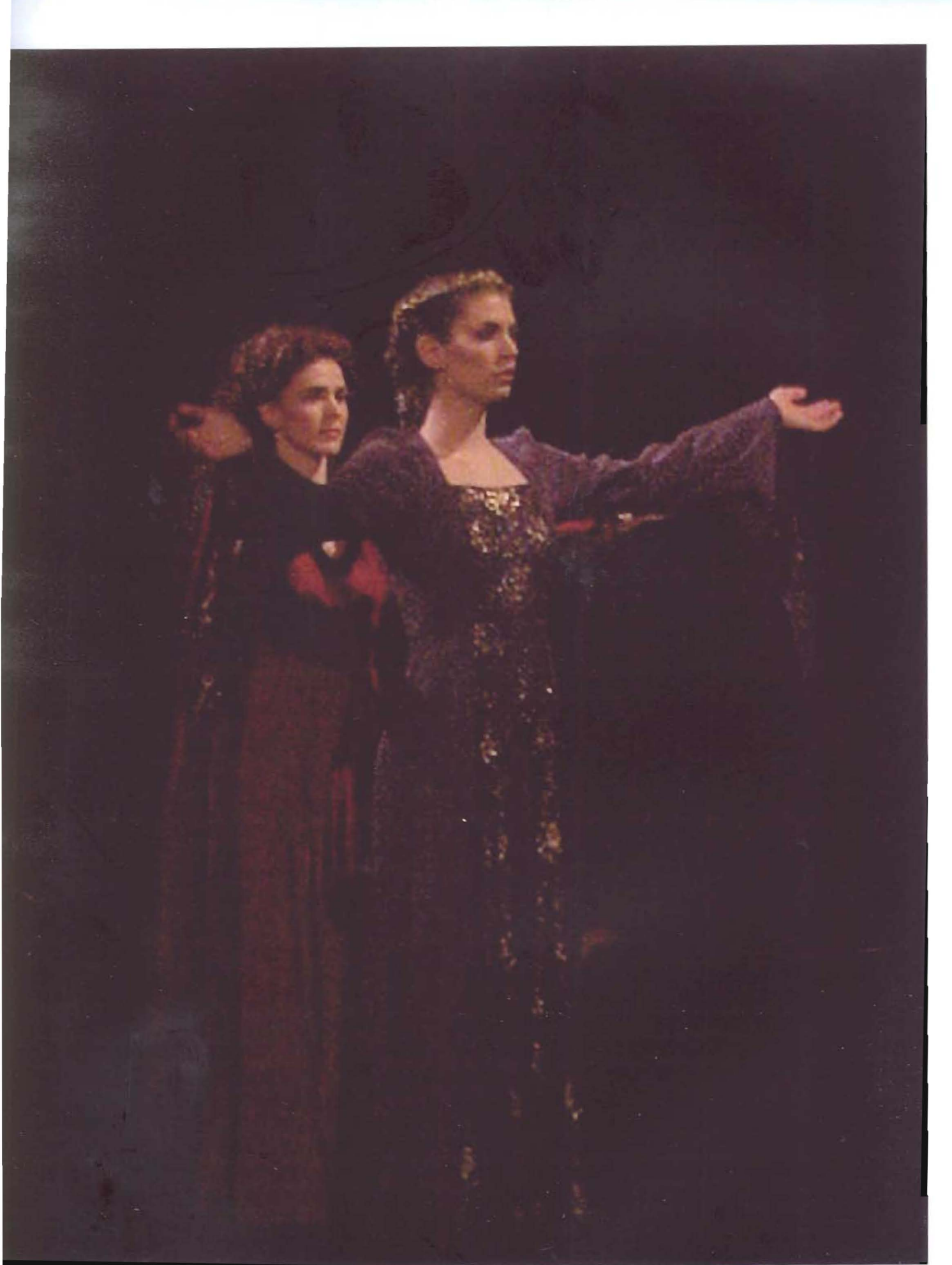


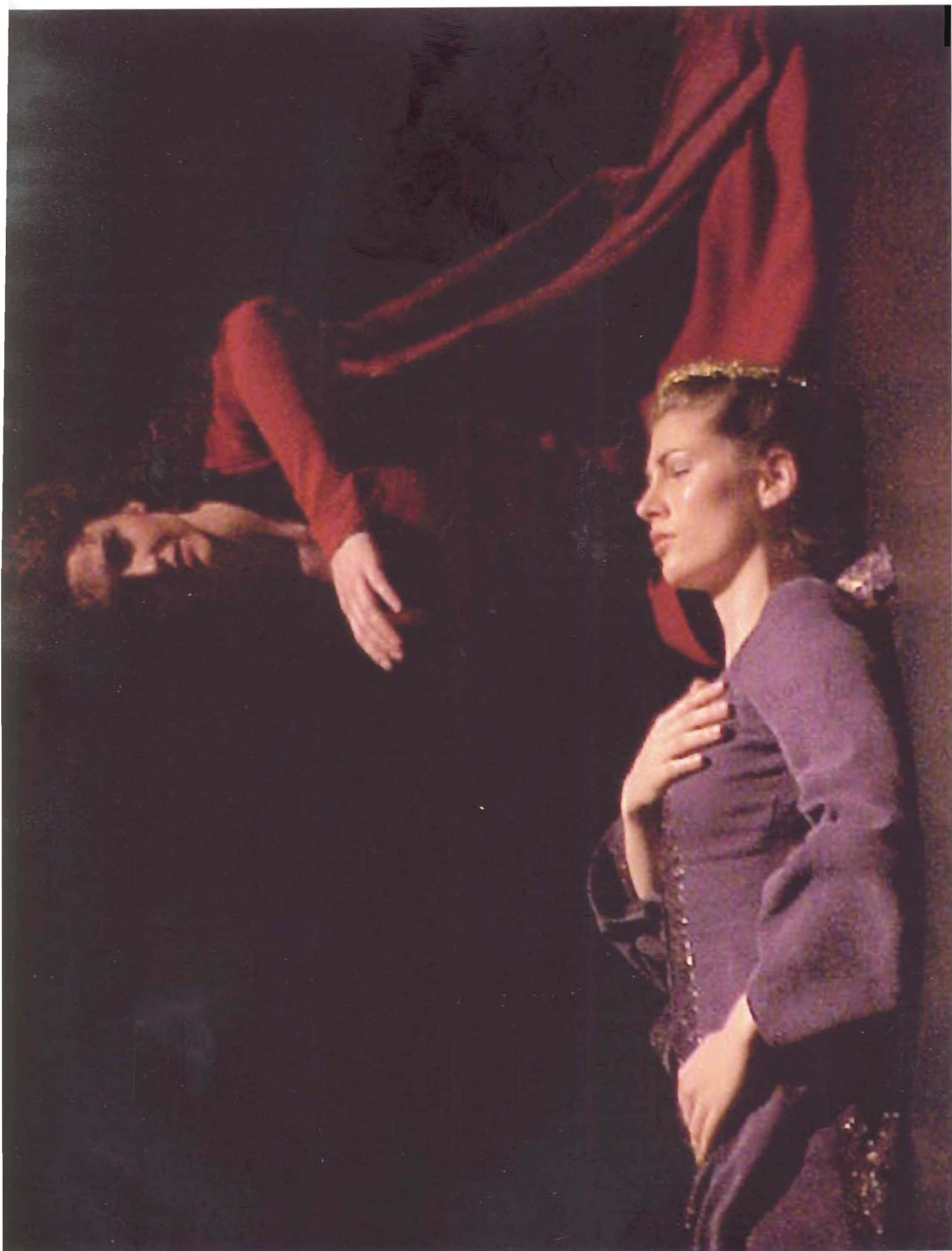














Works Consulted: Poetry

Most of the poems on the following pages (42-64) in the original are not included in this public electronic version for copyright reasons. The poets and titles are listed below in order of appearance in the original document.

** marked poems were used in performance

Robin Behn, "Late Search"***

Robert Bly, "Surprised by Evening"

John Ciardi, "Lancelot in Hell"

Robert Frost, "Once by the Pacific"

Silvia Plath, "Witch Burning"

Adrienne Rich, "Twenty-One Love Poems"

Adrienne Rich, "An Atlas of the Difficult World"

Theodore Roethke, "Meditation at Oyster River"

Theodore Roethke, "In a Dark Time"

Theodore Roethke, "In Evening Air"***

Charlotte Smith, "Written at the close of spring"

Charlotte Smith, "Written on the sea shore"

Charlotte Smith, "To night"***

Charlotte Smith, "Written at a church-yard at Middleton in Sussex "

Charlotte Smith, "To the invisible moon"

Charlotte Smith, "To oblivion"

Wallace Stevens, "The Idea of Order at Key West"

Sara Teasdale, "Guenevere"

EMILY DICKINSON

419

We grow accustomed to the Dark--
When Light is put away--
As when the Neighbor holds the Lamp
To witness her Goodbye--

A Moment--We uncertain step
for newness of the night--
Then--fit our Vision to the Dark--
And meet the Road--erect--

And so of larger--Darknesses--
Those Evenings of the Brain--
When not a Moon disclose a sign--
Or star--come out--within--

The Bravest--grope a little--
And sometimes hit a Tree
Directly in the Forehead--
But as they learn to see--

Either the Darkness alters--
Or something in the sight
Adjusts itself to Midnight--
And Life steps almost straight.

