



**SGT. PEPPER REDUX: (L to R) James Fox, John Brosnan, Reuven Gershon in 'Let It Be.'** Photo: Chad Batka



## *Theater Review*

# Broadway's *Let It Be*: Unoriginal, uninspired & off-key

**LET IT BE: A CELEBRATION OF THE MUSIC OF THE BEATLES**

Through December 29, 2013

St. James Theater

246 West 44th Street

(212-239-6200), [www.letitbebroadway.com](http://www.letitbebroadway.com)

By David NouNou

Disappointing and sad are two adjectives that best describe *Let It Be*. Disappointing because it is not a celebration of the music of the Beatles; it is a facsimile of another mediocre show entitled *Rain: A Tribute to the Beatles*, another ill-conceived notion trying to pay homage to the Beatles, which just closed two years ago at the Neil Simon Theatre. Sad because at which point has Broadway become a dumping ground for all these half-baked shows that they feel they have a place on Broadway just because there are vacant theaters in the summertime?

There was, is, and always will be only one Beatles. Just because donning bad wigs, and wearing tacky costumes that try to recapture "The Beatles" experience and their timeframe does not bring back The Beatles, or make it "an incredible simulation," the famous tagline from the hit 1977 show *Beatlemania*. It seems with every new conception of the Beatles, we are thrown into a deeper abyss that we come out of it sadder and more disappointed than the time before. What is so disheartening about this latest incarnation is that it is so unoriginal, uninspired, unfocused, and the performances by the four impersonators of the Beatles are listless and robotic.

The feeling at the St. James Theater is more like being in the Beatles section of Madame Tussauds Museum, with waxwork figures not even resembling the Beatles (please see photographs), embodying their four main eras: their genesis, their "Sgt. Pepper," their psychedelic period and their last years together, and having atonal tracks with sour notes in the background for each phase of their career. Also inserted in the background are projections of old concert footage, of no real importance, all of which run in a cyclical loop.

I must warn you in the middle of Act II, the audience is ordered by, I think, the John impersonator (I stopped caring at that point), "to stand up, wave your hands in the air, shout and clap." As a critic, I found it more interesting watching the audience reactions than the proceedings on stage. Some were actually getting into it, trying to recreate their youth and that one special moment in time celebrating the Beatles; and the other half were just obeying a command in shifting their hips and sort of wondering why are we doing this? Either way, it was interesting to see how an audience reacts when told to do something and obeying. Not because it was the natural thing to do at a concert or a happy event, but

because they were ordered to do it.

When I got home, I took out my *Rain* Playbill and tried to compare the differences between the two shows. The only difference I discovered is that the *Let It Be* Playbill cover is unequivocally the better of the two.

***Edited by Scott Harrah***

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