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## Monty Python's Spamalot – Mmm-mmm Good!

The wait is over, Cleveland! The Tony Award-winning Best Musical of 2005, MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT, will open the KeyBank Broadway Series at Playhouse Square Center, running October 3-15, at the State Theatre.

SPAMALOT is the outrageous new musical comedy lovingly "ripped-off" from the internationally famous comedy team's film classic Monty Python and the Holy Grail, the same folks who lit up our TVs in the 1970s with "Monty Python's Flying Circus."

Under the deft directorial touch of Mike Nichols (Tony Award-winner for Best Director for SPAMALOT), Python fans will be in heaven and musical comedy buffs will connect with all the inside jokes. Oh, so you're not a "Pythomaniac" who'll laugh hysterically just hearing the word "Ni" or at the mention of a deadly rabbit? You didn't see the movie from which SPAMALOT is indeed "ripped off" or any of the 45 TV episodes? It won't matter. All the fun and craziness onstage don't require a degree in Pythonic lunacy for anyone to follow the wacky sketches strung together in the simple plot.

Indeed, Nichols creates an all-audiences appealing combination

of film adaptation and the popular "Allusionary Musical" (the kind with plenty of easy-to-spot visual and vocal references to other well-known shows and performance styles).

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Cast of the national tour of MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT. book and lyrics by Eric Idle, music by John Du Prez and Eric Idle, directed by Mike Nichols. Photo: Joan Marcus

Telling the legendary tale of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and their quest for the Holy Grail (well, sort of, anyway), SPAMALOT features a chorus line of dancing divas and knights, flatulent Frenchmen, killer rabbits, amputees, gays, cows, monks, Jews, Finns, historians, bunnies, bed-wetters, socialists, the French, the English, the Scots, the runs, the dead, the Apostles, the Bible and Andrew Lloyd Webber. We're introduced to buxom showgirls carrying trays of jiggling Jell-o mounds and Gallic knaves on castle battlements hurling barnyard insults.

In other words, it's a world of delightfully silly stuff and nonsense, from the opening scene – a little Finnish number (Fisch Schlapping Song) that leaves you thinking you've been swept away to the spiritual home of Lord of the Rings – to the final curtain call/sing-along reprise of Always Look on the Bright Side of Life (which is actually from another Python film, The Life of Brian). It doesn't try to be serious; it focuses on the comedy that has made Monty Python a part of pop culture for almost 40 years.

The SPAMALOT touring company stars Michael Siberry as King Arthur. Siberry's many stage credits include the title role in The Royal Shakespeare Company's tour of The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, Captain VonTrapp in The Sound of Music and Merchant of Venice with Dustin Hoffman.

Also starring are Bradley Dean as Sir Galahad, Tom Deckman as the Historian, Jeff Dumas as Patsy, Pia C. Glenn as the Lady of the Lake, Christopher Gurr as Sir Bedevere, Richard Holmes as Sir Lancelot and David Turner as Sir Robin.

SPAMALOT features a book by Eric Idle, based on the screenplay of Monty Python and the Holy Grail by creators Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin, with music and lyrics by the Grammy Award-winning team of Mr. Idle and John Du Prez.

Besides his work with Monty Python in films and on TV, Eric Idle has written a West End play, Pass the Butler; three novels and many songs too rude to mention. He has sung opera, acted in movies, appeared on television and crossed America performing comedy on The Greedy Bastard Tour. His diary of the 15,000 mile bus journey was recently published by Harper Collins.

John Du Prez has composed more than 20 feature film scores, including A Fish Called Wanda, A Private Function, The Meaning of Life, Personal Services, UHF and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles I, II, & III. He has worked with Eric Idle since 1978.

Get ready to laugh – a lot! Get ready to groan – a lot! Get ready to hold your sides from laughing – a lot! Get down to the State Theatre at Playhouse Square Center for SPAMALOT! It's mmm-mmm good, and you're going to love it – A LOT!!

#### Spamalot – Synopsis

Trying to describe what this show is about is not easy. A quote, taken out of context from a review in the The New York Times, may sum it up well enough: "A resplendently silly new musical."

