

SOLIHULL

PRESENTS

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT

25TH - 29TH MARCH 2014 BUSHELL HALL

Book & Lyrics by ERIC IDLE. Music by JOHN DU PREZ & ERIC IDLE.
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 Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, Michael Palin

Original Broadway Production produced by Boyett Ostar Productions, The Shubert Organization, Arielle Tepper Madover, Stephanie McClelland/Lawrence Horowitz, Elan V McAllister/Allan S. Gordon, Independent Producers Network, Roy Furman, GRS Associates, Jam Theatricals, TGA Entertainment, and Clear Channel Entertainment

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

The play begins with a historian giving a brief overview of medieval England. After a detour, we are immediately transported to a dreary, dark village with penitent monks in hooded robes chanting Latin prayers and hitting themselves in the face with wooden boards. King Arthur travels the land with his servant Patsy ("King Arthur's Song"), trying to recruit Knights of the Round Table to join him in Camelot and his quest for the Holy Grail. He encounters various strange people, including a pair of sentries who are more interested in debating whether two swallows could successfully carry a coconut than in guarding their castles. Sir Robin and Sir Lancelot meet as they attempt to dispose of the sickly Not Dead Fred ("He Is Not Dead Yet"). They agree to become Knights of the Round Table together.



Meanwhile, Arthur attempts to convince a peasant named Dennis Galahad that he (Arthur) is king of England because the Lady of the Lake gave him Excalibur, the sword given only to the man fit to rule England. However, Dennis and his mother, Mrs. Galahad, are political radicals and deny that any king who has not been elected by the people has any legitimate right to rule over them. To settle the issue, Arthur has the Lady of the Lake and her Laker Girls appear to turn Dennis into a knight ("Come With Me"). Cheered on by the girls ("Laker Girls Cheer"), the Lady of the Lake turns Dennis into Sir Galahad and together, they sing a generic West End love song ("The Song That Goes Like This"). Together, with Sir Bedevere and Sir Not-Appearing-In-This-Show (a knight resembling Don Quixote who promptly apologizes and then leaves), they make up the Knights of the Round Table ("All for One").

The five knights gather in Camelot, a deliberately anachronistic place resembling Las Vegas's Camelot-inspired Excalibur resort, complete with showgirls and oversized dice ("Knights of the Round Table" / "The Song That Goes Like This (Reprise)"). In the midst of their revelry, they are contacted by God (voiced by Father Andrew) who tells them to locate the Holy Grail. Urged on by the Lady of the Lake ("Find Your Grail"), the Knights set off. They are viciously taunted by lewd French soldiers at a castle they come to, and attempt to retaliate by sending them a large wooden rabbit in the style of the Trojan Horse; however, they realise after the fact that it was not as simple as leaving the rabbit and walking away - they were supposed to be inside of it. Defeated, they leave in a hurry ("Run Away").

ACT II

Sir Robin and his minstrels follow King Arthur and Patsy into a "dark and very expensive forest" where they are separated. King Arthur meets the Knights who say Ni, who demand a shrubbery. King Arthur despairs of finding one, but Patsy cheers him up ("Always Look on the Bright Side of Life") and they find a shrubbery shortly after. The Knights accept it, but next demand that King Arthur put on a musical and bring it to the West End.

The Black Knight appears but King Arthur more or less defeats him by cutting off both his arms and legs, and leaving to find Sir Robin. Sir Robin, after wandering the forest for some time ("Brave Sir Robin"), finds King Arthur and insists that it would be impossible for them to accomplish this next task ("You Won't Succeed in Showbiz"). King Arthur and Patsy promptly set off in search of a star for the show. While the Lady of the Lake laments her lack of stage time ("The Diva's Lament"), Sir Lancelot receives a letter from what he assumes is a young damsel in distress.

He is a little surprised to find that the damsel is actually a sensitive young man named Herbert ("Where Are You?" / "Here Are You") whose overbearing, music-hating father, the king, is forcing him into an arranged marriage. Lancelot advocates for Herbert after the king returns, and Lancelot's more emotional side is revealed ("His Name Is Lancelot").