(Dickinson 88)

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Fata Morgana

O sweet illusions of song
 That tempt me everywhere,
In the lonely fields, and the throng
 Of the crowded thoroughfare!

I approach and ye vanish away,
 I grasp you, and ye are gone;
But ever by night and by day,
 The melody soundeth on.

As the weary traveller sees
 In desert or prairie vast,
Blue lakes, overhung with trees
 That a pleasant shadow cast;

Fair towns with turrets high,
 And shining roofs of gold,
That vanish as he draws nigh,
 Like mists together rolled—

So I wander and wander along,
 And forever before me gleams
The shining city of song,
 In the beautiful land of dreams.

But when I would enter the gate
 Of that golden atmosphere,
It is gone, and I wonder and wait
 For the vision to reappear.

(Longfellow 73)

Works Consulted: Arthurian Artwork

Images from the following plates influenced the development of *Fata Morgana*. Some of the physical positions, facial expressions, or thematic situations from these works of art were used in the piece. These images were printed from the following internet sites during May, 2001:

<http://www.camelot.celtic-twilight.com>
<http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/cphome.stm>
<http://www.mythicalrealm.com>
<http://www.taliesin.clara.net/gallery>

16. *Arthur and the Strange Mantle*, Aubrey Beardsley, 1893.
17. *Arthur Forgives Guenevere*. George Wooliscroft and Louis Rhead, 1898.
18. *End of the Quest*, Sir Frank Dicksee, c1900.
19. *How Mordred was Slain by Arthur, and How by him Arthur was Hurt to the Death*, Arthur Rackham, 1917.
20. *The King's Farewell*, Gustave Dore, 1866.
21. *Lancelot and Guinevere*, Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale, 1911.
22. *Last Sleep of Arthur in Avalon*, Edward Coley Burne-Jones, 1881-1898.
23. *The Magic Circle*, John William Waterhouse, 1886.
24. *Morgan le Fay*, Anthony Frederick Augustus Sandys. 1862-3.
25. *Morgan le Fay*, John Spencer-Stanhope.
26. *The Passing of Arthur*, Florence Harrison, 1912.
27. *Queen Guinevere*, William Morris, 1858.
28. *Study of Guinevere for Sir Lancelot in the Queen's Chamber*, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1857.

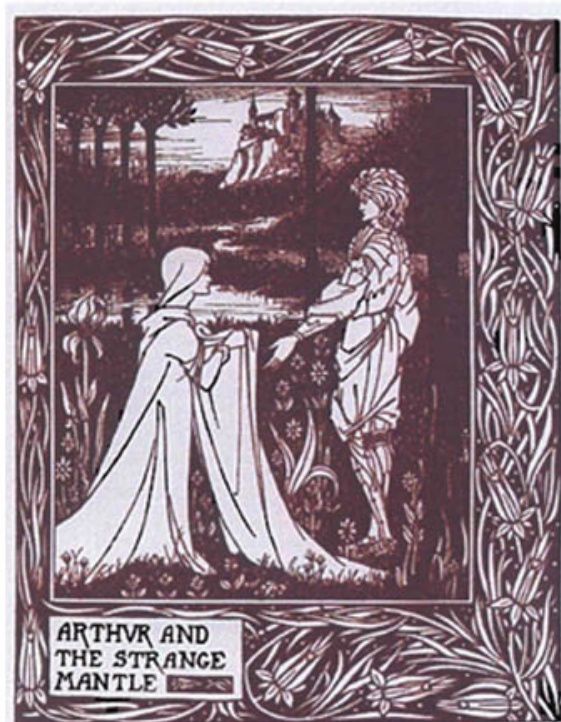


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Image resized at a lower resolution.



So like a shatter'd column lay the King

Mass D'Arthur

Image resized at a lower resolution.



Image resized at a lower resolution.



Image resized at a lower resolution.

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Publicity: Press Release

For Immediate Release Contact: Department of Theater and Dance 207-872-3388

Colby Dance Theater Premieres March 15-17

The Department of Theater and Dance at Colby College in Waterville will present the premiere performance of Colby Dance Theater, the college's repertory dance company. Performances will be held Thursday, March 15, through Saturday, March 17, at 7:30 p.m. nightly in Strider Theater of Runnals Performing Arts Center.

Colby Dance Theater (CDT) was created to perform the works of advanced student and professional choreographers. CDT's first performance will feature five compositions in contemporary dance, including: three works by director Holly Labbe Russell, visiting adjunct professor of theater and dance; a new work by Tina Wentzel, adjunct professor of theater and dance; and a piece by Colby senior Erin Rogers.