The fun begins even before the show begins, as you thumb through your program and learn about a foreign language "Moosical." It's a set-up for the historian-narrator's solemn "For this was England" introduction to having the ensemble hilariously land in a country that rhymes with but isn't England. Huh? You'll see.

King Arthur's journey to recruit warriors for his kingdom (which here is Camelot-cum-Caesar's Palace) has him and his loyal sidekick Patsy clop-clop-clopping through the starting gate on their non-existent horses. The quest for the Holy Grail changes from a holy chalice for God (a voice-over

role for original Pythonite John Cleese) to shrubbery and then putting on a show and taking it to Broadway for the Knight of Ni. That final permutation of the grail adds to the show's nods to other Broadway shows or performance styles, notably a sendup of Andrew Lloyd Webber's never-ending, much reprised arias (The Song That Goes Like This) and the knights doing a "bottle dance" a la Fiddler on the Roof (You Won't Succeed on Broadway) as well as a Peter Allen crossed with Las Cage Aux Folles rhumba carnival (His Name is Lancelot).

Thus, the plot becomes a two-tiered operation. On the one hand there is the dutiful acting-out of the movie's most famous set pieces (the killer-rabbit scene, the bring-out-your-dead scene, the taunting Frenchman scene, etc.). On the other hand, the show spoofs classic song-and-dance extravaganzas, showing what the satiric revue Forbidden Broadway might be like with an \$11 million budget.

Monty Python fans appreciate SPAMALOT's many references to the 1975 Holy Grail film, as well as other material in the Python canon, including a line from The Lumberjack Song, nods to the Ministry of Silly Walks, the Election Night Special and Dead Parrot Sketch routines, a rendition of the song Always Look on the Bright Side of Life from Monty Python's Life of Brian (1979), and the Fisch Schlapping Song, which is a reference to both The Fish-Slapping Dance and the song Finland. Another reference is actually part of the program; there are several gag pages about a musical entitled Dik Od Triaanenen Fol (Finns Ain't What They Used To Be).

Broadway musical fans appreciate all the visual and auditory references to other musicals and musical theater in general, such as the spoof of Andrew Lloyd Webber productions and many other Broadway power ballads; the character of Sir Not Appearing in This Show being Don Quixote; a member of the French "army" dressed as Eponine from Les Miserables; and a line pulled from Another Hundred People from Sondheim's Company by the "damsel" Herbert. The song You Won't Succeed On Broadway parodies The Producers and Yentl.

## Spamalot – The Songs

### Act I

1. Fisch Schlapping Song
2. King Arthur's Song
3. I Am Not Dead Yet
4. Come With Me
5. Laker Girls Cheer
6. The Song That Goes Like This
7. All for One
8. Knights of the Round Table
9. Song That Goes Like This (reprise)
10. Find Your Grail
11. Run Away

### Act III Wait...No...Act II

1. Always Look On the Bright Side of Life
2. Brave Sir Robin
3. You Won't Succeed on Broadway
4. The Diva's Lament
5. Where Are You?
6. Here Are You
7. His Name is Lancelot
8. I'm All Alone
9. Song That Goes Like This (reprise)
10. The Holy Grail
11. Find Your Grail Final-Medley
12. Always Look On the Bright Side of Life (Sing-Along Reprise)

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## Who or What Is "Monty Python?"



David Turner as 'Sir Robin' (center) and the cast of the national tour of MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT. book and lyrics by Eric Idle, music by John Du Prez and Eric Idle, directed by Mike Nichols. Photo: Joan Marcus

Is he God or Godot? An agent of the devil or an agent of the William Morris Agency? Or is he, as some have argued, a fictitious character invented in 1969 by Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin in a desperate attempt to find a title for their rather silly TV show?

Whatever the truth, he is the eponymous hero who fronts "The Flying Circus," The Holy Grail, The Life of Brian, The Meaning of Life, And Now For Something Completely Different and who appeared Live at Drury Lane, City Center and the Hollywood Bowl. He has fronted numerous books including The Big Red Book and The Papperbok, as well as many CDs, DVDs and matching ties and handkerchiefs. He is currently in retirement in an old jokes home near Dover, anxiously awaiting Nighthood and a Knightnurse. SPAMALOT is his first Broadway show.

