



Monty Python's Michael Palin: not brilliant

The Missionary

Deliver us from this film

Marshall Golden
Sex-starved priests are a hot topic these days. Suddenly Hollywood seems to think that bed-hopping fathers make good film. If *The Missionary*, which opened on Nov. 5, is any indication, religious film investors better be prepared to pay some heavy penance. The problem with this self-proclaimed comedy is easy to isolate: it isn't funny.

Written by and starring Michael Palin, of Monty Python fame, *The Missionary* tells the story of Charles Fortescue, a priest in England around the turn of the century. Dedicated to saving the souls of London's "fallen women", he sets up a mission house in one of London's seedier districts and calls it "The Church of England Mission to Fallen Women." They arrive in droves, 28 of them to be exact, taking advantage of the free room and board and eventually, Charles himself. Sometimes, they even fight over who is next to share Charles' bed. Charles, being the obliging sort, obliges them-all of them.

Palin said he was excited "about writing a script without the collaboration of the (Monty) Python team."

It is true that with the other Python writers, Michael Palin has produced some of the most brilliant comedy of our time. Without them, however, the product is dull, lifeless and, to use an adjective that is the antithesis of all Python writing, safe. Palin seems hesitant to go for a laugh. He holds back, lapsing into a style of semi-sophistication that just sits there. There were about five good laughs in the entire film, most of them when Palin allowed that Python zaniness to shine through. Those few moments of misplaced insanity were hysterical in their out-of-context positioning.

There was however, some virtue in *The Missionary*. It was beautifully photographed and the setting of Edwardian England was impeccably recreated right down to the last lace frill. Maggie Smith, who played an aristocrat with whom Palin was having an affair, was wonderful until her character lost the support of the script. But the best performance in the film belonged to Michael Horden who played Maggie Smith's butler, Slatherthwaite. This loveable,



Maggie Smith, an aristocrat

bumbling and incredibly forgetful old fossil was still getting lost in a mansion where he'd spent over 50 years; he gave the film some of its finest moments.

Those of you going to see *The Missionary* expecting to find the usual quality of Python humour--don't bother--it's only a lukewarm imitation. Along with *Monsignor*, this year's other religious fiasco, *The Missionary*, inspires a familiar ecclesiastic cry--"Deliver us from this, film".

.....ENTS.....

Festival of sound and dance

Glendon Gallery is currently presenting *AS A MATTER OF SOUND*, a variety of performances that investigate the interaction between music and visual arts.

On November 12, choreographer Karen Bowes-Sewell of York's Dance Department will show *At Night*. Danced by Bowes-Sewell and three other artists, the piece also features electronic musicians William Buxton and David Grimes.

The choreographer and composer stresses that *At Night* is a juxtaposition of dance and music rather than a collaboration. The choreographer and composer worked separately and then combined their work so that the electronic score is an environment for the dance.

On November 14, three Montreal artists premiere a work that summarizes the basic premise of *AS A MATTER OF SOUND* - The combination of visual and aural arts is both vital and current.

Theatre Glendon until November 14
Information: 487-6206

Folk club fights image

Use the phrase 'folk music' and images of brown rice and beaded vests cloud the mind. 'Folk music', however, is really just traditional music. Country blues, Celtic ballads and cowboy songs are all 'folk music'.

The Calumet Folk Club is suffering from this image problem. Although they present first-rate artists, poor attendance has discouraged the members. The club is funded by Calumet College. Curiously, York has a graduate programme in ethno-musicology.

Given the diversity of York's community, The Calumet Folk Club could be an exciting forum, especially if people stopped thinking brown rice and started thinking heritage.

Fifties' days ahead

Slick down your hair and dig out your Banlon sweater because *Grease* is coming to York. York Independent Theatre Productions will stage the 50's nostalgia show in March of 1983. Last year, this group produced *Hair*, to critical and popular acclaim.

Publicist Natalie Lue insists that there is a wealth of talent in the York community and she is looking for it. Auditions for *Grease* will be held November 25-27. Anyone who is interested in performance or production should immediately sign the list posted at Room 205 in Burton.

York Independent Theatre Productions believes that they have another pit on their hands. They will have a director and choreographer dedicated producing a professional quality show, but think the raw material is in the York community.

Southern Gothic:
bizarre and tragic

Laurie Kruk

A play called *Southern Gothic* seems a good choice for Halloween night. "Experience the comedy and horror of a world upside down," the New Drama Centre invited, "a world of madmen, freaks and damaged personalities." We are also promised elements of Edgar Allan Poe, William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor and Carson McCullers--four American writers--two men and two women--who are famed for either their understanding of the South, or their portrayal of the Gothic: sounds like the perfect thing to do when you're too old to beg goodies door-to-door in the E.T. costume your mom made you. Well, it is--but it isn't what the audience might have expected. The two-hour performance turned out to be not a play, but an inventive employment of both storytelling and acting. This was a solo performance starring Helen Porter, a professional storyteller and actress who starred in New Drama Centre's acclaimed "Loving Women" last March. She and director Doug Hilker created *Southern Gothic* by combining her gift as a storyteller with four powerful short stories by four Southern American writers. The

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Waddington: proud of her roots

Laurie Kruk

"Person, Place and Poem" was the title of the third poetry reading in the Winters College Series the afternoon of November 2nd, and Miriam Waddington, poet and York professor, was in the spotlight. She began with what she called her "romantic and patriotic" poems about Canada: most penned several years ago, she informed us, when she was more optimistic about our future. The later ones, she added, had war-like scenes in them. "I think I'm breaking one of the rules of poetry readings," Waddington added dryly, "by reading poems about loss, loneliness, death and despair." Happily, those poems did not overstay their welcome, for Waddington is a humorous woman with a sharp eye for satire, as illustrated by her poem "Sad Winter in the Land of Can-Lit" ("written for all the Johnny-Come-Latelies who jumped on our bandwagon").

Like many Canadians, Waddington is proud of her roots, and her European background showed up, subtly but powerfully, in several of her more serious poems. She completed her repertoire with a few 'holiday postcard poems' and of course, a few love poems--"Oh, have I wasted love poems on people who don't deserve them," she laughed, and we laughed with her.

Then she added one sample of her prose, a story called "The Honeymoon House", a tale both comical and touching. She finished with enough time to make her next class, and our applause was appreciative of this special lady.

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