

SPAMALOT

CODS Crediton

October 29th 2022

Director Carolyn : Stoyle

Choreographer : Georgia Steer

Musical Director : Allan Fouracre

What fun, what larks! Spamalot! For those in the cast a chance to let their hair down because it is a silly story and everyone's acting silly! Almost a pantomime but not quite, beginning with the "Fisch Schlapping Song" by a chorus who had mistaken England for Finland!

The set was good, a castle with wooden doors and turrets, climbable, and with various windows from which different characters could emerge. King Arthur looked good and had a cheeky grin and glasses, trying to maintain his dignity as monarch while galloping around the stage accompanied by Patsy on the coconut shells. A good, strong singing voice in "King Arthurs Song".

Patsy had a wonderful stage presence, reminiscent of Baldrick in Blackadder, a combination of idiocy and earthy wisdom, completed by outstanding facial expressions maintained throughout the show, responding to events on the stage throughout. A great and genuinely funny performance.

The Lady of the Lake was superb ,she had it all, the appearance, splendid costumes ,a beautiful singing voice and facial expressions. Sending herself up mercilessly, it all came over very well especially "The Song that Goes Like This "and "The Diva's Lament "a showstopper !

Sir Lancelot did well, especially being his debut on stage Maybe a little more camp when required to accentuate the difference in the two aspects of his persona. As all the characters except for Arthur and The Lady, he was expected to take many different roles and performed The French Taunter /Knight of Ni/ Tim the Enchanter with gusto and enthusiasm, as did all the other actors.

Historian/Not Dead Fred /Minstrel/Prince Herbert put his all into the countless parts he was performing and did a great job. As did Sir Robin/ Guard1/brother Maynard.

Sir Dennis Galahad/the black Knight/Prince Herbert's Father Came over well along with Sir Bedevere/ Mother /Concorde

The Laker Girls were enthusiastic and full of energy, wonderful!

"Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" was sung with a real flavour of sheer comedy and a joy, even the audience joined in this fun song that never fails to cheer anyone up, despite originally being used as black comedy in a crucifixion scene!

Difficult to single out parts of this fastmoving and anarchic show, but the scene with an earnest scientific discussion about the weight of birds and their ability to carry heavy objects while their castle was under siege and then the political tirade from the mud gatherer were particularly well done, totally seriously and surreal and therefore very funny indeed.

Towards the end of the 2nd Act ,maybe the cast began to enjoy themselves too much, finding themselves funny and possibly overindulging in the local references, perilously near pantomime mode. However, it was the last night and by that time the audience were well into the genre and thoroughly appreciating the fun and laughter so it didn't detract from the overall experience.

If possible, the backdrops needed to be drawn a little closer to the set as the actors could be seen climbing up and down ladders etc and waiting for their cues, although I accept that this is quite difficult to achieve in a school hall, rather than a conventional stage and the local campaign to acquire a hall/ theatre of their own is to be greatly encouraged and all good wishes to them for this enterprise. Maybe King Arthur needed a cloak to add a bit of splendour to the Finale?

The Musicians led by Allan Fouracre sounded brilliant, a super sound! They were obviously enjoying the whole experience as much as everyone else.

Choreography under the skilful direction of Georgia Steer was super, and Director Carolyn Stoye is to be congratulated.

A show full of fun ,frolics and silliness gave the audience a chance to forget the outside world and have a laugh!

Thank you CODS.

Graham Liverton Regional Councillor NODA Southwest

