



NICK BRANNAM
DIRECTOR | CHOREOGRAPHER

PRODUCTION	<i>Monty Python's Spamalot</i>
COMPANY	Basingstoke Amateur Theatrical Society
PUBLISHED BY	Basingstoke Gazette
DATE OF PUBLICATION	18 th May 2017

The perfect escape for the world-weary currently awaits local audiences in The Haymarket. BATS have staged the Monty Python musical Spamalot – the first local production of this smash-hit show - and their sublime slice of silliness is a genuinely laugh-out-loud treat.

First time director / choreographer Gary J Myers has bitten off a lot, but it's certainly not more than he can chew. In fact, what he has served up is quite wonderful! He's ably assisted by Neil Streeter as musical director.

Spamalot is the tale of King Arthur (a suitably regal Colin Flaherty) and his band of knights, and their quest to find the Grail / stage a musical in Basingstoke.

Along the way they encounter surly peasants, the French, the Knights of Ni, the irrepressible Black Knight, flying cows and the rest.

The show is a huge challenge for all departments – sound, props, wardrobe and lighting – but the society has multi-tasked to the max to achieve something quite special.

BATS' talented actors also showcase their adaptability by demonstrating serious comedic ability and timing. Some of their stalwart performers (Ian Moseley, David Izzo) are a revelation and supporting players also do wonderful work in smaller parts: Ed Branch (French taunter), Tracey Gonzato (head minstrel), Stuart Baker (Dead Fred) and Grant Foyle (Kevin) are all fantastic.

Izzo, Nick Brannam and Pete Chandler are hysterically funny throughout the plotline about Prince Herbert whilst a brilliant Kirsty Kingham demonstrates divine comic delivery – and boasts terrific vocals - as the Lady of the Lake, hilariously snarling "Whatever happened to my part" during The Diva's Lament.

Well done to the rest of the company, too, who whizz on and off in various outfits constantly, singing, dancing, nailing punchlines and doing whatever else the show demands.

It goes without saying that Python fans will be in heaven but there's lots of general fun to enjoy, including references to other famous musicals. Other standout musical numbers

include the Knights of the Round Table, You Won't Succeed in Showbiz and His Name is Lancelot.

Only the hardest heart could resist joining in with the final sing-along to Always Look on the Bright Side of Life, so partake of Spamalot's cheeky joy while you can. You'll feel much better afterwards!

Joanne Mace