

Arts & Entertainment

Brit humor comes to campus

One of Python's driving forces says new movie possible

By Geoff McMurtry
Staff Reporter

And now for something completely different. A scholarly, professorial-looking middle-aged man walks to the podium. The crowd falls respectfully silent.

"I'd like to begin by asking you for a few minutes of abuse," he says. People oblige with screams, jeers and catcalls; they hurl vile epithets and occasionally the odd roll of toilet paper as well. Things are off to

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a good start.

"I rather like that, and I've found it to be a good way to start things off," he told me later.

Just who is conducting this lecture?

"He's not the messiah; his name is Brian, and he's been a very naughty boy."

"Now that's what I call a dead parrot!"

"We're here for your hubby's kidneys, ma'am."

"A Yellowbeard is never more dangerous than when he's dead."

"A king must know these things."

No, he's not the messiah, and he's not your biology professor (although he is qualified as a doctor). His name is Graham Chapman, and he's been all of the above or at least partly responsible. As a member of Monty Python, Chapman has written or co-written such off-the-wall masterpieces as "Looking For An Argument," in which a customer actually ends up paying someone to argue with him. Their discourse deteriorates into an argument about whether they're really arguing or not. Another memorable Chapman contribution is "The Pet Shop," where a particularly wily sales clerk manages to sell a parrot that's just a bit past its expiration date.

Some of the more memorable characters he's portrayed have been King Arthur in "Holy Grail," the star-struck, misidentified Brian of "Life of Brian," the brave, notorious pirate "Yellowbeard," and most of the serious, authoritative types on the "Flying Circus" show.

And now for something completely different.

The "Monty Python's Flying Circus" TV show lasted from 1968 to



Courtesy of Greater Talent Network

Graham Chapman

1972. The show was performed live onstage off and on until 1976. They've made three feature films, released several related books, and had two films made of highlights from the TV and stage shows.

Chapman and the other five members of the group have come to be associated primarily with each other. That's not all they do, yet most of their recognition comes from being part of Monty Python. How is this a problem?

"It's good in that they've heard of me and will read my scripts because of that, but it can be bad in that some things are read the wrong way, or they have the wrong expectations."

There are always rumors about anything interesting, and one of the most persistent is always that there will or will not be another Python film. The particular rumor I'd heard was that John Cleese was the only member not wanting to do another film. Apparently, that was at one time true.

"Talking with Cleese recently, he did say we'd very likely do another

one, but we just can't get the six of us to agree on one particular topic," Chapman said.

Once a film or a sketch is written, how do you decide fairly who plays what parts?

"Well, Cleese is the tallest, so he takes what he wants and the rest of us just scrabble around a bit," he said.

Monty Python started with the half-hour Flying Circus TV shows, which had its beginnings when a young Cambridge student named Chapman began writing for "The Frost Report," a BBC-TV series, to pay his way through medical school. While so engaged, he met a rather humorous young fellow named John Cleese.

And now for something completely different. Graham Chapman will bring an evening of standup lecture to the Nebraska Union's Centennial Ballroom at 7:30 p.m. Thursday. The show is sponsored by LPC Talks and Topics and Q-102. Tickets are \$2.50 in advance and \$3 day of show for students, and \$4.50 and \$5 for the public.

Film on Mother Teresa of the highest order

By Stew Magnuson
Senior Reporter

Of all the rock 'n' roll movies, French sex farces and foreign films showing this semester at Sheldon Film Theatre, this weekend's documentary, "Mother Teresa," is the one you shouldn't miss.

Movie Review

In a time when Oral Roberts black-mails his fiefdom to fund an extravagant hospital and Jim and Tammy's Pass-The-Loot Club asks for large sums of money to finance a dude ranch and a water slide for "Christians," it's refreshing to see an example of a person living as Christ would. If you want to see a true Christian, the way Christ described one during the Sermon on the Mount, see "Mother Teresa." Then tune into the PTL Network and have a good laugh.

If you want to see an eye-opening story about one woman's tireless fight against human suffering, see "Mother Teresa." If you want to see a documentary about the Untouchables in Calcutta, India, look somewhere else. Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity started in Calcutta, but are now in 370 locations in 70 countries. And director Ann and Jeanette Petrie's cameras follow her to Italy, shanty towns in Guatemala City, her hometown in Yugoslavia, Kenya, Rwanda, Ireland, Canada and the South Bronx of New York.