Really, now. We all know that Monty Python is not a person, but the group of British actors and writers (and one American) mentioned above that performed their famous comedy show "Monty Python's Flying Circus" on the BBC from 1969 to 1974, with subsequent international fame and success.

## Monty Python Timeline

October 27, 1939 – John Cleese born in England

November 22, 1940 – Terry Gilliam born in Minneapolis, MN

January 8, 1941 – Graham Chapman born in England

February 1, 1942 – Terry Jones born in England

March 29, 1943 – Eric Idle born in England

May 5, 1943 – Michael Palin born in England

May 11, 1969 – John Cleese and Graham Chapman met Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin

May 23, 1969 – BBC gave the go-ahead to create a 13-episode comedy program

October 5, 1969 to January 11, 1970 – First year of Python comedy aired on BBC

September 15, 1970 to December 22, 1970 – Second year aired

September 28, 1971 – The Python's first film, And Now for Something Completely Different, opened in England

October 19, 1972 to January 18, 1973– Third year of Python comedy aired on BBC

1974 –Monty Python and the Holy Grail filmed in Scotland.

October 31, 1974 to December 5, 1974 – Fourth year of Python comedy aired on BBC (Produced only 6 new episodes and without John Cleese.)

1974 – American PBS stations began to run all 45 episodes on late Sunday night

March, 1975 – Monty Python and The Holy Grail opened in L.A.

August 17, 1979 – Monty Python's Life of Brian opened in New York City

June 25, 1982 – Monty Python Live at the Hollywood Bowl opened in New York City

March 30, 1983 – Monty Python's The Meaning of Life opened in the U.S.

October 4, 1989 – Graham Chapman died of cancer

2002 – Eric Idle and veteran Python composer John Du Prez wrote the first draft of the SPAMALOT script and produced a demo disc of the score.

March 17, 2005 – Five of the living Pythons and the ashes of Graham Chapman (in the urn) are reunited at the Broadway opening night of MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT at the Sam S. Shubert Theatre.

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Cast of the national tour of MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT. book and lyrics by Eric Idle, music by John Du Prez and Eric Idle, directed by Mike Nichols. Photo: Joan Marcus

As my friend Eileen said after listening to the cast recording of MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT, "Sir Lancelot has come a lo-o-o-o-ng way from Robert Goulet."

Indeed. Who knew that Camelot would ever lead the way to SPAMALOT? Who knew that the Knights of the Round Table would ever sing, dance, fight, be taunted, search for the Holy Grail and put on a Broadway show? Who knew that Sir Lancelot—yes, Sir Lancelot!—might be a bit more sexually confused than we ever thought?

Now you're probably expecting me to say that actor Rick Holmes (aka Richard Holmes; aka Rick Vincent Holmes), who plays the heady role of Sir Lancelot in the touring company of SPAMALOT coming to Playhouse Square Center in October, knew that it would all come to this some day. But he didn't. He was a fan of Monty Python's "Flying Circus" TV show, and, of course the movies that Monty Python created, but little did he know back then that he would be starring in a Monty Python musical playing all over the United States and Canada some day.

"I may not have known it back then, but I'm very glad to have such a great role in such a funny, successful show today," he told me when I caught up with him by telephone in Toronto, where the show was playing.

"I'm having a blast in a show that is completely unique, yet recognized by so many. I am still calling friends from junior high, reciting lines that we all knew from the TV show and the Holy Grail movie. They recite many of them right along with me, and I explain how they're being used in the show," he told me.

It's only his second musical, having played Cliff in both the Broadway Studio 54 and national touring company productions of Cabaret as his "intro" into the genre, but he is already looking toward his future in more.

"I came into musical theater rather 'late in life,' but I hope to find more roles in musicals that need my type. I may not be a 'singer,' but I am an actor who can sing. I may not be a 'dancer,' but I'm an actor who can move or dance well enough...I think," he adds with a laugh.

He's enjoying SPAMALOT as much as the public and the press are, but he tells me of the rigors, too. "I have to go the gym in each city we play.....not because I'm so into working out, but because musicals are so physical! I have to stay in shape enough not to get injured," he explains.

