



# Adelaide Theatre Guide

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## **MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT**

### **Northern Light Theatre Company**

Shedley Theatre

Until 27 Mar 2010

Review by Nikki Gaertner

'Lovingly ripped off' from the well-known film "Monty Python and the Holy Grail", "Spamalot" could just be a dream come true for fans of both Monty Python and musicals – and may also convert some who are neither.

With a script and score like this, containing catchy numbers with tongue-in-cheek lyrics and recreating many renowned scenes from the film, it is difficult to go very wrong with this musical. But Northern's recreation is certainly a success, easily entertaining the opening night audience (complete with some obvious Monty Python fanatics present).

For those not in the know, in a nutshell the show follows King Arthur (Nick Setchell) and his dedicated lacky, Patsy (Michael Papps), as they travel the land, first in search of men to join the Knights of the Round Table, and later in their Quest for the Holy Grail. Papps is perfectly cast as the downtrodden Patsy, faithfully following his King and carrying his heavy load. His performance of "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" is particularly enjoyable. Alongside him, Setchell is appropriately regal and distinguished as the golden King of Camelot.

The Knights – Sir Robin (Jethro Pidd), Sir Lancelot (Steve Rudd), Sir Galahad (Jason Ferguson) and Sir Bedevere (Glenn Vallen) – are all successful in establishing their characters, sending them up and having great fun with them, although Galahad's dashing blond wig is sadly missing. Rudd's performance with Prince Herbert (Omkar Nagesh) in "His Name is Lancelot", is particularly amusing and well received. Nagesh should also be commended for his work across a number of contrasting roles in the show – from the Historian to Not Dead Fred, he donned many disguises, and did so very well!

The only prominent female in the show, Megan Humphries, looks absolutely stunning as The Lady of the Lake. Although her duet with Ferguson in Act I, "The Song That Goes Like This", is a little hesitant and could certainly be sent up more, Humphries progressively comes into her own, and in Act II, hits a home run with "The Diva's Lament".

MD Peter Johns' orchestra is tight and the sound could almost be lifted directly from the cast recording CD. The set is well designed and works nicely, and the lighting, designed by Ian Barge, particularly enhances this production, with many varied and complex effects, executed well by Peter Howie. A welcome return to Northern is costume designer, Ann Humphries, whose planning and eye for colour and detail are very apparent.

An area for improvement, to add some final polish, would be the chorus. More projection and diction are needed in ensemble numbers so the comical lyrics are not lost on those who don't already know them. Focus on unison in group numbers would also help make Sue Pole's choreography more effective.

Director Mike Pole will be very happy with the end result of his hard work, and has ensured his cast achieve the characterisation required and expected by Monty Python enthusiasts. As with all productions of "Spamalot", one can't help but wish for the added layer of humour that is supplied by the original Broadway cast simply for being themselves, but Northern's production with their cast of well-known locals, is sure to be loved almost as much.

Rating: 4.5 stars (out of 5)