Russell, artistic director for the 19-member company, will present three works. The solo "2 a.m." will be performed by Wentzel. The quartet "FFA: Fairy Flight Academy," commissioned by the department of theater and dance, features four fairies trying to earn wings. "Betwixt and Between," co-created by Russell and a nine-member cast, focuses on human relationships. Russell, a 1994 Colby graduate, is a choreographer, teacher and performer from Augusta.

Wentzel's work, "Milonga," is a contemporary ballet for 11 dancers that draws inspiration from the tango. Wentzel's recent choreography includes "Jammed In," Dance Portland 2000's award-winning piece, and "Dreamwalk" co-choreographed with Russell.

“Fata Morgana” created by Rogers, is the result of an independent year-long senior honors project in poetry and dance. A dramatic quartet inspired by Arthurian legend, the work interprets the Christian-pagan Britain conflict during the Dark Ages.

General admission is \$3; students and seniors are \$2. For ticket information call the box office at 207-872-3358 between 4-6 p.m. Monday through Saturday of performance weeks. Or call 207-872-3388 between 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Tickets may be reserved online at www.colby.edu/theater.

Publicity: Program, Colby Dance Theater

Publicity: *Echo* Articles

29. "Senior Scholars pursue unique projects," Jennifer Coughlin, March 8, 2001.
30. "Colby Dance Theater mesmerizes audience," Mango Chin, March 22, 2001.



JEFF NICHOLS/THE COLBY ECHO

From left to right, Senior Scholars Erin Rogers, Michelle-Nicholle Rahmings, Binah Palmer, Raymond Mazza.

By JENNIFER COUGHLIN
FEATURES EDITOR

Colby's Senior Scholars Program is a college-wide initiative, established in 1953, that provides students with the opportunity to pursue an independent project during their senior year. Projects must be approved by the Independent Studies Committee in the spring of junior year, and candidates must have at least a 3.3 grade point average in their major. Participation in the Program releases the student from two courses or six credit hours per semester, and Jan Plan work on the project is optional.

Scholars select a faculty member to tutor them during the year, and meet weekly with that tutor to discuss progress made and problems encountered. Each project also has two readers, faculty members from one or more departments who evaluate the scholar's work at the end of the senior year. If the project merits better, it is deposited in the College

"I like it because I have more time each semester to do something that I am really interested in."

Raymond Mazza '01
Senior Scholar

mic year are Raymond Mazza, Binah Palmer, Michelle-Nicholle Rahmings, Erin Rogers, and Hannah Smith.

Rahmings is a theater major whose project is entitled, "The Colored Museum, Ethnic Theater: A Representation of African-American Culture, Reality or Stereotypes." She said that she opted for a Senior Scholars project instead of an honors project because Theater honors projects usually last only one semester, and she "wanted to go more in-depth. I wanted to do research based on sociological finding from the play's performance." Rahmings opted to work with "The Colored Museum" because "It raises interest-

ing questions about stereotypes and how we deal with them." It was on Broadway for about eight years and won a Tony Award. Rahmings is directing ten exhibits of the play, each with a different audience. Afterward she hosts panel discussions with audience members and tries "to figure out if the play helped people to understand stereotypes and the prejudices they may have." She uses these discussions as the basis for her sociological research on stereotyping and racial understanding.

Rahmings emphasized the importance of using subtlety in conducting her research. "Students aren't going to admit the prejudices they carry. So I ask questions like, 'who was your favorite character and why?' You can learn a lot from people's responses." The next performances of "The Colored Museum" will be performed again on Mar. 1, 2 and 3 at 8 p.m. in the Pugh Center.

Mazza said that he decided to pursue a Senior Scholars project because he knew he would have a lot of free time senior year. He is a computer science and physics double major and "hadn't thought of doing a project until

my advisor brought it up. I like it because I have more time each semester to do something, that I'm really interested in."

Mazza's project is called, "Building an Interactive Three-Dimensional World." His goal is to "construct a large-scale, three-dimensional virtual world that a user can explore and interact with...I wanted to learn and make use of recent techniques and state-of-the-art tools to develop an entertaining product for the inquisitive mind."

Using the programming languages C++ and OpenGL, Mazza designed an outdoor environment with trees, lakes, mist, and castles with art galleries, among other things. It is built out of differently shaped polygons, and required math and geometry to configure.

"This project is most appropriately a Senior Scholar project because of the time necessary to complete an endeavor of such magnitude," Mazza said. "It's very versatile. Honors projects are usually theses, but a Senior Scholars project can be anything—there is much more flexibility and more time as well."

Senior Scholars projects need not be research papers, whereas most departmental honors projects do.

Rogers, an English major with a love of dance, also opted for a performance project. She wrote and choreographed a contemporary ballet that she titled, "Sata Morgana," which is the Italian name for Morgan LeFey, a character important in Arthurian legend.