Playing multiple characters has its challenges, but Holmes enjoys them all, including the Knight Who Says “Ni,” the French Taunter, Tim the Enchanter, and, of course, Sir Lancelot. “When Lancelot storms the castle to rescue Herbert, well, that certainly is a fun twist.”

The show-stopping second act is filled with hit numbers, but Holmes feels the rhumba carnival homage to Peter Allen with some La Cage Aux Folles thrown in is a highlight. “I don’t want to give anything away,” he continues, “but it is called His Name is Lancelot, after all.”

He explains more of the show’s structure: “Act I is, naturally, the set-up. It’s all about the quest for the grail, the Knights of the Round Table, etc. Act II is just a plain romp...more fun than the audience knows what to do with sometimes. It’s the ‘switch’ to putting on a Broadway show, to being who you truly are, to plain ol’ silliness and fun.”

I asked him some of the usual “acting questions,” and he pretty well summed them up by explaining that “the trick for us and (director) Mike Nichols is to look at things in the two sections of the entire show: obviously there is the sketch comedy, but there is also the need for us to think of each character we play as having objectives, relationships...that are real, no matter how funny or silly we may perceive the particular scene to be.”

His next comment, though, is one that we all love to hear from any actor who’s living the dream: “There are days when I just have to stop and think ‘I can’t believe this much fun is what I’m doing for a living...that this is what pays the bills!’”

Holmes has been able to pay the bills pretty successfully with this acting thing ever since he arrived at New York University to work on an MFA in acting. Oh, he’s had some of the typical “actor jobs” like doorman/bartender at the original “Catch a Rising Star” where he got to know guys like Jon Stewart and Ray Romano, but his first big “gig” was the role of Lord Grey/ensemble in Richard III with the New York Shakespeare Festival while he was still working on his masters.

“I’ve done a little of everything,” he goes on to explain, “but what actor doesn’t? I’ve been fortunate to be on Broadway in everything from Cabaret to Timon of Athens. At the Roundabout I worked with Blythe Danner and Ed Hermann in a production of Terrence Rattigan’s The Deep Blue Sea.” Other Broadway credits include The Pillowman, Major Barbara, St. Joan and The Government Inspector.

His off-Broadway work is equally impressive. He’s appeared with the Joseph Papp Public Theatre several times, at Lincoln Center, at the Delacorte Theatre, the Atlantic Theatre, the Vineyard Theatre and with the New York Shakespeare Festival.

V viewers have seen his work on Law and Order, Law and Order SVU, The City and All My Children. “I had the good fortune to work on an ABC series called Talk to Me with Beverly D’Angelo and Kyra Sedgwick, but the series wasn’t quite as fortunate: it only ran for a partial season.”

“Another TV job that was a highlight was working on a production of The Petrified Forest, which was a salute to the 1955 production on live TV’s Producer’s Showcase. I played the same role that a young Jack Klugman played in the 1955 show. The coolest part, though, was that it was Delbert Mann directing—the same director of the 1955 TV show!”

The last time Holmes was in Cleveland and at Playhouse Square Center was with the touring production of Angels in America. “I played the Mormon Joe Pitt, grappling with his latent homosexuality.” Holmes remembers the beautiful, spacious, “elegant system of theaters that all seemed to be hooked together.”

Holmes started the SPAMALOT tour in March in Boston for a six-week run,

moved on to Chicago for an eight-week run, to Washington DC for a five-week run, then to Toronto, also for an extended run. "These longer 'sit-downs' as they're called are great, but I'm really looking forward to the two-week runs at so many venues throughout the US. We travel all together on a bus, and it really makes the company closer, enjoying each other in so many ways," Holmes explains.

"I loved where I stayed last time when I was in Cleveland, so I'm sure I'll love it again. And those great theaters—I am really looking forward to seeing them again! This is a great show, and I know Cleveland is going to love it!"

