

This is a printer friendly version of an article from www.heraldtribune.com
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Article published Jan 15, 2007

THE ARTS

'British Invasion' is fun but lacks attack

By SUSAN L. RIFE
susan.rife@heraldtribune.com

For a bit of a stroll down rock's memory lane, "The British Invasion, The Sound Heard 'Round the World" will do nicely, thank you.

At the very least, it ought to prompt some of us to dig that old vinyl out of the back of the closet and give it a spin once more on the turntable, assuming we still own such a dinosaur.

The intent of "The British Invasion," a cabaret show at Florida Studio Theatre, is to lead audiences on a musical journey that began when The Beatles tore up U.S. audiences in the early 1960s and started a musical revolution.

Quibble if you must about The Beatles' ripping off music from earlier black influences, but the Fab Four are going to get the credit, don't you know. They opened a door that let The Rolling Stones, The Who, The Moody Blues, The Animals and a host of other British pop musicians in.

In the hands of director Dennis Courtney, "The British Invasion" gathers the musical talents of Paul Binotto, Casey Gensler and Rachel Eve Moses onto the cabaret's tiny stage, where they do (softened) battle with electric and acoustic guitars, backed by Christopher Lavender on drums and Jim Prosser on the blasted Clavinova, a synthesizer that is put to far too heavy use in the show. More guitar and bass, please!

The three principals do fine vocally -- Binotto gets the Lennon tunes from The Beatles, Gensler gets the McCartney songs and Moses gets the Dusty Springfield and Bonnie Tyler tunes and does fine by Mick Jagger on "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" and "Gimme Shelter."

There are a few funny moments, including a cross-gendered "Lola" (The Kinks) and a cute medley of "Do Wah Diddy Diddy" (Manfred Mann), "Wonderful World" (Herman's Hermits) and "I Only Want to Be With You" (Springfield) as a sassy Moses tries to choose between Gensler, as the young, shaggy-haired poet, and Binotto, as the more worldly musician.

Doubtless, everyone who sees the show will wonder why this song or that was left out.

For my money, less Cat Stevens and more Elton John -- or at least different songs! -- would have been appropriate.

Unfortunately, the show lacks most of the bite of the rock music that inspired it.

The '60s were a time of anger, desperation and fierce determination and hope among a younger generation.

What you get in "The British Invasion" feels a little too sanitized, despite the talent of the cast.

REVIEW

The British Invasion, The Sound Heard 'Round the World

Conceived by Richard Hopkins. Created by Hopkins, Rebecca Langford and Jim Prosser. Directed by Dennis Courtney.

Reviewed Jan. 11 at Florida Studio Theatre Cabaret.

Performances through March 24.

Tickets \$19-\$29.

Call 366-9000 or access www.fst2000.org.