"Sata Morgana" is Rogers' interpretation of the Arthurian romance, which, she says, "is always being rewritten. I think the various interpretations reflect the era that it's written in, and reveals much about the author. I intentionally made the ballet to have lots of possibilities and insinuations."

The focus of her project is the 30-minute performance of "Sata Morgana," scheduled as part of Colby Dance Theater, Mar. 15-17. An additional component of the project is a retrospective critique of the performance in which she will also discuss her research and sources. Rogers considered writing an honors thesis, but did not want "to sit behind a stack of books. I wanted to create something, and this is my way of doing both."

Rogers' tutors are Christine Wentzel, Professor of Theater and Dance, and Elizabeth Sagaser, Assistant Professor of English. Rogers says that Wentzel was a logical choice for a tutor and that she chose Sagaser because of her background in both Renaissance poetry and ballroom dance.

When asked about the flexibility the program provides, Rogers said, "You do have to have a good idea of what you're doing, but ultimately, it's all up to you—you set your schedule and your goals."

by Dance Theater mesmerizes audience



JEFF NICHOLS (ABOVE), AMITY BURR (RIGHT)/COLBY ECHO

of detailed costumes, complex dance steps, and subtle acting portrayed the stories of *Morgana*, and *Fairy Flight Academy*.

CHIN

15-17, the Colby Theater and Dance at Colby Dance Theater. Colby's new repertory company delivered a very nice.

ded to the Theater and in 2000-2001 and the opportunity for study advanced technique and to partake in this process from a inception through its its performance," said Russell, the artistic director.

te in CDT, one must class in the fall.

of prior dance experience is allowed to audition," '01.

ances were learned and steps were improvised at the auditions. The about two hours and to create an atmosphere openness by the teacher technique course ing professor, and Tina rent professor of dance

the big performance the company was raring h five very different graphed by Russell, Senior Scholar Erin e art of dance-theater to the audience.

impressed, and for the

first time I really understood what dance-theater was. It's not just watching people dance but also act," said Christina Ramos '04.

This was especially evident in *Milonga*, *Fata Morgana*, and *Fairy Flight Academy*. *Milonga* is a piece about the origins of Argentinean tango in the 1800s in the outer barrios of

I WAS ABSOLUTELY ASTOUNDED BY CDT'S FIRST PRODUCTION. THE ORGANIZATION AND CREATIVITY PUT INTO EACH PIECE WAS EFFORTLESS. NO EFFORT WAS WASTED.

Buenos Aires. Incorporating the history of the *compandritos* (the "street thugs", played by Steve Creighton, Coy Dailey '01, Guito Joseph '03, Laurits, and Daniel Martin '01) and the women of the local brothels (played by Brinyer Alltucker '01, Elizabeth Holmes '04, Julie Finn '03, Rogers, Russell, and Dana Wheeler '04), the *lifeline* of *Milonga* was presented to the audience in a gorgeous array of colors, light, and movement.

Fata Morgana, meaning *Morgan le Fay* (a name given to mirages seen at sea) was interesting in that it included poetry and spoken text as well as dance.

"It was fantastically put together

about *Morgan le Fay* and her plan to destroy Camelot and ruin Arthur. The piece revolves around the past relationship between Arthur and Morgana and the fact that they were once lovers, but he left her in search of his dream and his queen," said Laurits, who acted as Arthur in the piece.

The costumes for this piece really brought the time and place on stage, especially the dresses made for Morgana (Russell) and Guenevere (Sarah Bandow '03). A slow-motion sword fight between Laurits and Martin was even choreographed into the piece—a semi-exciting event.

Fairy Flight Academy, which was definitely the humorous piece of show, was a hilarious interpretation of five fairies (each with rather distinguishing personalities) attempting to earn their wings.

"I was the silly fairy (Findlepick), who tried to hide the fact that she was nervous about getting her wings and actually tried to sabotage her chances of getting them," said Desiree Davis '04. Here, the color of lights had a very noticeable effect throughout the piece.

My personal favorite, though, was *Betwixt and Between*, a piece that was danced to music by John Lurie and The Lounge Lizards.

"*Betwixt and Between* was all about human interaction and the different ways that human bodies can be woven, knotted, and bound together," said Wheeler. Even their costumes, strips of cloth floating and twisting and knotted, reflected this idea.

As an audience member, I was absolutely astounded by CDT's first



production. The organization and creativity put into each piece was evident. No effort was wasted, as each part, lighting by Associate Chair of Theater and Dance Jim Thurston, Will Tackaberry '01 and Chesley Davis '01; the stage by David Benetello '01; cos-

tumes by Lisa Caldwell '04 and Pamela Scofield; and choreography, fit together to make one big, bodacious show.

The students would like to thank the whole production crew, especially Russell and Wentzel. They also ask for those who really enjoyed the show to

support their efforts in keeping vi professor Russell on campus, I would be a shame to lose some talented as Holly, and who I b has touched all of our lives in di ways," said Davis.

