

Inspired by 50 years of Monty Python: original comedy by East London children

Tuesday 1 October, 2019

What happens when you introduce **young writers from East London** to the world of spam, coconut horses and dead parrots? We found out in an exciting project celebrating the **50th anniversary of Monty Python's Flying Circus** in partnership with **BBC History**, to be screened at **Genesis Cinema**.

This October, Monty Python's Flying Circus celebrates its 50th anniversary. In partnership with the BBC, **Ministry of Stories** pays homage to the Python's irreverent comic style.

Working with comedy writer-performer **Gem Carmella**, a group of 11-12 year olds from Swanlea School in Tower Hamlets mastered the techniques of comedy script writing and got to grips with the iconic Hell's Grannies and the Ministry of Silly Walks in order to write their own contemporary responses. These short sketches were **exclusively premiered** on the big screen at **Genesis Cinema on Monday 30 September 2019**. The event included a Q&A with the writers and director and closed with a red carpet award ceremony.

Most of the young people who took part had never heard of Monty Python's Flying Circus. After watching her first sketches, Aamna, aged 12, said, "It was hilarious...the way they acted - they slammed the dead parrot on the table!" Ishaq, aged 11, was less sure: "I thought they [The Pythons] didn't take anything seriously...I thought people wouldn't laugh at it that much."

The final sketches, performed by professional actors and produced by the BBC, feature a Chicken Shop with an unusual approach to hot sauce, an online delivery gone wrong and a political debate on the appropriate fairytale princess for the 21st century.

Robert Seatter, Head of BBC History, said "**When Monty Python's Flying Circus began in 1969 it radically changed the face of TV comedy. By introducing these famous Python sketches to today's young people we want to change it all over again – with the same spirit of surreal invention!**"

Shane Allen, BBC Comedy Commissioner, added: "**This is a brilliant collaboration, that totally gets the spirit of Python. Long live silly worlds!**"

Miriam Nash, Writing Programme Leader at Ministry of Stories said, "**This is an exciting opportunity for our young writers to explore the history of sketch comedy, and to contribute their own sense of humour and ideas to the genre. We're thrilled that the BBC is creating a platform for their original, hilarious work.**"

As part of the project, Ministry of Stories will release an original teaching resource to support other young people across the country to write their own comedy sketches and share the spirit of Monty Python's Flying Circus.

The films will be webcast by BBC History and Ministry of Stories following the screening.

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Company Contact:

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Ministry of Stories

T. 020 7729 4159

E. press@ministryofstories.org

W. <https://www.ministryofstories.org/>

Additional Contact(s):

info@ministryofstories.org

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