King Arthur begins to give up hope of ever putting on the West End musical and laments that he is alone, even though Patsy has been with him the entire time ("I'm All Alone"). The Lady of the Lake appears and tells Arthur that he and the Knights have been in a West End musical all along. All that's left is for King Arthur to find the Grail and marry someone. After picking up on some not-too-subtle hints, Arthur decides to marry the Lady of the Lake after he finds the Grail ("Twice In Every Show").

Reunited with his Knights, Arthur meets Tim the Enchanter who warns them of the danger of an evil rabbit. When the rabbit bites a knight's head off, Arthur uses the Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch against it, knocking down a nearby hill and revealing that the "evil rabbit" was actually a puppet controlled by a surprised puppeteer. A large stone block showing a combination of letters and numbers is also revealed. After pondering the final clue, Arthur admits that they're "a bit stumped with the clue thing" and asks God to "give them a hand". The grail is "found"; Arthur marries the Lady of the Lake (who reveals that her name is Guinevere); Lancelot marries Herbert; and Sir Robin decides to pursue a career in musical theatre ("Act 2 Finale/ Always Look on the Bright Side of Life (Company Bow)").

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

- Overture
- "Historian's Introduction to Act I" – Historian
- "Finland" / "Fisch Schlapping Dance" – Mayor and Company
- "Monk's Chant" – Company
- "King Arthur's Song" – King Arthur, Patsy
- "I Am Not Dead Yet" – Not Dead Fred, Lance, Robin, and Bodies
- "Come With Me" – King Arthur, Lady of the Lake, and Laker girls
- "Laker Girls Cheer" – Laker Girls
- "The Song That Goes Like This" – Sir Galahad and Lady of the Lake
- "All for One" – King Arthur, Patsy, Sir Robin, Sir Lancelot, Sir Galahad and Sir Bedevere
- "Knights of the Round Table" – Company
- "The Song That Goes Like This" (Reprise) – Lady of the Lake
- "Find Your Grail" – Lady of the Lake and Company
- "Run Away!" – Company

ACT TWO

- Entr'acte
- "Historian's Introduction to Act II" – Historian
- "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" – Patsy, King Arthur, Knights, and Knights of Ni
- "Brave Sir Robin" – Sir Robin and Minstrels
- "You Won't Succeed In Showbiz" – Sir Robin and Ensemble
- "The Diva's Lament (Whatever Happened to My Part?)" – Lady of the Lake
- "Where Are You?" – Prince Herbert
- "Here Are You" – Prince Herbert
- "His Name is Lancelot" – Sir Lancelot, Prince Herbert, and Ensemble
- "I'm All Alone" – Company
- "Twice in Every Show" – Lady of the Lake and King Arthur
- "The Holy Grail" – King Arthur, Patsy, Sir Robin, Sir Lancelot, Sir Galahad, Sir Bedevere, and Knights*
- "Act II Finale" – Company
- "Always Look On the Bright Side of Life" – Company and Audience

CAST

in order of appearance

Historian
Mayor
Monk
Monk
Monk
King Arthur
Patsy
Guard 1
Guard 2
Sir Robin
Sir Lancelot
Kevin the Cart Pusher
Not Dead Fred
Dennis/Sir Galahad
Dennis' Mother
Lady of the Lake
Sir Bedevere
Sir Not Appearing in this Show
Dancing Nun
Dancing Monk
The Voice of God
Hutchinson
French Taunter

French Guard
French Guard
French Guard
French Guard

Principal Knight of Ni
Knight of Ni
Knight of Ni
Black Knight
Principal Minstrel
Minstrel
Minstrel
Susan Boyle
Concorde
Prince Herbert
Herbert's Father
Guards 3
Guard 4
Tim the Enchanter
Sir Bors
Brother Maynard

Female Ensemble
Nicole Angelides; Jenna Balfour; Annie Bewick;
Lauren Buchan; Hannah Butler; Lucy Davies; Sam Deakin;
Jaipreet Deo; Grace Deveney; Poppy Eales; Grace Evans;
Caroline Gerard; Ella Goodworth; Sophie Hicks;
Marie Hill Brogan Kelly; Faye Kent; Maddie Lavery;
Aine Maher; Abigail Moise; Megan Perry; Charlotte Perry;
Paulina Rosales; Beth Roberts; Muskan Shrivastasa;
Victoria Steele; Francesca Theakston; Alana Wall;
Sophie Ward; Crystal Williams; Katie Williams;
Megan Woolley; Olivia Eguiguren-Wray;

