



## Religious spoof: It's in bad taste but oh so good!

What is all the fuss about? "Monty Python's Life of Brian" (R) is certainly an irreverent movie. It occasionally is hilarious, sometimes dull, and always in bad taste. But, somehow, I think both Christianity and Judaism will survive.

Pythons' Judea of 33 A.D. is a land of quarrelling revolutionaries, where each terrorist group begets a splinter group until some people are so confused they can't recall which organization they belong to. The Judean People's Front? The Popular Front for Judea? The Judean Popular People's Front?

Nor can everyone recall why it is he wants to drive out the Romans. When the speaker at a meeting asks rhetorically, "What have the Romans ever given us?" a voice from the audience says, "aqueducts." Another says "education," and someone else says, "roads." Soon, much to the chagrin of their leader, the enthusiastic crowd itemizes Roman contributions to their daily life.

The film is a spoof. If any people are held up to the light of ridicule, it is authority figures — whether religious, political, or military — and the people who blindly accept them.

THE COMEDY GROUP'S parodies range from 1930s Hollywood musicals to grammar lessons to soapbox orators to market place haggling. However, religion and revolutionaries bear the brunt of their attention, with the funniest scenes going to religion and the reluctant messiah, Brian Cohen.

We guess from the beginning that Brian is a loser. The evidence is in early, when three Magi bring gifts to the infant Brian, then hastily take them back and leave when they discover they are in the wrong manger.

Thirty-three years later, Brian is a nervous wreck from the crowds which follow him everywhere. People have become devoted to him since misinterpreting some mutterings he made while pursued by Roman soldiers.

Ending his followers, he loses a shoe and leaves behind a gourd. Both items are seen as signs. Thus his admirers divide into two zealous groups, those who follow the gourd and those who gather shoes.

The ending easily is anticipated, though one never knows to what vulgar lengths the group will go. It is just one more antic in the crazy quilt mode that is familiar to those who have acquired a taste for Monty Python's guerrilla comedy. For those who haven't, come prepared to be offended, and you won't be disappointed.



### Starring roles

Two movies from Twentieth Century-Fox are coming this month to metropolitan Detroit theaters — "Avalanche Express," an adventure-suspense drama opening Friday, Oct. 19, and "Luna," a contemporary drama opening Friday, Oct. 26. (Above) Linda Evans stars as Elsa Lang, an American agent on a dangerous assignment in "Avalanche Express." Also heading the cast are Lee Marvin and Robert Shaw. (Below) Jill Clayburgh stars as an American opera singer returning to Italy accompanied by her adolescent son in "Luna," a film by Bernardo Bertolucci.



# Opening follows benefit preview

The Hilberry Theatre production of "The Diary of Anne Frank" officially opens Wednesday, Oct. 17.

A special benefit preview will be held Tuesday, Oct. 16, for International Year of the Child activities sponsored by the Wayne State University Center for Peace and Conflict Studies and the Detroit Council for World Affairs.

Funds from the preview performance will be used to subsidize tickets for metropolitan area students to attend special matinee performances of "The Diary of Anne Frank" followed by discussions.

Anne Frank was a 13-year-old girl who, together with her family and another Jewish family, went into hiding

## Theater

in a warehouse-annex to escape from the Nazis in Amsterdam, Holland, during World War II. She perished in the concentration camp in 1944.

SHORTLY BEFORE going into hiding, Anne began a diary and during her two years of confinement continued recording all her innermost thoughts. This diary represents the triumph of the human spirit under the most trying conditions.

The dramatization of the diary by Albert Hackett and his wife, Frances Goodrich, has won the Pulitzer Prize and many other awards. The play, like the diary, has moved audiences all over the world. Both works are bittersweet portrayals of a Jewish adolescent under stress, the more poignant because of audiences' awareness of the cataclysmic events outside the warehouse and the gruesome aftermath.

Leading the Hilberry cast are two guest actors as the play's two adolescents, Maryann Ferenc of Troy (Anne), and Duane Donuts of Warren (Peter), with Hilberry actor Neil Thackberry Jr., as Anne's father, Otto Frank. Also appearing in the production are

Sara Morrison Barnicle as Mrs. Frank, Kristin Reeves-Beauchamp as Margot, Edith Taylor Hunter as Mrs. Van Daan, Terri Turner Phillips as Miep, Buckner Gibbs as Mr. Kraler, Gerald B. Roe as Mr. Dussel and Peter Van Wagner as Mr. Van Daan.

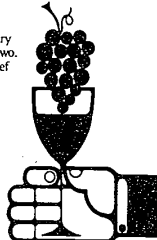
Direction is by Anthony Schmitt with set design by William McConnell Bozeman, lighting by Gary M. Witt and costumes by Nicholas John Mozak.

"THE DIARY of Anne Frank" is part of the 1979-80 Hilberry repertory season, which will also include a revival of Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," Brian Friel's "Philadelphia, Here I Come!"

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