



NICK BRANNAM
DIRECTOR | CHOREOGRAPHER

PRODUCTION	<i>Monty Python's Spamalot</i>
COMPANY	Basingstoke Amateur Theatrical Society
PUBLISHED BY	National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA)
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Monty Python's Spamalot is described as "A new musical lovingly ripped off from the motion picture Monty Python and the Holy Grail from the original screenplay by: Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gillian, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin – and that's exactly what it is. It's a highly irreverent version of Camelot and sticks – very loosely – to the Arthurian legend. It's pointless, puerile, spoofy and silly but also enormously funny and has happiness coursing through every scene. It's xenophobic, homophobic and blasphemous but good-natured and a huge amount of fun and I loved it.

The set: village scenes, castle etc were effectively created of high quality and cleverly designed. There was minimal disruption during the scene changes. Great and convincing use of props, especially the wooden bunny.

The costumes were excellent: bright, bold and larger than life with great attention to detail and were in keeping with the characters and story.

The lighting was very effective. The sound was excellent with voices clear and blended well with the live music. All the songs were sung enthusiastically. Lady of the Lake, Kirsty Kingham was simply stunning as she belted out her numbers including (one of my favourites) "The Diva's Lament" and "The Song That Goes Like This" (with David Izzo, Sir Galahad).

Director, Gary J Myers, demonstrated his talent as he drew great performances from this large and versatile cast. The music, led by Neil Streeter, created a solid sound giving the performers superb lead. The show worked well due to the chemistry and strong performances not least by Colin Flaherty (as King Arthur) and his Knights of the Round Table. Richard Bond as Patsy (King Arthur's side-kick) provided great support complete with horse clapping sound effects from a pair of coconut halves. There was lots of spectacle and hilarity from the French Taunters (Ed Branch on top form) to the routines and songs taking the mickey out of other musicals (I spotted quite a few including 42nd Street and Chicago). The principals had a terrific ensemble around them. I enjoyed the variety and changes of style and atmosphere. The comedy was fast paced and very off the wall but clever and everyone had a chance to shine. BATS audiences expect high production values and they were not disappointed. Congratulations to the production team, led by Colin Webb, whose hard work, in this instance, led to a polished show that was full of memorable and hilarious moments.

Chris Horton