Male Ensemble
Gianni Baldi; Tom Beasley; Elliot Botterill; Tom Carson;
Ben Davidson; Liam Deane; Lawrence Finch;
James Green; Jack Hines; Ben Gee; David Herriotts;
Harry Morgan; James Newman; Taimoor Rashid;
Louis Roach; Ian Rodriguez; Vickneswaren Sarveswaran;
Harry Sharpe; Matt Tyler; Toby Wassell; Isaac Webber;
Oli White; Angus Young

Alanna Wall
Liam Deane
Matt Tyler
Ben Davidson
Vickneswaren
Sarveswaran
Jack Hines
Callum Fisher
Oscar Haynes
David Herriotts
Aine Maher
Chris Bevins
Tom Griesbach
Lawrence Finch
Harry Sharpe
Shashank Chaganty
Liam Deane
Esther Domingo
Ben Newman
Ben Gee
Megan Perry
Gianni Baldi
Father Andrew

Louis Roach and
Harry Morgan
Liam Deane
Harry Morgan
Ben Gee
Vickneswaren
Sarveswaran
Grace Lodge
Abigail Moise
Katie Williams
Harry Sharpe
Liam Deane
James Green
Jack Hines
Olivia Harris
Angus Young
Tom Carson
Harry Morgan
James Green
Tom Beasley
Matt Tyler
Taimoor Rashid
Oli White

MUSICAL TEAM

Musical Director
Violins

Viola:
Cellos
Bass
Piccolo
Flute
Clarinets
Bass Clarinet/
Tenor Saxophone
Alto saxophone
Horn
Trumpets
Trombone
Percussion
Keyboards

Stephen Perrins

Helen Dolby, Amy Parry, Jamie Turpin,
Charlotte Sasse, Hannah Shakeshaft,
Imogen Hanson, Ellie Ajao
Eloise Boblin
Dominic Martens, Lucy Allen
Catherine Sullivan
Libby Thomas
Abigail Smith
David Clarke, Jacob Small

Robert Jones
Charlotte Beesley
Allyson Roper
Joe Price, Charlotte Perry, Joe Sherman
Sam Troth
Jonathon Altham, Chris Rooney
Oliver Walker, Simon Phillips,
Philip Blenkinsop



PRODUCTION TEAM

Director/Producer
Choreographer
Make-up

Costume

Photography
Set Design/Construction
Set painting
Programme

Backstage
Production Manager
Stage Manager
Backstage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Props

Sound Manager
Sound Operator
Keyboards Sound Technician
Assistant Sound
Lighting and Projection

Stage Crew

Pete Stansfield, James Sutton, Matt Sargent, Lydia Jones,
George Gamlin, Tom Sheppard, Kevin McCormack, James Berry,
Andres Oelker, Jodie Meeneghan-Bell, Jo O'Sullivan, Ellie Brown

Jean Wilde

Sam Mabon
Sharron Thomas, Sandra Marks,
Helen Watling & Sixth Form helpers
Eleanor Hurst, Sue Butler, Jo Johnson,
Jean Wilde, Lyndsey Thomas,
Helen Watling
Tom Gill, Ewan Waddell, Mat Prichard
Karl Leach, Kevin Hunton
Kevin Hunton, Claire Pettitt, Laura Adkins
Alan Hill (Hill Shorter), Lisa Fair

Paul Jukes
Joe Hadley
Paul Hadley
Freya Harding
Karen Perrins, Ibrahim Rehman,
Thomas Smith
Theresa Morgan
Sam McCumiskey
Lee Harris
Cormac McLean
Ben Lyth