Correspondence

Budget Proposal, Student Special Project Fund
January, 2001
Erin Rogers

"Soft Evening's Queen" is the working title for my Senior Scholar's Project, a 30-minute dramatic presentation combining original poetry and contemporary dance. Providing guidance for the project are professors from the Theater and Dance department (Tina Wentzel) as well as English (Elizabeth Sagaser). The presentation is based upon and inspired by my study of Arthurian legend in fiction, poetry, and criticism. The project will be presented along with three faculty dance works in the inaugural concert of Colby Dance Theater, March 15-17, 2001. An outdoor performance of the project will be presented in May.

I am requesting funds for costuming only. Funds for the piece's lighting, set, props, and sound will be provided by the Department of Theater and Dance's budget for Colby Dance Theater. Because of the faculty works involved, and because "Soft Evening's Queen" will be presented outside of Colby Dance Theater (as an independent work), the Department of Theater and Dance cannot provide all of the funds necessary for the project.

The work will be performed by four characters. I am requesting \$100 for each character's costume. Some costumes will consist of several different elements.

| <u>Character</u> | <u>Funds Requested</u> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Guenevere | \$100.00 |
| Arthur | \$100.00 |
| Morgan | \$100.00 |
| Lancelot | <u>\$100.00</u> |
| Total Funds Requested \$400.00 | |

Colby College

4781 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, ME 04901-8847



Edward H. Yeterian
Vice President for Academic Affairs
and Dean of Faculty

Audrey Wade Hirtinger Katz and Sheldon Toby Katz
Distinguished Teaching Professor of Psychology

January 11, 2001

To: Erin Rogers
Box 7586
Colby College

From: Edward H Yeterian, Dean of Faculty

Subject: Student Special Project Funds Granted

The Account Number Assigned to you is: 02.2690.XXXX.6827

The amount of funds granted: \$400.00

I am pleased to inform you that the Committee to Fund Students' Special Projects has agreed to award you a total of \$400.00 to help with the cost of your Project:

Soft Evening's Queen

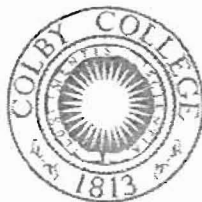
Please keep a careful record of the expenditures (providing documentation such as bills, receipts, etc.), obtain a Purchase Order from the Purchasing Office in Eustis for any and all materials, and report them to Jenny Roy, Administrative Secretary in this office who will then send invoices or submit reimbursement requests to the Accounts Payable Office.

EHY/jr

cc: Accounts Payable
Admin. Services
Wentzel/Sagaser

Colby College

5260 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, ME 04901-8852



Department of English

phone 207-872-3295
fax 207-872-3806

February 20, 2001

Paul Machlin, Chair
Independent Study Committee
Music Department
Colby College

Dear Paul,

I am delighted to report that Erin Rogers's readers, Peter Harris and Jim Thurston, her other tutor, Tina Wentzell, and I think her project is evolving beautifully and should be supported through its completion this spring. As Jim Thurston reports, "I have full confidence in Erin (as I always have) and have no reservations about her work as a Senior Scholar. Erin continues to inspire all of us with her maturity, focus, creativity and sense of the organic, collaborative process."

Erin is now thoroughly involved in production--full-cast rehearsals, set and costume design, sound, lighting. Her poetic text is almost complete; she has been revising the last version with more focus on lineation, and she is reconsidering some diction from earlier drafts now that her characters and their motivations have developed.

Erin has renamed the project "Fata Morgana" (Morgan of the Faeries--also an Italian phrase for "mirage"), and though it is in some ways very different from the project entitled "Travelling Light" that she proposed last spring, the work is a fascinating extension of these original ideas. The ideas first took shape last year as a group of lyric poems exploring her journey away from, and continued connections to, a broken, complex immediate family. Her decision to situate her movement/poetry piece within Arthurian mythology may in fact have freed her to explore her subject more complexly. In particular, "Fata Morgana" seems to be about divorce after all: it takes place in the aftermath of Morgana and Arthur's love relationship and is about grief as well as destiny--the recognition that having come from such different worlds in the first place, Morgana (the native, Northern, faerie pict) and Arthur (the southern Christian military knight) were destined to separate. The piece also explores the autonomy, resilience, and creative power women, and of course, it explores ways that verse and movement can challenge and elaborate on each other.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sagaser
Assistant Professor

cc: Erin Rogers
Tina Wentzell
Jim Thurston
Peter Harris

Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2001 09:35:35 -0500
To: egrogers@colby.edu
From: "Paul S. Machlin" <psmachli@colby.edu>
Subject: Fata Morgana
Cc: ehsagase@colby.edu, cmwentze@colby.edu

Hi, Erin -- Sue and I had the very great pleasure of attending the Colby Dance Theater last night (Friday), and we enjoyed and were moved by all that we saw. So I want to commend you first (in my capacity as chair of the Independent Study Committee) for a superb realization of your senior scholar project. It strikes me that what you've done is precisely what the program should be about: conceiving and bringing to fruition a complex, intense, sophisticated, major piece of work in all its many dimensions. Congratulations!