From the filth and poverty of the South Bronx, where the sisters of her order feed the hungry and homeless, she goes to a Harvard graduation ceremony and tells graduates to open their eyes to the suffering around them.

Mother Teresa is an incredibly articulate and intelligent person. And she will let nothing get in the way of her helping "the poorest of the poor."

While the Israelis bomb West Beirut, Mother Teresa simply tells a group of amazed advisers that she will go to evacuate a bombed hospital full of sick, spastic children.

She tells a Guatemalan bureaucrat who wants her mission relocated that she prefers not to be moved. Not only do the Guatemalan scrap the idea, they also give her a few more acres.

Through interviews with her fellow sisters and her own words, we get an amazing and life-affirming portrait of one of the most fascinating individuals of our time.

This documentary could have gone in many directions. It could have simply shown us an endless stream of the suffering in all these countries. But instead, the film focuses on Mother Teresa. Through her words and actions, we can better see the suffering and the need for all of us to help alleviate poverty.

"Mother Teresa" shows at the Sheldon Film Theatre Thursday through Sunday. Screenings are each evening at 7 and 9, Saturday at 3 p.m. and Sunday at 3 and 5 p.m.



Courtesy of Sheldon Film Theater

Mother Teresa



Courtesy of Subterranean Records

The Muskrats

Rock is dead to Berkeley Muskrats, breeders of mind-melding folk music

By Charles Lieurance
Senior Reporter

The Muskrats live in a small one-bedroom apartment in Berkeley, Calif., four blocks from one of the best Sunday flea markets in the U.S. of A. and in the heart of the resurgence of tie-dye. There's a mattress on the living-room floor that guitarist/singer Jay Rosen sleeps on. Washboardist/vocalist Tom Freeman gets the bedroom. Could be they trade off sometimes if one has to work late at night or something.

The standup cardboard (paper?) devil the Muskrats often bring on stage is nowhere to be seen. This is Berkeley's seedier side of town, and a demon dog from hell is snarling into the night.

Muskrats work very strange hours. Tom's off work at 8 p.m., goes home, sleeps, gets up at 2 a.m. and goes back out to work again. It's 2 a.m. Tom comes out to go to work and cheerfully offers me his bed for the night.

I wonder briefly if Jay wants to fight me for it. Jay tells me the new Muskrats' LP is coming out soon. He's really intense about everything. When I ask

him what the new brainchild sounds like, he thinks about it heavily — the way some men think about the afterlife or growing old. He'll ask you a question and then reach deep into your psyche for the answer, probe the hell out of every word you say. A vulcan mind meld at 2 a.m. is a little disorienting.

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Jay tells me he believes the Muskrats started a happy migration of Nebraskans to the golden shore of California. Omahans Buck Naked and the Bare Bottom Boys came, he says. Butch Berman is out here playing with Roy Loney. But the 'Rats were first.

Their first LP, "Rock is Dead," on the dominant San Francisco independent label, Subterranean, was a collection of folk nuggets that paved the road for a new folk-music revival on the coasts. But live the Muskrats play folk music of a different color. Folk music for skateboarders and kids who were perpetually tardy throughout high school, who knew guidance counselor's

shoe size.

They play it on your standard Kingston-duo instruments and, come to think of it, there's something of the Smothers Brothers to their appearance, but the sounds emanating from that guitar would send a beatnik's beret into a little cartoon helicopter spin a few feet above his head. And then Tom lights up the old washboard, literally. Pours gasoline on it and torches it while Jay's running his guitar strings up and down the stage stairs playing "Whole Lotta Love" or some Flipper tune. Tom announces that rock is dead, and everyone is too mesmerized to argue with him.

Tom's off to work and Jay is playing me something off the new album. No docile folk harmonies, just that amplified, fuzzed-out acoustic guitar ram-paging out of the speaker. Jay has that intense look as he watches me listening. Those eyes. That guitar. Which way was Tom's bedroom again?

The Muskrats will burn in hell tonight at 9 at The Drumstick. Cover is \$2. Let your folks listen to "Rock is Dead" and then haul 'em along. Yarrood!