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## Spam, Glorious Spam



Jeff Dumas as 'Patsy' (foreground) and the cast of the national tour of MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT. book and lyrics by Eric Idle, music by John Du Prez and Eric Idle, directed by Mike Nichols. Photo: Joan Marcus

The Hormel Company and Monty Python have a long history together. On December 15, 1970, the popular TV show "Monty Python's Flying Circus" ended with a famous skit. A couple enters a restaurant and tries to order a meal. To their frustration, however, every item on the menu contains SPAM, i.e. "spam, egg, sausage, and spam" and "spam, spam, spam, spam, baked beans, spam, spam, and spam." (There's a historical connection here. It seems that many British people had become tired of SPAM during World War II, as it was one of the few meat products available then—which is probably why the Python crew picked on it!). Although the skit lasts only two minutes, the word SPAM is mentioned at least 94 times. Throughout the skit, a chorus of Vikings sings a song about "lovely SPAM, wonderful SPAM." And they sing so loudly that they finally drown out the customers trying to order their meals. If you don't believe me, check out the lyrics and hear them sung at

Now, in case you didn't realize it, this is the connection to the type of e-mail known as spam: Drowning out other people's messages with a flood of your own messages.

You might wonder what the Hormel Food Corporation thinks about all this. Do they mind that the word 'spam' – something people hate to get in their

e-mail – is the same as the name of their still famous canned meat? Do they get upset? Or do they like the publicity?

If you visit the Hormel website [www.hormel.com](http://www.hormel.com), you'll find that the company has lots to say about SPAM and "spam." They are adamant about people using SPAM (all caps) to refer to their canned meat products, to distinguish it from "spam" e-mail. You'll also read "Use of the term spam was adopted as a result of the Monty Python skit in which a group of Vikings sang a chorus of "spam, spam, spam..." in an increasing crescendo, drowning out other conversation. Logically, the analogy applied because UCE (unsolicited commercial e-mail) was drowning out normal discourse on the Internet.

It hasn't passed Hormel by that the Monty Python sketch actually gave its product an iconic status, and so in a reasonable tongue-in-cheek manner they went on to say: "We do not object to use of this slang to describe UCE, although we do object to the use of our product image in association with that term."

But it doesn't end there. Hormel has once again joined Monty Python to push its product. In honor of MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT, Hormel foods introduced a limited edition flavor, SPAM golden honey grail, in a "SPAMALOT collector's edition" can. The can features SPAMALOT graphics and characters from the show and instructions in "SPAMALOT-ese" on how to "cooketh" SPAM.

"SPAM products have been spoofed by the Monty Python comedy team for decades," said Nick Meyer, senior product manager of Hormel Foods. "The brand is beloved by so many, so we are pleased to offer this special collector's edition can and SPAM golden honey grail to consumers."

"SPAM is the holy grail of canned meats," said Eric Idle, co-author of the musical. "We're thrilled to dine on SPAM golden honey grail at the round table of SPAMALOT."

That's your first (and obvious) SPAM/SPAMALOT connection. Here's another: At parties both before and after performances of SPAMALOT the "in" treat has been SPAM cupcakes. Yep, you heard me: SPAM cupcakes. These are not your bakery's style of cupcakes; oh, no—these are more of a heavy hors d'oeuvre, guaranteed to stick to your ribs (and other locations). I'm providing the recipe, just so you can try them!

### SPAM Cupcakes

Servings: 12  
Prep time: 30 minutes  
Cook time: 30 minutes

#### Ingredients:

For cupcakes:

- 2 SPAM Classic (12 oz.) cans
- 2 eggs slightly beaten
- 2/3 cup quick cooking oatmeal
- 3/4 cup milk

For glaze:

- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon prepared mustard
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon water
- 4 cups prepared instant mashed potatoes
- Snipped fresh chives for garnish

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 F. For cupcakes, in large bowl, grate SPAM. Add eggs, oatmeal and milk; mix well. Lightly spray a regular size muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray. Fill each muffin tin two-thirds full with SPAM mixture. Using the back of a spoon, lightly press mixture into tins. In a small bowl, whisk together the brown sugar, mustard, vinegar and water. Lightly spoon glaze mixture over SPAM mixture. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until mixture is set. Meanwhile, prepare 4 cups of instant mashed potatoes. Remove cupcakes from oven. Place oven rack 2-3 inches from heat source and heat broiler. Top each cupcake with potatoes. Return muffin tin to oven. Broil 2-3 minutes or until potatoes are lightly browned. Garnish with fresh chives and serve. Tip: For best results, let cupcakes stand 5 minutes before removing from pan.

