

Early 19th-Century literary legacy restored

Craigcrook Castle in Edinburgh's Blackhall, which once hosted the most exclusive literary gatherings in the history of Scotland's cultural life, will reprise its role as a centre for cultural commentary. Lucy Nordberg's 'King Arthur', a renaissance-style play and timely examination of democracy, will be performed as an open-air promenade performance in the venue's atmospheric grounds.

This special production was first discussed during the 2009 Edinburgh Festival when Lucy met Fringe legend Richard Demarco at one of his Masterclasses. After seeing the critically acclaimed show staged by Edinburgh-based company Siege Perilous, Richard seized on the idea of using the renaissance form in combination with a myth, and invited the company to perform the play at Craigcrook Castle, which is also the new home of the extensive Demarco Collection and Archive.

The play resonates with Richard's premise of connecting art with its history through the use of location to enrich it, to create art of lasting worth. As Lucy describes, "Sometimes we must look at the past to make sense of the present".

Alongside the 10 professional actors, some 20 drama students from the local community are also involved in both acting and backstage roles.

With a large part of the work written in the renaissance form of iambic pentameter but with contemporary language, there are a number of underlying themes. Broadly, these cover political progress and the confusion of celebrity with its leadership, and the contradictions involved in imposing democracy on another culture versus 'natural' democracy. King Arthur is an enlightened leader who fears for the future of his state. But how can he make sure his progressive ideals last forever when so many of his people insist on retaining their traditions? He decides to impose democracy but how will his subjects react?

These are themes which no doubt Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Hans Christian Andersen and Alfred Lord Tennyson may once have debated themselves whilst at Craigcrook Castle.

☆☆☆☆☆ A traditional play reinvented with a topical twist (Three Weeks)

☆☆☆☆☆ Spectacular modern take on a legend (Edinburgh Evening News)

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Notes to editors

1) Show times and contacts details for media enquiries/photos:

Show title	Venue	Date
'King Arthur'	Craigcrook Castle, 95 Craigcrook Road, Edinburgh EH4 3TU	30 August – 4 September, 2010
Time	Duration	Prices
6.00 p.m	Approximately 100 minutes + 20 minute interval	£12/£8
Press and Photo contact	Tickets; public	Tickets: Press
Tina Finch 07720 288620	0131 662 6892 box@zoovenues.co.uk On the door or from Zoo Venues	Tina Finch 07720 288620

2) Siege Perilous is a professional theatre production company based in Edinburgh. Run by co-founders Artistic Director Andy Corelli and Producer Tina Finch, the company aims to invigorate small-scale theatre in Edinburgh outwith the Fringe, and match that which is available to see in Glasgow. With the agility and flexibility afforded by a small company, Siege Perilous focus on giving new writers a platform for their work to be seen. The Company received an Arts and Business Award in 2010. For more information about Siege Perilous, go to www.siegeperilous.co.uk.

4) Brighton-based Lucy Nordberg has worked as a writer for six years and her company Pendragon Enterprises co-produced with Siege Perilous for the 2009 production at the New Town Theatre in George Street. She produced her play "When All the Crowds Have Gone" at the Brighton Festival Fringe 2010 ("a fresh perspective to the human dilemma" *****Fringe Guru*; "a naturalistic theatre at its best" *****Fringe Review*). Lucy Nordberg can be contacted via *mobile* 07707 556499 *email* lucy@pendragonenterprises.co.uk. For more information about Lucy see www.lucynordberg.com.

5) Richard Demarco co-founded the Traverse Theatre in 1963. He forged many significant links with overseas artists and performers, notably Joseph Beuys and Tadeusz Kantor who both came to Edinburgh at his request, through the Richard Demarco Gallery. He has attended or been involved with every Edinburgh Festival since its inception. He has staged numerous events including 'Macbeth' on Inchcolm Island. He is a promoter of the visual and performing arts, and his exhibition of art from around the world, the Demarco Collection and Archive including an extensive record of the Festival and Fringe, is now housed at Craigcrook Castle. For more information about Richard see www.richarddemarco.org.

6) Craigcrook Castle was originally constructed in 1542 and later remodelled by William Playfair. It is steeped in literary history. When occupied by Francis Jeffrey, Lord Jeffrey co-founder and the most successful editor of *The Edinburgh Review*, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Hans Christian Andersen and Alfred Lord Tennyson all visited. When occupied by the writer and politician William Stirling, he invited the English poet Gerald Massey to stay. Massey who was eulogised by Alfred Lord Tennyson, penned one of his most accomplished poems *Craigcrook Castle*, which coincidentally was written in blank verse. Craigcrook Castle is now available to rent. www.dtz.com.