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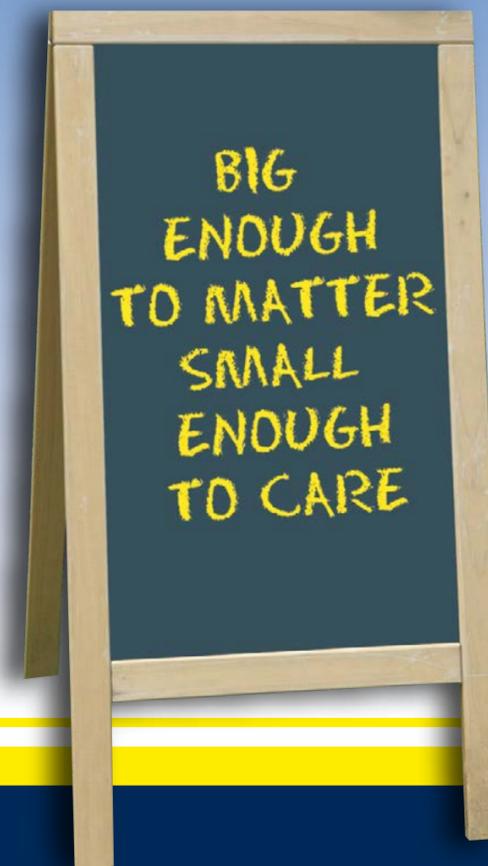
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CALLUM FISHER - KING ARTHUR

When I watched my first Solihull School musical, 'Barnum' in 2006 (?), my dream was to have a lead role by the end of my time here. I started off working in the backstage crew in Thirds, and since then have worked my way up through many chorus roles and main parts in many different productions, including in 'Phantom' last year. In this, my last year at Solihull School, I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to act the lead roles in 'Macbeth' and 'Spamalot' – that dream has come true. There are so many people I want to thank – all my friends and family who have helped me learning lines over the years, and the different teachers who have coached me in acting and music (Mrs Wilde, Mrs Fair & Mr Perrins) to name but a few. The whole cast have dedicated many morning breaks, lunch breaks, free periods and many hours in after school rehearsals to make this production great, and we've had a lot of fun in doing so. I hope you enjoy the show!

BEN NEWMAN - SIR BEDEVERE

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time rehearsing and preparing for this musical. Despite having been in several during my time at the school, this one has certainly been the most entertaining. I was honoured to be given a principle role; the part of Sir Bedevere has been extremely fulfilling and fun to play. Being my final year here at Solihull School, and after 12 years, it has been a tremendous opportunity for me to have this involvement with the drama department and I have loved every second.

TOM GRIESBACH - SIR LANCELOT

Ever since I was a child, I have always been a huge fan of Monty Python and specifically John Cleese as an actor. I remember crying with laughter at his role in The Holy Grail, and others such as Fawlty Towers, and so when the cast list for Spamalot was put up for the first time outside the Sixth Form Centre, I was thrilled with the part I was given. I have had such a great (and mostly embarrassing) time attempting Lancelot's role; he is an... 'interesting' character, who certainly develops his inner-feelings throughout the play! It is a great pleasure acting beside such a talented and funny cast, and I can honestly say that the experience has been one of the very best of my Solihull School career.

SHASHANK CHAGANTY - DENNIS GALAHAD

First of all, I would like to thank everyone who has let me explore my passion for acting and singing. Throughout the experience of putting on this show, I have seen myself develop personally in both character and confidence, for which I owe Mr Perrins, Mrs Wilde and the rest of the cast and crew of Spamalot. Hope you enjoy the show!

CHRIS BEVINS - SIR ROBIN

Getting a principle role in Phantom, with no acting experience before, was a brilliant opportunity for me and I thoroughly enjoyed playing "Piangi." The cast, especially Charlotte Beesley, and success of Phantom really inspired me to take part in the musical again this year. With a totally different style to Phantom, I have loved Spamalot just as much and am really glad I have taken part in it! The rehearsals have been so much fun and the whole cast have pulled together and really taken to the joy of Spamalot. We have all worked very hard to try and deliver the comic essence of this musical and I think we have truly achieved this. Thank you to everyone who has made this show possible.



ESTHER DOMINGO - THE LADY OF THE LAKE

Being new to the Solihull School musical 'scene', I didn't have any pre-conceptions of what to expect. It soon became apparent that it was going to be a memorable part of my Sixth Form experience and one I will not forget! I've had a brilliant time, not least because I have been given the excuse to be a huge diva as the Lady of the Lake, but also being able to share it with amazing people while doing what I love. Thank you to Mrs Wilde and Mr Perrins for all you have done and finally to everyone who has made my time at Solihull (albeit short) so special!