But wait, we're not through yet! I have dessert for us, but at least this is a fun, recognizable treat! Ben and Jerry's, the Vermont-based ice cream company has recently released a Monty Python-themed ice cream.

The company started selling the officially licensed confection, called Vermonty Python, this past winter. The ice cream is only available in the traditional pint-sized containers, and may be found in your local grocery stores. The packaging features suitably Pythonesque images and a HolyGrail/SPAMALOT theme (including the Python Grail) and the following text:

And now for something completely euphoric. We interrupt ourselves with much hooting through tin horns to bring you this brilliant new ice cream made from dried shrubbery and old cereal packets. Don't be daft – we're just having you on a bit, all right? This is a ripping good flavor, really, so buy it quickly now and run away, silly person, or we shall taunt you a second time!

The flavor is coffee liqueur ice cream with a chocolate cookie crumb swirl and fudge cows. Think tiramisu with chocolate treats.

So there you have it: The SPAM/SPAMALOT/Monty Python food connection. I'm sure there's more, but I've had enough, thank you.



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#### Spamalot: The Background and Making of a Hit Musical



(L to R) David Turner as 'Sir Robin,' Rick Holmes as 'Sir Lancelot,' Bradley Dean as 'Sir Dennis Galahad,' Christopher Gurr as 'Sir Bedevere,' and Michael Siberry as 'King Arthur' in the National Tour of MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT, with book and lyrics by Eric Idle, music by John Du Prez and Eric Idle, directed by Mike Nichols. Photo: Joan Marcus

So what, exactly, is SPAMALOT?

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT is basically the cult film Monty Python and the Holy Grail adapted for the stage. It involves many items and characters that are familiar from the movie: the two halves of a coconut being banged together to represent the clopping of horses' hooves, the killer rabbit, the holy hand grenade, King Arthur and, of course, all of his silly knights of the round table.

But unlike the mere \$400,000 spent on the original 1975 film, the new Broadway and touring show cost multi-millions, having already spent the budget of the original film on lawyers alone, and those millions went into making a simple comedy sketch-show into a full-blown musical comedy. The biggest difference when comparing and contrasting the film and play is simply that the play is loaded with songs guaranteed to engender all sorts of laughter, from titters to guffaws to side-splitting explosions. Though Holy Grail did include a few musical notations (such as Brave Sir Robin, which is featured in the stage version), SPAMALOT has over 25 numbers that poke fun at everything from Andrew Lloyd Webber to homosexuality, from Las Vegas to the plague, and from pessimism to death itself.

Another large difference is that while Holy Grail is basically a bunch of sketches strung together with no real ending, SPAMALOT has a plot (albeit a loose one) and a resolution. The last major variation is the addition of a new character: The Lady of the Lake, as fabled in most Arthurian legends. By instituting The Lady of the Lake, a female was added to the mostly-male cast, thus balancing the show and "rounding it out." The lady also makes way for a touch of romance which leads to marriage at the very end.

But SPAMALOT didn't just happen with the snap of a finger. The idea for SPAMALOT was conceived in the early 80s, yet the first draft of the play wasn't composed until December of 2001. The brainchild of Python member Eric Idle, SPAMALOT didn't even really begin to take shape until 2002. Along with lifetime friend and musical companion John Du Prez, the two began working on songs for the show once they had a basic script. Idle writes below from his diary:

Looking back now at the first draft, I am struck by how little of the original lyrics we kept. In the text I had indicated areas where I felt we needed a song, but it was all still fairly loose. There were some completed lyrics, some snatches of doggerel, and some fairly sketchy rhyming gags to indicate song possibilities. Here and there we lifted a line for a song, or we picked up a theme from a suggestion, but there was total sea change the minute John came on board. That's the great thing about a partner, they get you to places you would never even have imagined. We got so into writing that at one point we ad-libbed a complete song onto the tape recorder, John at the piano and me screaming lyrics. It is still our favorite song in the show and it was the one the Pythons immediately responded to—The Song That Goes Like This.