We also enjoyed watching you and your colleagues dance in Tina's "Milonga" and Holly's "FFA" -- both great fun and technically challenging (or so it seemed to me, at least--though I am pretty untutored in matters danceable!) As individuals and as a coordinated group, you all seemed to move with energy, grace, and precision.

In any event, I hope that your experience as a senior scholar has been a fulfilling one, and that you will share your success in the program with other students in order that they, too, may see possibilities in it for their educations that they might not otherwise realize exist.

Thanks again for a great evening!

Cordially,
Paul Machlin, Chair
Independent Study Committee

Paul S. Machlin
Arnold Bernhard Professor of Music
Colby College
Department of Music
5676 Mayflower Hill
Waterville, ME 04901-8856

psmachli@colby.edu
off: 207/872-3242
fax: 207/872-3141

Date: Sun, 18 Mar 2001 11:49:51 -0500
 To: egrogers@colby.edu
 From: Elizabeth Sagaser <ehsagase@colby.edu>
 Subject: Re: "a great moment in Colby theatre"

Hi again, Erin!

I did go back last night--just for your piece. I saw it from the balcony, which was really fun. This time, I thought it was even more of a pleasure to watch and listen to, perhaps because I was alone and I felt sneaky--sneaking out after Julia fell asleep--but mostly because I had the piece in my head well enough to be able to look forward to and really concentrate on certain parts, and to notice things I hadn't noticed before.

This time, I really enjoying how lulling and mesmerizing the piece is--the words, music, and movement unite to capture and slow down the viewer's attention, and transport the viewer to a more intense place than he or she might have wanted to go! I was so involved this time, I got tears in my eyes. Holly does an excellent job with your text, and of course with your choreography. I think you triumphed in your rewriting of the torch metaphor--the new emphasis on holding it above the people and the question of whether or not that will be illuminating or blinding for them seems to me important to the whole piece. And I love Morgana saying she can see in the dark.

I also noticed this time the motif of holding, how the characters are often in a position of holding or being held (and often being caught). I'm using some object-relations theory (a branch of psychoanalytic stuff, lead by Klein and Winnicott, two psychologists who specialized in child development) and the concept of holding is very important. Winnicott suggests that to grow and to be creative, a child needs a holding environment--one in which the mother is there "to cover the risks" though she might be doing her own thing. I've been thinking about holding from the literal holding of infancy to the holding environment of childhood to more abstract kinds of holding environments we might create for ourselves in adulthood.

OH--you asked about Milonga-- I loved it, though i would say it didn't hold as many surprises for me as some of the other pieces. I love tango music, and this selection was fabulous. You were GREAT--what a difficult role in terms of dance and acting--but you had total self-possession and were just beautiful.

I hope you enjoy your triumphantly weary muscles and mind today. We'll talk

soon about your permanent presentation of your piece--the video, a typescript, and? Perhaps some photos, if there are some.... Certainly the program.... I am sending out the routine mid-term report to Paul and will cc you and the readers. It's exciting I can write about the successful premiere now!

see you soon-- bravo,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Sagaser
Assistant Professor
English Dept.
Colby College
Mayflower Hill Dr.
Waterville, ME 04901

Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2001 12:36:39 -0500
 To: egrogers@colby.edu
 From: Elizabeth Sagaser <ehsagase@colby.edu>
 Subject: ** CONGRATULATIONS! **

Hi Erin!

I wanted to email you yesterday, but it was a crazy day of morning meetings and then kidstuff, culminating in the Montessori School ST.Patrick's Day Concert (and parents' Irish dancing contest-- I won! (o:))

I have been thinking about "Fata Morgana" repeatedly since I saw it. It is haunting and lovely in my mind; you really created a powerful piece, and I didn't mean to say it was all dark. It was austere, yes, but the representation of female strength was inspiring. Holly was perfect, and Sarah triumphed, too, I thought, and danced beautifully with Holly.

To my mind, you represent an old story ("old" in both the sense of ancient and partly in the sense of replayed over and over again between men and women, men and men, women and women) with measure and a kind of creative patience that is fascinating. Morgana's line, "Why do they come to us with their dreams?" was so well-timed and well-delivered.

