

Spamalot – The Little Theatre of Alexandria

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Audience Alert: It became clear to me, when I was the only person howling with laughter, that the musical intro to *Spamalot*, The Little Theatre of Alexandria's first show of the 2014-2015 season, that the audience failed to pick up on the musical cues that consist of every cockamamie intro passage in the known world played at the opening of an event. The collection of tally-ho horns, magisterial foofaraws and sweeping orchestrations from famous film scores – had gone entirely unnoticed by the audience. It goes on for a full five minutes. Now that you're in on it, you too can roar with delight.

Python-heads know this musical backwards and forwards. It features King Arthur, King of the Britons and his Knights of the Round Table, Sir Robin, Sir Galahad and Sir Lancelot – all your adorable medieval heroes on a quest to find the Holy Grail.

Remember the Lady of the Lake who armed Arthur with the Excalibur sword? She's



there too – in full throttle.

So what's not to like about Monty Python and his merry band of men?

Filled with quirky dance routines, twenty-five musical numbers, political spoofs, feather-brained high jinks and boundless double *entendres*, LTA'S production is high-powered



hilarity on steroids.

Part of the quest for Arthur and his men, as ordered by the "Knights Who Say Ni" aka "The Keepers of the Secret Word", is to require them to put on a Broadway Show. Alas, they are "Jew-less", as in the number, "You Won't Succeed on Broadway", which merrily claims, "If it's not kosher, there's no show, sir." Nonplussed they rally the troops with "*Hava Nagila*", and a righteously rendered Cossack dance.

Director **Wade Corder** has assembled a terrific cast starting with **James Hotsko Jr.** as Arthur, **Patrick McMahon** as Sir Lancelot, **Dimitri Gann** as Sir Robin, **Matt Liptak** as Arthur's goofy sidekick Patsy, and **Ashlie-Amber Harris** as the Lady of the Lake, with cast members handling a number of parts. But it's Harris I want to scream about. As magical as the dynamics are between the players and as rib-tickling as their antics, it is Harris that is volcanic. Her supernaturally brilliant comic timing, boffo voice and knockout figure are the stuff superstars are made of.



Scatting and soulful in Cher-like gold Lurex, she is electrifying. “The Diva’s Lament (Whatever Happened to My Part)” in which she bemoans being off-stage for too long while our hapless knights gadabout seeking shrubbery (don’t ask) and bolluxing up the handy ruse of a Trojan rabbit (ask if you like), will have you in tears. Harris actually got a huge ovation for this riotous number. It’s no small wonder that after the run of this show the former *American Idol* contestant is headed straight to Broadway with agents already lined up. See her now before you read about her in *Variety*. Don’t make me say, “I told you so!”

So whether you drool over sexy chorus girls in red leotards and sequined shrugs, cheerleaders that bare their navels and French Cancan dancers or dancing knights in white satin, male Conga dancers in neon-colored ruffles or peasants in sackcloth, YOU



WILL BE DAZZLED.

Grant Kevin Lane designed the costumes – all 200 of them, **Grace Machanic** did the amazing choreography, **Rebecca Sheehy** and **Helen Bard-Sobola** designed the 400+ props, one of DC's finest Accent Coaches, **Carol Strachan**, taught the 20–person cast Scottish, English and French accents and the superb 14-piece orchestra is conducted by **Paul Nasto**.

Highly recommended.

Through August 23rd at The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe Street. For tickets and information call the box office at 703 683-0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com