

SPAMALOT INSPIRES STANDING OVATION, UNANIMOUS LAUGHTER



By [Erin P. Doherty](#)

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Photo by Keith Waters for Kx Photography
Knights of the Round Table

ALEXANDRIA, VA. - Arthur Snow and his team effectively execute special effects, beginning with projections of floating clouds and sky that change color behind the curtain. Then, the curtain opens and a high-energy evening of fun begins.

The Historian (Patrick Graham) provides context from a castle tower before Arthur's story commences with slapstick humor. Colorfully dressed dancers hit each other with fish and sing "The Fisch Schlapping Dance," until the Historian clarifies, "I said England, not Finland".

Arthur (James Hotsko Jr.) begins his quest by putting out a call for knights, enticing one, Sir Dennis Galahad (Peter Halverson), with The Lady of the Lake's help. But Spamalot's Arthur is a lonely King, accompanied only by his faithful manservant, the long-suffering Patsy (Matt Liptak).

The Lady of the Lake (Ashlie-Amber Harris) sings "The Song That Goes Like This" with Dennis Galahad (Peter Halverson), which inspires him to be a true knight. Before this, Gallahad was a Marxist theorist before that time who ridiculed Arthur. Harris's voice and stage presence are strong and beautiful as she and Arthur push the comic boundaries of their characters without overdoing it.

Someone rolls out a cart of plague victims, including Not-Dead Fred (Graham). They rally, causing the bureaucrats charged with rounding them up to try to finish them off. (Spamalot moves King Arthur's legend forward by about four hundred years. The plagues came about two hundred years later.)

Soon after, Camelot starts resembling Las Vegas, complete with "Laker Girls" as showgirls. Then, God's voice interrupts Arthur's and his

Knights' revelry with a command to find the Holy Grail. Meanwhile, Sir Lancelot (Patrick McMahan) discovers that his damsel in distress is Prince Herbert (Graham).

Sir Robin (Dimitri Gann), whose red wig is surprisingly realistic, discovers that his principal knightly virtue is musical comedy, which is helpful when the Knights Who Say "Ni!" challenge Arthur to stage a Broadway musical.

More impressive special effects ensue when King Arthur amputates the Black Knight's (Halverson's) arms and legs. The Black Knight insists, "I'm fine. Come on and fight, you pansy!"

The Black Knight wasn't Arthur's only hindrance. Another was a Killer Rabbit guarding a hill in France. Avid theatergoer Patrick Estrada favored a different funny prop in this scene, though. "It was the Holy Hand Grenade! The Divine Instruction to Sir Lancelot to toss the Holy Hand Grenade on the count of three was hilarious!"

Estrada has also noticed a pattern with these productions, "The actors with multiple roles maintained clear separation and distinction while playing them. So what else is new? It's amazing how they always do this!"

The Knights find the Holy Grail with an unsuspecting audience member's help, who coincidentally, is also named Arthur. He enhanced the show with his humor, good nature, and easy grace onstage.

Don't miss this brief, shining moment that is "Spamalot." The show runs from August 2 through 23, 2014. For tickets, either call The Little Theatre of Alexandria at 703.683.0496 or visit www.thelittletheatre.com.



Photo by Keith Waters for Kx Photography
"Camelot in Spamalot"



Photo by Keith Waters for Kx Photography
Spamalot Cast



Photo by Keith Waters for Kx Photography
Todd Paul (Sir Bedevere), Ashlie-Amber Harris (Lady of the Lake), and King Arthur (James Hotsko, Jr)



Photo by Keith Waters for Kx Photography
King Arthur (James Hotsko, Jr) and Matt Liptak (Patsy)