



[Monty Python's Spamalot](#) at Opera House

By Eric Idle and John Du Prez

Reviewed by [Helen Nugent](#) May 2012

As someone who spent a great deal of their student life quoting the Knights Who Say Ni and demanding a shrubbery, news that *Monty Python's Spamalot* was coming to Manchester was as thrilling a prospect as meeting the keeper of the Bridge of Death.

For the uninitiated, Monty Python's eccentric blend of non sequiturs, half-finished sketches and stream of consciousness comedy can seem baffling. But on the first evening of a week-long run at [Manchester's Opera House](#), the majority of the audience were clearly hardened fans who delight in regurgitating Python scripts.

Given the rousing reception afforded to leading actors Marcus Brigstocke, Bonnie Langford and Todd Carty last night, it is hard to believe that Monty Python and the Holy Grail, the basis for Eric Idle and John Du Prez's *Spamalot*, was made in the year this reviewer was born. Back in 1974, the collected Pythons shot the film on a meagre budget of just £229,000 on the chilly and windswept outcrops of the Scottish Highlands.

Nearly 40 years later, the dialogue, Arthurian setting and general silliness haven't aged a day. Michael Palin, John Cleese and co may have moved on to other projects but affection for their ground-breaking, subversive humour has not waned. In a packed Opera House, where the, er, cosy Victorian seating sets audience members cheek by jowl with their neighbours, the public suspended a considerable amount of disbelief to enjoy a rag-tag bunch of knights and peasants searching for the Holy Grail.

Every memorable line was greeted with howls of laughter, most notably King Arthur's sword fight with the Black Knight. "It's just a flesh wound," asserts the knight, despite having lost both his arms. Second in the laughter stakes was the confrontation between Arthur, his knights and the French soldier. Does abuse really get any better than this? "I don't want to talk to you no more, you empty headed animal food trough wiper. I fart in your general direction. Your mother was a hamster and your father smelt of elderberries."