After completing the recordings and once they were all onto a CD, the CD was shipped to the other four surviving Pythons: John Cleese, Terry Jones, Terry Gilliam and Michael Palin. Somewhat surprisingly, all agreed to the musical. Not long after, Bill Haber was signed on as the producer, and Academy Award-winning Mike Nichols was set to direct. Piece by piece the musical fell into place with actors Tim Curry, David Hyde Pierce and Hank Azaria set to star as Arthur, Robin and Lancelot.

The show pre-opened at Chicago's Shubert Theatre on December 21,

2004. All shows in Chicago sold out within a single week. The show played to packed houses on a nightly basis, and it was well received by the public and critics alike. The only ones who didn't seem to like it – and they were few and far between – had only one complaint, and that was that the play was “not enough like the film.”

The show then moved to New York and Broadway's Shubert Theatre in February. From then until March, it had what is called a “gypsy run” – basically another set of previews and “tester shows.” But when it finally premiered on March 17 and “officially” opened, hundreds of fans and reporters swarmed the theater to snap photos of a rare sight: a Python reunion. The evening ended in confetti and tears of joy.

Since that time, the popularity of SPAMALOT has continued to grow. It still plays to sold-out houses and remains a top grossing musical on Broadway, pulling in thousands of dollars a week in revenues from tickets and merchandise that includes clapping-ready coconuts, t-shirts, stuffed animals, books, killer rabbit puppets, special edition golden honey grail Spam and more. A 11-stop tour across America (and parts of Canada) is currently underway. In October the show will premiere in London where British fans have already snapped up tickets, and coming next year SPAMALOT will hold court in its very own Grail Theatre in the Wynn Casino in Las Vegas, designed and built by Eric Idle and original set designer Tim Hatley.



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### Monty Python Trivia Quiz

OK, we have some hard-boiled Pythoniacs out there, we know. We also know that we have some Python-converts stepping up. And we know that we've provided you with plenty of useless information regarding Monty Python, the Pythons, the shows, etc. So now it's your turn: see how well you can do with a Monty Python trivia quiz! Don't peek at the bottom for the answers—uphold the code of the Knights of the Round Table! Incidentally, some of the information for the answers will NOT be found in these pages. Too bad.



(L to R) Bradley Dean as 'Sir Dennis Galahad' and Pia Glenn as the 'Lady of the Lake' in the in the National Tour of MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT, with book and lyrics by Eric Idle, music by John Du Prez and Eric Idle, directed by Mike Nichols. Photo: Joan Marcus

1. What Monty Python now plays Q in the James Bond movies?
2. Which of the six Monty Python members passed away?
3. Which Monty Python is not English? He also created the animation for the group.
4. What is the real name of the “Monty Python’s Flying Circus” theme?
5. How many “Monty Python’s Flying Circus” episodes were produced?
6. What was the name of the first Monty Python film?
7. Name the actress who appeared with the Pythons in almost all of the Flying Circus TV episodes, in their movies, and in their stage performances. She has often been called “The Seventh Python.” HINT: Her last name is the same as a major American city in the Midwest.
8. After the third year of the TV show “Monty Python’s Flying Circus,” which Python member did not return for the fourth year?
9. Name the three Python members who attended Cambridge University in England.

Now, I told you not to peek at the answers, so I’m going to put them in really small print. Have someone else check your answers for you---yes, print this out and take it as you would any important quiz. No, there’s no prize—just bragging rights, and you rabid Pythoniacs are into that.

1. John Cleese 2. Graham Chapman died in 1989. When asked if the Pythons would ever get back together, Eric Idle has remarked in the past, “Graham insists on remaining dead, which is really selfish of him.” 3. Terry Gilliam was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota 4. “The Liberty Bell March” by John Philip Sousa 5. 45. They produced 13 shows from each of the first three seasons and 6 shows in the fourth and final season. 6. “And Now for Something Completely Different.” The film opened in 1971 7. Carol CLEVELAND 8. John Cleese. He left to pursue other projects. 9. Eric Idle, Graham Chapman and John Cleese. Michael Palin and Terry Jones attended Oxford University.