OSCAR HAYNES - PATSY

I've had great fun being part of this musical. Although it has been a challenge, I hope the audience will enjoy it as much as the cast have enjoyed putting it on.

HARRY MORGAN - FRENCH TAUNTER/HERBERT'S FATHER

I've thoroughly enjoyed every single moment of Spamalot and bringing Herbert's Father to life on stage. I just hope that on the nights I perform the French Taunter, I don't mix his exaggerated French accent with the Father's Northern twang! After taking part in many productions at Solihull, I'll be sad to leave the Bushell Hall stage for the final time. However, I'm sure that the infectious energy from all the cast will help to turn this unique, hilarious musical into one of the most memorable performed here.

Thank you to all who have made this musical happen, especially Mrs Wilde. My special thanks go to Sam Mason for helping me to realise my unique talent in dance. I'd also like to thank my partner Louis Roach; understudying you as the French Taunter has been a privilege.

LOUIS ROACH - FRENCH TAUNTER

Taking part in my last play at Solihull School has been a special experience and I've enjoyed every moment of bringing The French Taunter to life. Special thanks must go to Sam, my wonderful dance teacher who has sculpted my skills in movement to something truly phenomenal and to Mrs Wilde who brings out the thespian in me. Also I would like to dedicate a word to Harry J C Morgan who has been a companion of mine for many years now. Handing down my skills to a novice actor like Harry and seeing him progress as a person and my understudy in this play has been a rewarding experience. His incompetence at times has been hard to handle but I feel as if he has developed into a more well rounded human being. Peace.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR - MR STEPHEN PERRINS

Broadway. August 2008. There I am with my twin 13 year old sons in the Shubert Theatre with the curtain about to go up on *Spamalot*, I show I knew absolutely nothing about, except that it was supposed to be very funny. Would my lads enjoy it? Had I wasted more dollars than I could really afford? Well, I needn't have worried because from the first notes of the overture right through my sons' constant helpless laughter we were on to a winner. And how we came out of that theatre whistling and singing '*Always look on the bright side of life*' all the way back to our hotel!

From that moment I knew I wanted to do do '*Spamalot*' here. It's taken nearly six years but we're there (well, almost). Convincing the cast of the choice of show was hard, as many of them had never heard of it! But over the past months they have had tremendous fun learning the songs, honing their comic timing and enjoying trying to give John Travolta a run for his 70s disco money. It's been a joyous journey working with this wonderful team of cast, crew and musicians and if you too go out of here whistling and singing *that song* then all their hard work will have been worth it. Enjoy the show!



DIRECTOR - JEAN WILDE

When 'Monty Python's Flying Circus' first came to TV it was broadcast after my bedtime, but the next morning on our way to school my brother would recite as much of it as he could remember to me. Before the end of the first series I had managed to nag and whine my way to being allowed to stay up to watch it. My brother and I, along with most of our friends loved it, my dad got some of it, but my mum who would arrive back from her evening shift at the mill part the way through the programme and who was 'shushed' until it ended, couldn't see what was funny. At school Drama was not on the curriculum, but my fabulous and eccentric English teacher, Mr Geoffrey Flitton, occasionally got us to make up scenes and act them out. Mostly what we did was act out sketches we'd seen by the Pythons – the Four Yorkshiremen; the Dead Parrot (which we particularly liked with its reference to nearby Bolton) and of course the Spanish Inquisition ("Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!). It wasn't just the sketches that appealed either; I remember laughing myself helpless for several minutes at Conrad Pooh and his Dancing Teeth. The stage shows and films that followed were equally brilliant, my favourite being 'The Meaning of Life' and no the answer to the meaning of life isn't 42 – that's another programme and refers to "the ultimate question of life, the universe and everything ."

Naturally, I was excited when the idea of a Pythonesque musical 'Spamalot' based on 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail', was suggested and was lucky enough to be taken to see the original West End show as a 50th birthday treat by some lovely friends of mine. It didn't disappoint.

As you can see I am a Python fan and the chance to put on 'Spamalot' as the school musical has been a fantastically enjoyable opportunity. I have been lucky to have a talented cast, crew, design and support team to work with and have enjoyed immensely the process of putting on this show.

