

VOICES OF HISTORY SKUC

1689: (*Chorus of the Cold People - Purcell*) Music 1'00" Script 2'30"

[*Chorus of the Cold People* from *King Arthur* starts. During the singing, the pianist, with powdered wig, stops and interrupts the singers. **P** has a strong upper class British accent.]

P Wait, stop the performance! (Name of **B**), do you own your house?

B Well, actually, I rent a small apartment. Why do you ask?

P Sorry, in the 1680's, you can't sing with us if you don't own land.

[The music starts up again, minus the bass.]

P OK, (name of **T**), you're French, aren't you?

T Yes, I'm a Huguenot. I left when Louis XIV chased us out.

P Sorry, in the 1680's, no Huguenots in this group.

[The music starts up again, *sans* **B** and **T**.]

P (Name of **A**) - I heard a rumor that you are a Quaker?

A Yes, I am.

P Sorry, off to the Americas.

A But they're hanging witches there, in Massachusetts!

P Go to William Penn's new colony, then. Get out of here!

[The music starts up again - **S** solo.]

P Hey, (Name of **S**), you're a Catholic, like our King James II? Out!

[**P** continues to play piano by herself. Soon, **SATB** come running in with a newspaper! They throw it in front of the pianist.]

P [Annoyed] I say! What is this cheap, flimsy book?

SATB It's a newspaper! Read it!

P reads: Hmm. Henry Purcell has a new opera, *King Arthur*, featuring the *Chorus of the Cold People*. Edmund Halley discovers comets orbit around the sun ... first seen in 1066 during the Norman Conquest of England! Newton discovers gravity!

SATB Keep reading!

P reads: The slave trade has been quite good this year, with profits up.

SATB Keep reading!

P reads: The Fire of London, the plague, the Turks invading Vienna again. Bah, humbug! (pause) What *is* this Bill of Rights?

SATB From now on, *Parliament* has the right to tax, run the army, make laws, organize free elections. . . and the king cannot impose excessive fines.

P reads: By Jove! And what's this Toleration Act?

SATB Freedom of religion! You *have* to let us sing with you!

P I guess I've been Baroque about all these things. It's time for me to be more Enlightened.

Chorus of the Cold People [followed by a choreographed bow]