MONTY PYTHON’S SPAMALOT

BOOK AND LYRICS BY Eric Idle
MUSIC BY John Du Prez and 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

Directed by Lezlie Wade
Choreographed by Jesse Robb

SYNOPSIS
And now for something completely derivative...

The musical lovingly ripped off from the motion picture Monty Python and the Holy Grail is back on stage! The winner of three Tony® Awards, including Best Musical, and a smash hit on Broadway and London’s West End, Spamalot is the musical comedy sensation that will have you cheering on real knights riding imaginary horses.

In a Medieval England beset by plague, strife and a dearth of shrubbery, the noble King Arthur and his newly minted Knights of the Round Table set out on a quest to find the Holy Grail. Their journey takes them to many a dark forest and perilous castle, where they battle cattle-tossing French soldiers, the annoying Knights Who Say “Ni” and a murderous bunny rabbit. Spamalot is the brainchild of Monty Python legend Eric Idle, who penned the score with long-time collaborator John Du Prez, a composer and conductor internationally recognized for his innovative film soundtracks. Showcasing original songs and sketches along with classics from the Python back catalogue—including “Always Look on the Bright Side of Life”—the anarchic musical is a wholly original work as well as a tribute to England’s greatest comedy troupe.

It’s hard to imagine a better introduction to musical theatre for students. Younger audience members love the sight gags, song-and-dance numbers and silly humour while students more schooled in comedy and musical performance are won over by the show’s sheer inventiveness and the always subversive Python wit. Spamalot plays fast and loose with the legendary tales of King Arthur but references the source material closely enough for an enriching discussion with history-shy students. Behind the slapstick and Vegas-style dance numbers lurks a very serious critique of class and gender differences in Medieval Europe and the role of knights and nobility in early European history. How do the merry knights of Spamalot stack up against their historical counterparts? If King Arthur were transported to the Marvel Comics Universe, which hero or villain could he beat in a fight? If there were no actual song-and-dance numbers in ancient England, what music was performed at court and in the village hall? And where did Arthur and his merry band of adventurers get those coconuts? Enquiring minds will want to know.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Global Competencies:
  - Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Metacognition
- Grade 7-8
  - The Arts (Music, Drama, Dance, Visual Arts)
  - Language
- Grade 9-12
  - The Arts (Music, Drama, Dance, Visual Arts)
  - English
- Grade 11-12
  - Social Sciences and Humanities

THEMES

- Arthurian Legend
- Bravery and Cowardice
- Comedy: Dark Comedy, Farce, Satire, Absurdism, Spoof, Slapstick
- Camelot
- Chivalry
- Gender Roles
- The Medieval Period
- Parody
- Social Class
- Theatrical Conventions
- Quest & the Hero’s Journey
DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What do you find funny? What styles of comedy appeal to you? Why?
- What shows today parody current events? Why do you think they are so popular?
- What makes a good hero?
- What qualities are most admired in a knight? Why? What do we least admire and why?
- The musical is set in the Medieval period. In what ways has society changed since then? What belief systems persist today?

STUDY GUIDES

2023 Shorts and Study Guides and those from previous seasons are available free of charge online at https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/Learn/Teachers/ResourcesPD

BOOKING INFORMATION: TICKETS, WORKSHOPS & CHATS

STUDENT MATINÉES

You may book any available date, but selected student matinée performances for this show are at 2 p.m. on the following dates:

- Wednesday, April 19th
- Monday, April 24th
- Wednesday, April 26th
- Tuesday, May 2nd
- Thursday, May 4th
- Wednesday, May 10th
- Tuesday, May 16th
- Wednesday, May 24th
- Friday, May 26th
- Tuesday, May 30th
- Friday, June 2nd
- Tuesday, June 6th
- Thursday, June 8th
- Friday, June 16th
- Tuesday, June 20th
- Thursday, June 22nd
- Friday, June 23rd
- Friday, June 30th
- Wednesday, September 6th
- Friday, September 15th
- Wednesday, September 20th
- Thursday, September 28th
- Tuesday, October 3rd
- Friday, October 6th
- Thursday, October 12th
- Wednesday, October 18th
- Tuesday, October 24th

WORKSHOPS & CHATS

Pre or Post-Show Workshops and Post-Show Chats (virtual, onsite or at your school/centre) can be booked by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600.

SOCIAL MEDIA

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Tools for Teachers includes Prologues, Study Guides and Stratford Shorts.