Last year we brought you a wonderful, 'Phantom of the Opera' but now "for something completely different" – I hope you enjoy 'Spamalot.'

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MONTY PYTHON

The 1960s satire boom opened up the way for a fresh, inventive generation of young comedy writer-performers to flourish on TV and to take comedy in a new and exciting direction. Among them were five graduates from the Oxbridge comedy scene, all of whom became contributors to *The Frost Report* and whose stand-out talents were soon rewarded with prominent roles in new hit sketch series: *At Last the 1948 Show*, which starred ex-Cambridge Footlights John Cleese and Graham Chapman, while *Do Not Adjust Your Set* featured ex-Oxford writing partners Michael Palin and Terry Jones alongside another former Footlight, Eric Idle.

The two shows had a similar, zany feel and *Do Not Adjust Your Set* was spiced-up further by the inclusion of some hilariously surreal animations by an eccentric young American upstart named Terry Gilliam.

Forming a strong mutual respect, the six decided to team up and work together on 'something new' and with the help of Barry Took (who was then a comedy consultant at the BBC) they were given their own series, famously being told "you can have thirteen shows, but that's it".

Having toyed with several names (including *Owl Stretching Time* and *The Toad Elevating Moment*), the group settled on the appropriately bizarre *Monty Python's Flying Circus*: 'circus' being suggested by the BBC, and *Monty Python* being envisaged by the team as the perfect name for a sleazy entertainment agent.

Their writing effectively threw away the rulebook of traditional sketch writing, dispensing with punchlines and allowing sketches to blend into each other or simply stop abruptly.

Gilliam's unique animation style became crucial, segueing seamlessly between any two completely unrelated ideas and making the stream-of-consciousness work.

Flying Circus was fortunate too in being broadcast in colour, unlike their previous shows, helping transmit to viewers the Pythons' vibrant, crazy ideas.

The show took a short while to find a fanbase but grew into a phenomenon, so much so that George Harrison claimed the spirit of the Beatles had passed onto *Monty Python*.

Episodes often had a surreal and barely identifiable theme and the Pythons joyfully weaved sketches throughout every show so viewers had no idea where they would be taken next.

It's one of the Pythons' astonishing achievements that a single edition could throw up characters like *The*

Spanish Inquisition, who remain as memorable as any of the weekly repeated caricatures in recent series like *The Fast Show* or *Little Britain*.

Flying Circus did have its share of recurring items: John Cleese' BBC link man and his announcement "And now for something completely different" became a catchphrase; while characters appearing in multiple episodes included a rubber-chicken-wielding knight and various members of the dim-witted *Gumby* family.

But such moments seemed to be the icing on the Pythonic cake, always outbalanced by fresh material.

The Pythons took on virtually every acting role themselves, the main exception being attractive women (usually played by 'honorary Python' Carol Cleveland) and each cast member developed his own specialities.

Terry Jones could portray both middle-class English gentlemen and ratbag old women; the towering Cleese and Chapman mastered pompous authority figures but could also do a fine line in cantankerous old ladies; Idle often played more feminine women as well as TV anchor roles and slimy, more sinister men (as in his famous *Nudge, Nudge* sketch); and Palin, perhaps the most gifted comic actor of the group, could make his own anything from Cardinal Ximenez of the *Inquisition* to sleazy end-of-the-pier variety compères.

Gilliam, who spent much of his time slaving over the animations, was usually handed supporting roles which, over time, became some of the filthiest characters in the scripts.

Flying Circus ran on TV for four series.

With a huge and growing global following, the Pythons were encouraged to continue working together on three hilarious and groundbreaking feature films, while the *Flying Circus*, which started it all, has come to be seen as probably the most ingenious and imaginative comedy show ever to grace British television.



ERIC IDLE (BOOK AND LYRICS)

Eric Idle (Book, lyrics, and music) has multi-hyphenated his way through life assiduously avoiding a proper job, from a writer and actor in the legendary "Monty Python" TV series and movies, to the creator and director of "The Rutles," the pre-fab four, whose legend will last a lunchtime. He has appeared on stage in drag singing rude songs at Carnegie Hall and the Hollywood Bowl as well as performing in two highly successful tours, *Eric Idle Exploits Monty Python* (2000) and *The Greedy Bastard Tour* (2003), for which he journeyed 15,000 miles across North America in a bus. HIS GREEDY BASTARD DIARY of that tour is published by Harper Collins. His play *PASS THE BUTLER* ran for five months in London's West End; he has written two novels, *HELLO SAILOR* and *THE ROAD TO MARS*, a children's book, *THE QUITE REMARKABLE ADVENTURES OF THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT*, and a bedside companion, *THE RUTLAND DIRTY WEEKEND BOOK*.



