



YEAH, YEAH, YEAH: A scene from 'Rain: A Tribute to the Beatles On Broadway.'
Photo: Cylla von Tiedemann

Theater Review

Rain: A Tribute to the Beatles on Broadway an 'incredible simulation'

Rain: A Tribute to The Beatles On Broadway

Neil Simon Theatre

Through January 9, 2011

250 West 52nd Street

(877-250-2929), www.RainTribute.com

By David Nounou

Not a musical. Not even a jukebox musical. *Rain, A Tribute to the Beatles On Broadway* must then be a concert. However, why doesn't it *feel* like a concert? In theory, a concert allows the viewer to do as he or she feels. He or she can express feelings by standing, screaming, clapping, hooting, and hollering; all or any of the above. We are not supposed to be coaxed into by a member of the cast (in this case, the Paul McCartney impersonator) to stand, clap or sing. It has to come naturally. In all fairness, at the performance I attended, the audience complied with what they were told to do.

The Fab Four need no introductions. However, mention must be made of the cast: Joey Curatolo (Paul), Steve Landes (John), Joe Bithorn (George) and Ralph Castelli (Ringo). Intact with their Liverpool accents, the foursome does everything in their power to recreate the group and satisfy. Yes, they are talented and personable. All four of them are either self-taught musicians or had family members teach them. However, in the pantheon of music, there was only one Beatles. In the immortal tagline for *Beatlemania*, it is "not the Beatles but an incredible simulation."

Aided by video designs by Darren McCaulley and Mathieu St-Arnaud, a highlight of the evening is the projections, from the arrival of The Beatles at JFK and their debut on "The Ed Sullivan Show," all the way to the end with Strawberry Fields, it is a constant visual treat, especially the old vintage commercials for Winston cigarettes and Prell shampoo. They also serve as a commentary about the times. Everything is here, be it from the beginning with the Pop era of "I Want to Hold Your Hand", to the rock, psychedelic, hippie, and the end with "Let It Be," over 30 songs are incorporated into the show.

The songs and talent are most definitely here. It's a shame that the audience has to be pandered to applaud or approve. In order to have had a real Beatles experience, a trust in the audience needed to be here. We are going to be supportive. That's why we are there. We do not need constant prodding by cast members to participate or

cheer.

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