

**Director's Vision**  
**By Rob Ruggiero**



**What is your vision for *Camelot*?**

The challenges of *Camelot* are simultaneously thrilling and (I must admit) a bit intimidating. Some might argue that Lerner and Lowe have taken on one of the most powerful and ambitious themes in the history of musical theater: the Legend of King Arthur and his vision for a “new order,” a political ideal called Camelot. It is my hope that this production of *Camelot* will distinguish itself from other productions by staying focused on the complex and layered relationships of King Arthur, Guenevere, and Lancelot rather than trying to articulate some epic idea that might swallow up those relationships in spectacle and theatricality.

It is in the articulation of the *humanity* of these characters that can bring about a real connection to the larger story, and affect us on a more personal level. The dramatic impact of intense love, friendship, betrayal, honor, commitment, and sacrifice are very provocative and potent themes to manage, especially in a musical. But *Camelot* is full of really wonderful writing, sophisticated conflicts, beautiful music, and universal themes which audiences find very appealing. There is nothing better than a musical that both entertains and challenges us emotionally and intellectually. Needless to say, I am very excited about how our cast and creative team will be approaching this timeless musical.

In her book *Home: A Memoir of My Early Years*, Julie Andrews wrote some very inspiring and insightful thoughts on the creation of *Camelot*:

“Like an exquisite tapestry that captures the heart of anyone who gazes upon it, *Camelot* cast its mantle over us all, binding and enfolding craftsmen, actors, musicians, technicians. There is an indefinable, indelible, aura about the show that sprang from the book and its important themes of chivalry, honor, love, idealism, and hope.”

This memory and these thoughts live in me as a reminder and a constant inspiration while working on this production here at Goodspeed.

**Why do you think Goodspeed audiences will enjoy the show?**

At the end of Act One, Arthur contemplates a very critical and burning question:

“Can passion be selected?”

I think Goodspeed audiences will connect with this *Camelot* for many reasons, starting with the power of the love story itself. The intense passion of this unique love triangle is both incredibly moving and inspiring. It is the integrity of these three characters that will allow audiences to empathize with their story. The larger message of *Camelot* also especially rings true in the current political climate. The power of hope for our future, and the idea that real vision can survive in the wake of fear and doubt is one that has inspired audiences for decades. Many of us remember the Kennedy “Camelot,” and how it came to symbolize his work and his presidency. This has now re-emerged with the current administration. The unforgettable words of *Camelot* continue to live in our hearts forever:

“Don’t let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment, that was known as Camelot.”

It’s a story that is truly timeless - a story for all ages, and one that has endured the true test of time. It is this unique love story as well as its incredibly captivating book and musical numbers, which will hopefully make this production a very compelling and unforgettable evening in the theater.

**Tell us about the cast – how you chose them and what the audience can expect to see.**

Classically, the role of Arthur always ends up being portrayed by an older actor. However, I really wanted to cast the production more in the spirit of the original production (and the original story itself) in which Arthur, Lancelot and Guenevere are presented as contemporaries. I feel this will not only strengthen the power of the story and our production, but also honor the spirit of the legend more accurately. These are very challenging roles to cast, and I am delighted we have secured the talents of some really wonderful actors. Bradley Dean brings a passionate edge to Arthur - a depth and many unique colors that I feel will make his interpretation of this classic role very special indeed. Broadway veteran Erin Davie’s Guenevere will be refined, well-bred, intelligent, fun and distinct – both reflective of the signature essence Julie Andrews brought to the role, but also uniquely her own. Maxime de Toledo was born and raised in France, so he brings an authenticity and sensuality to Lancelot that I think cannot help but charm and impress our audiences. In addition, Ronn Carroll (who was delightful as Ben Franklin in our production of *1776*) will bring his impressive comic abilities and great heart to the role of Pellinore. These fine performers along with an incredibly strong ensemble make up our production of *Camelot*. I continue to feel very fortunate to be able to collaborate with the level of talent offered by each cast, our designers, theater artisans, and technical staff here at Goodspeed Musicals. Truly some of the best in the country.