JOHN DU PREZ (MUSIC)

John Du Prez, a Trevelyan Scholar at Christ Church, Oxford, and Associate of the Royal College of Music, entered the film industry in 1978 composing additional music for *MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN*. This began a long association with Eric Idle, leading eventually to their current writing partnership. He has scored more than 20 feature films including *THE MEANING OF LIFE*, *A PRIVATE FUNCTION*, *A FISH CALLED WANDA*, *ONCE BITTEN*, *UHF* and *TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES I, II AND III*. Other Python projects include the *CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION ALBUM*, *MONTY PYTHON AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL* and *THE FAIRLY INCOMPLETE & RATHER BADLY ILLUSTRATED MONTY PYTHON SONG BOOK*. He was musical director for Eric Idle's two North American stage tours, *Eric Idle Exploits Monty Python* (2000) and *The Greedy Bastard Tour* (2003).

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LESSER KNOWN FACTS ABOUT MONTY PYTHON'S HOLY GRAIL

King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table first embarked on a search for The holy Grail in the very, very, very low-budget 1975 movie, Monty Python and the Holy Grail. The film was written by the Pythons, directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones, produced by Mark Forstater with music by De Wolfe and Neil Innes.

This, the second feature-length Python production, was uniquely financed. At the time, tax rates in the United Kingdom (80% or higher) were driving wealthy creative types to find ways to lose money in investments so as to offset the high rate of Inland Revenue.

With two first-time movie directors and a motley bunch of actors and writers, the odds were pretty good that the movie would never make a penny. So financing this really low budget film were such renowned musical groups as Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Genesis and such prominent artists as George Harrison and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

The film was shot in about five weeks for a mere \$400,000. Despite telling a very English story, Monty Python and the Holy Grail was almost entirely filmed in Scotland in many historic Scottish castles.

Because of the fiscal limitations, creative measures were used to save money. The castle used as a backdrop on the horizon, for example, is made of cardboard. The Pythons were originally going to ride horses, but soon realized they didn't have the money to do so. So the actors turned to early radio techniques, slamming together empty coconut halves to replicate the clippety-clop of horses' hooves as they pranced through the countryside.

The chain mail they wore was actually silver-painted wool. But wool absorbs moisture, and when it rained during filming—which it did often—the actors were weighted down with the rain that the wool absorbed.

The film opened in London on April 3, 1975. In 2004, Monty Python and the Holy Grail was named by film fans as the best British picture of all time by Amazon and the Internet Movie Database.

SOLIHULL SCHOOL PAST PRODUCTIONS

- 1976 H.M.S. Pinafore
- 1978 The Beggars Opera
- 1979 Salad Days
- 1980 Orpheus in the Underworld
- 1981 La Belle Helene
- 1982 Free as Air
- 1983 The Magic Flute
- 1984 Pink Champagne
- 1985 Orpheus in the Underworld
- 1986 Kiss Me Kate
- 1987 The Mikado
- 1988 The Merry Widow
- 1989 La Belle Helene
- 1990 The Pirates of Penzance
- 1991 Pink Champagne
- 1992 Fiddler on the Roof
- 1993 My Fair Lady
- 1994 Annie get your Gun
- 1995 South Pacific
- 1996 Kiss Me Kate
- 1997 Oklahoma
- 1998 Guys and Dolls
- 1999 Crazy for you
- 2000 West Side Story
- 2001 Cabaret
- 2003 Oliver
- 2004 Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
- 2005 Les Misérables
- 2006 Barnum
- 2007 The Sound of Music
- 2008 The Scarlet Pimpernel
- 2009 My Fair Lady
- 2010 South Pacific
- 2011 Grease
- 2012 Fiddler on the Roof
- 2013 Phantom of the Opera