

# arts/entertainment



Photo courtesy of Python Pictures LTD.

Graham Chapman, who is fleeing from the Romans, is about to land safely on mendicant Michael Palin, in this scene from Monty Python's *Life of Brian*.

## Mistaken messiah may offend some

By Pete Schmitz

*Monty Python's Life Of Brian* is great Monty Python, but poor parody and only fair cinema.

Yet credit must be given to director Terry Jones, who also plays Mandy, Brian's mother, and film editor Julian Doyle. At least they make sure that their various skits are focused on one character and theme.

### movie review

This is a great improvement upon their previous movie *Monty Python and The Holy Grail*, which amounted to nothing more than an incongruent display of humor that was sometimes satiric, other times slapstick and most times tasteless.

In their latest effort, many may be offended by what the Python crew make fun of, which is Judean politics during the era of Christ, and mistaken messiahs.

However crude the crucifixion of Brian may seem at the end, it is likely that you will leave the theater humming the tune that accompanies this last scene.

Aside from frequent diversions, this comedy trials the downfall of a man named Brian, who was born at the same time as Jesus. The hero of this "epic" is a klutzy mama's boy who inadvertently winds up with a disorganized terrorist group called the People's Front of Judea.

Through a series of mishaps which occur when this organization is in danger of being busted by the Romans, Brian ends up jabbering to a crowd to avoid armed Roman soldiers who are out to get him. The crowd takes such a

liking to its new found hope that everyone will run after him with one sandal off and the other on.

The funniest scene in this picture happens when Brian tries to ward off his followers by encouraging them to act as individuals. When the masses shout that they are all different, one dissenter yells that he is not different.

The costumes, historical characters, setting and choir music all alluded nicely to other religious epics, yet parody fails to emerge because the actors tenaciously cling to their familiar comic devices such as having the men play most of the female parts, accentuating English accents, and having the characters beat each other when dialogue disintegrates.

Christians probably won't like to hear Christ referred to as a "bloody do-gooder" by a former leper, who is forced to make a living after he is cured.

Many who consider rape a serious problem will not appreciate Mandy's line "it started out that way," when her son asks her if he was conceived in rape.

Indeed, the character of Mandy, an antithesis to the sweet and pretty virgin Mary, is representative of redundant misogynist indulgence that prevails throughout the Monty Python shows.

But the writers do succeed in creating some good satire which questions the effectiveness of charismatic leadership and trivial quibbling among members of revolutionary groups.

Because their humor is more focused and witty than usual, many audiences who have avoided Monty Python may be won over by this movie.

But for those who like to take films and religion seriously, *Life of Brian* may kill their evening. It is now playing at the Douglas 3.

## Ponty and band electrify crowd with jazz/rock concert

By Casey McCabe

The electrifying violin of Jean-Luc Ponty and the smoothness of his current crew of back-up musicians found an enthusiastic nerve in the crowd of 1,214 at Omaha's Music Hall Tuesday night.

### concert review

The highly respected Ponty touched several bases in his jazz/rock repertoire, which besides several solo albums has included work with Frank Zappa, and The Mahavishnu Orchestra.

Opening the show, after sound problems had caused a considerable delay, was Luigi Incorporated. Leading the band on vibes was Luigi Waites, a multi-talented jazz composer and arranger, and a major force behind the Omaha Jazz Society.

Luigi Incorporated played a more traditional jazz, and in between the groups original compositions "Intrepid Fox" and "Mambo" were well-covered jazz arrangements of such songs as "Over The Rainbow" and "Michelle." The audience was especially responsive to the George Benson-style guitar riffs produced by John Albright on his Gibson hollow body.

But the crowd was hot for Ponty

### Journal prepared

The University of Nebraska's Center for Great Plains Study is making preparations to publish an interdisciplinary journal, *The Great Plains Quarterly*.

The first issue of the quarterly will not appear until January 1981. However, Frederick Luebke, professor of history and editor of the journal, said his associate editors have been named and an advisory board has been formed.

The journal will publish research and criticism dealing with the history, geography, literature, fine arts, folklore, anthropology, politics, economics and sociology of the Great Plains region.

especially after another long delay between groups. When the bearded Frenchman finally appeared, the cheers went up, and though he seemed a little tired, at times a little lethargic, Jean-Luc delivered what the crowd had been waiting for.

Material from two of Ponty's best efforts, *Cosmic Messenger* and *Enigmatic Ocean*, was the most quickly received, while offerings of "Stay With Me" and "Dream Eyes" for his newest L.P. *A Taste For Passion* showed no deviation from Ponty's unique musical formula.

At times with a more traditional jazz sound, at others with an obvious rock

influence, Ponty and the band always kept a good continuity to the music. If things even remotely threatened to lose interest, a searing riff from his violin would snap the crowd back to attention. Ponty also split time between violin and keyboard, augmenting the full time band member who throughout the show played very supportive keyboards and synthesizer.

"Struggle of the Turtle To The Sea" a suite from *Enigmatic Ocean* was the band's showcase tune, giving each member an ample share of the spotlight. As was the case all night, bass player Ralph Armstrong elicited a tremendous response with his inspired, enjoyable performance on bass,

that at times could easily be mistaken for more complicated-licks from a lead guitar.

When Ponty slowed things down, it was to an ethereal pace. The title track from *Cosmic Messenger* found him finger-picking his blue violin with an eerie echo chamber delayed echo, producing a hypnotic, space-age control of the sound.

When the band left the stage, nobody left their seats and Ponty was brought back for two encores including his most recognized work "New Country" from *Imaginary Voyager*. Ponty left the Music Hall crowd with a thought that had already entered their minds; that he might have to make it back to Omaha soon.



Photo by R. K. Hahn

Jean-Luc Ponty, a versatile violinist, performing at Omaha's Music Hall Tuesday night.