

‘A Life With The Beatles’



A Life with The Beatles is a wonderfully fascinating tribute to a wonderfully fascinating band. As we follow the band’s road manager, personal assistant and President of Apple Corps, Neil Aspinall, we are given an artistically detailed description of some of the most famous and not so famous landmarks of their development from a unique perspective that will excite any music fan – Beatles or otherwise.

While this is truly a must-see for the Fringe’s Beatles fans, the way Stella Danzante Productions forges sound-bites with information and observations from a writer who was clearly also a big fan should put this play on any music nerd’s itinerary. How we are lead through all the intrigues of some of the band’s most famous songs is an eye-opener; the detailed account of the inns-and-outs of recording ‘A Day in the Life’ at Abbey Road, with respectable orchestra musicians playing about with red noses and funny hats, is particularly memorable.

This brings us to the point of how A Life With The Beatles should be seen as a model for all biographical monologues in terms of fusion of historical details and creative presentation, for it manages to be a work of art that doesn’t allow itself to be swamped by information and facts.

On the other hand, one cannot but feel that sometimes the writing falls into the traps of clichéd one-man shows – the dramatic quickening of pace that opens with

“Liverpool: 1959!”, for example. Indeed, the pacing overall is somewhat incoherent with a slow start and then a stop–start movement throughout.

Ian Sexon, who plays Aspinall, doesn’t help this jagged pacing with a portrayal that sometimes comes over as jumpy and somewhat illogical. However, this actor’s strength lies in the complexity of imitating other characters in the shoes of Neil Aspinall – from Pete Best to Brian Epstein to Mick Jagger. One forgets that this is a one–man show due to Sexon’s flexibility of character that allows a myriad of vivid characters to be on show.

On the whole this is a delightful journey through the lives of the unsung heroes of The Beatles’ success, as well as The Beatles themselves, and thus it was no doubt I left the theatre singing Beatles songs and dying to get back to my room and listen to all of their work until the early hours of the morning.

Llewelyn Hopwood, “EdFringe Review” 23rd August 2015