I also loved the beginning: Holly spoke the "you left me" lines beautifully, and they were key to making her character so complex. In those lines, she is so human and sympathetic; however much she seems like invulnerable and superhuman later in the piece or a force of nature, we know how human she is, and that her strength is no accident, but born of her vulnerability.

It was thrilling, too, to see the text I was familiar with fully dramatized on stage. I hadn't realized that would be so exciting.

By the way, I love your choice of an epigram for the piece in the program: it's absolutely perfect.

My friend Carrie said her favorite part of the whole Colby Dance Theatre production was the duet with Morgana and Gueneviere), and also, she thought your piece seemed so professional, she would never have guessed it was a student's work. I saw Ted Underwood this morning, and he also said he thought the duet was beautiful. He went to the performance mostly out of fascination that a Charlotte Smith poem would be in it. He was impressed with how well it worked!

I am hoping to sneak out tonight and see "Fata Morgana" again-- I really want to; I probably won't be able to stay for FFA, so you probably wouldn't see me afterwards--but I hope to make it!

Good Luck tonight! Enjoy your success!

Love,

Elizabeth

p.s. Your dancing is MOST impressive. WOW. Also, your acting is beautiful.

Elizabeth Sagaser
Assistant Professor
English Dept.
Colby College
Mayflower Hill Dr.
Waterville, ME 04901

Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2001 14:35:39 -0500
To: egrogers@colby.edu
From: Elizabeth Sagaser <ehsagase@colby.edu>
Subject: "a great moment in Colby theatre"

Hi Erin,

I just had to write again to tell you I talked to Paul Machlin on the phone today, and he is exuberant about your piece. Our discussion included the compliment from him in the subject line above. Also, I thought you'd think it was cool that two professors were excitedly analyzing your work; we exchanged some interpretations!

I hope you are getting a little sleep this weekend.

Buona fortuna,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Sagaser
Assistant Professor
English Dept.
Colby College
Mayflower Hill Dr.
Waterville, ME 04901

Date: Sat, 17 Mar 2001 14:37:06 -0500
To: glcolema@colby.edu
From: Elizabeth Sagaser <ehsagase@colby.edu>
Subject: title change for Erin Rogers's senior scholar project
Cc: egrogers@colby.edu, psmachli@colby.edu

Hello George,

I just noticed in the guidelines for senior scholar projects that you must be notified if a senior scholar changes the title of her project after she originally registers for senior scholar credit.

Erin Rogers originally called her project "Travelling Light," but mid-way through the project changed the title to "Fata Morgana."

She is presenting "Fata Morgana" most successfully this weekend as part of Colby Dance Theatre's premiere performance.

thanks,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Sagaser
Assistant Professor
English Dept.
Colby College
Mayflower Hill Dr.
Waterville, ME 04901

Date: Sun, 18 Mar 2001 17:32:23 -0500
To: egrogers@colby.edu
From: Wesley McNair <wcmcnair@colby.edu>
Subject:

Hi, Erin -- I was at the show last night and wanted to say congratulations for your unique retelling of Morgan Le Fay's story. I thought the text you wrote and the dance you choreographed flowed together as one thing, spare and haunting. Thank you for inviting me. -- Bouquets to you, Wes

March 19, 2001

Paul Machlin, Chair
Independent Study Committee
Music Department
Colby College

COPY

Dear Paul,

Here is the mid-semester report of Erin Rogers's senior scholar project, "Fata Morgana."

As you know, Erin's movement/poetry piece is successfully premiering this very weekend, March 15-17, as part of the premiere performance of Colby Dance Theater in Runnals Auditorium. The show was sold out last night and is sold out again tonight.

Erin completed her text after months of writing original poetry as well as 'sampling' other poems and lines. Her ideas are bold and eclectic: her own voice drives the script, but she elegantly incorporates poetry by Robin Behn, Theodore Roethke, and the eighteenth-century poet, Charlotte Smith.

As Tina will report, Erin has also been intensely involved in choreographing the piece and in coordinating all aspects of its production.

I admire how disciplined Erin has been in completing this complex project. She worked hard this summer drafting poems, reflecting on Arthurian myth and the nature of myth in general, and exploring approaches to text/movement performance. By September, she had compiled diverse inspiring images and poems in a large binder to help her refine her ideas. She cast her piece and began rehearsals with a realistic sense of the time and commitment involved in production. She met with me regularly through the fall, always with new work and revisions to show me and new ideas to discuss. Through January and this semester, she has worked hard daily to realize her project on stage.

"Fata Morgana" is haunting and beautiful. To my mind, it suggests an old story ("old" in both the sense of ancient and in the sense of replayed over and over again between men and women, men and men, women and women), yet it suggests this story with patience, measure, and a complex, generous spotlight on female power.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sagaser
Assistant Professor

cc: Erin Rogers
Tina Wentzell
Jim Thurston
Peter Harris