

arts/entertainment

Beatlemania offers magical mystery tour of '60s

By Casey McCabe

Beatlemania is a Broadway show without acting or a plot. It is a musical, multi-media experience that relies on the audience's desire to relive a legend it doesn't really remember living through the first time.

Beatlemania played two near sell-out shows in Omaha's Orpheum Theater Sunday, to an audience that treated the four impresarios with enthusiasm. The average age seemed to be around 22 years old, and the average state of mind was understandable curiosity.

The four New York-area musicians who portrayed The Beatles in this Midwest tour of the Broadway production are only one of several groups to do the show. Assuming that the Omaha line-up was a fair representation of the others, then the group's flawless versions of several Beatle classics would suggest that the art of imitation is not as rare as some would like to believe.

Beatles not mentioned

The fact is, that through the musical and costume changes, from mop-top, through Sgt. Pepper psychedelia,

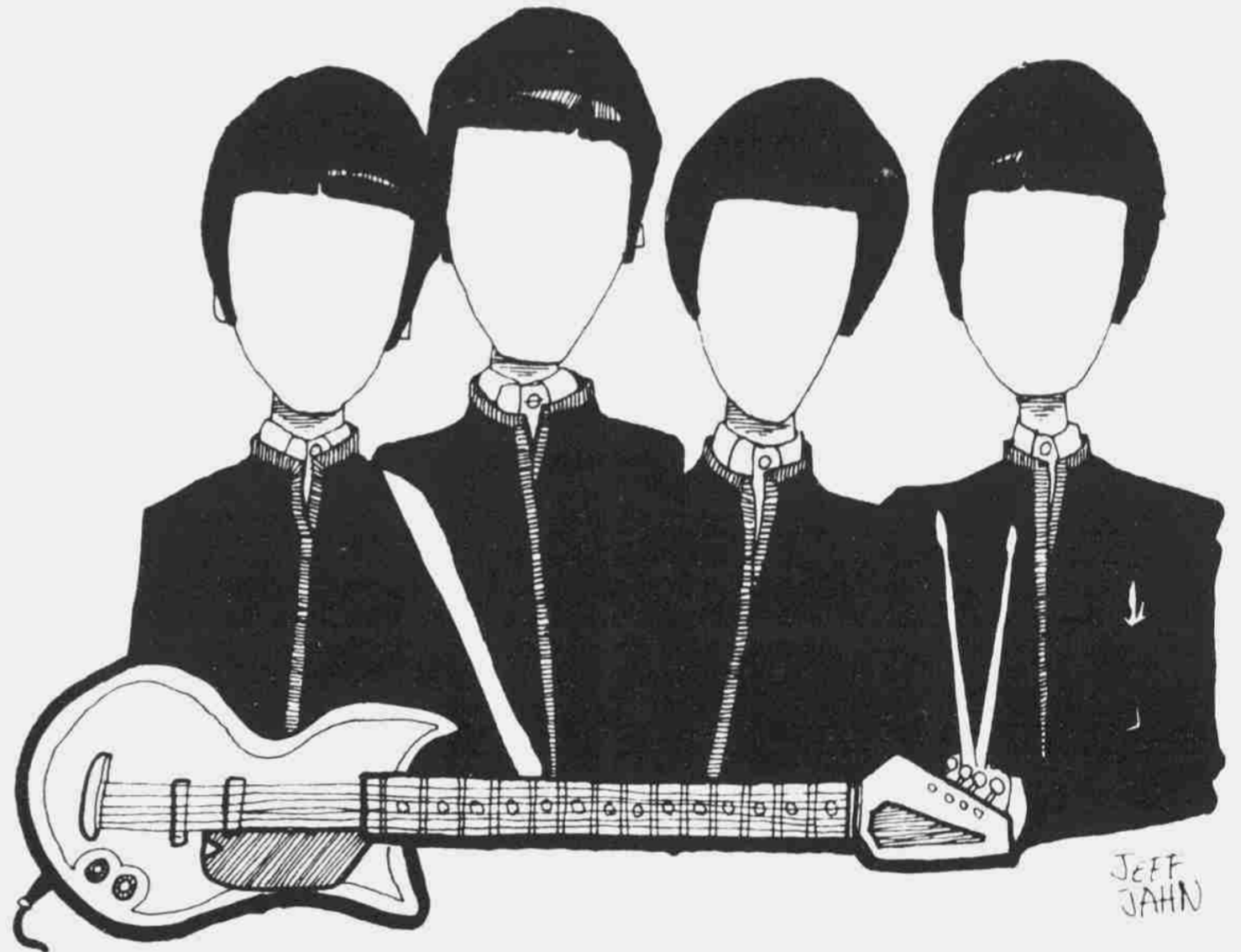
review

and *White Album* individualism, *Beatlemania* makes no direct reference to the Beatles themselves. The musicians-imitators strived for the Beatle posturing, the cute shakes of the shaggy heads, and Liverpool accents during the brief moments between songs. But still they referred to each other as "the bass player" or "our drummer," avoiding both their real names or any direct reference to John, Paul, George and Ringo.

And the concert programs, which were selling briskly in the posh Orpheum lobby, did not contain anything but the vaguest liberal allusions to what this all was obviously based upon. How much of this is to avoid legal hassles I'm not sure, but the cast of *Beatlemania* seems fixed in the position of being spokesmen for the spokesmen of the era.

In such a position, a performance that strayed very far from perfection would have made the entourage appear to be the ultimate in unmitigated gall, especially at a \$10.75 ticket price. But *Beatlemania* is carried off with the precision expected from an established Broadway production. With some aid from off-stage musicians, the cast was able to do such difficult live songs as "Strawberry Fields Forever," "Penny Lane" and "Magical Mystery Tour" with full studio clarity and tight, characteristic vocals.

All told, it is very possible the *Beatlemania* crew is able to perform Beatles songs live better than the Beatles were themselves. The equipment is better, they can hear



performed under a backdrop of bloody Vietnam violence and comic book aggression.

But beyond any recycled social statements, the main promotional thrust behind *Beatlemania* was the chance to come as close as possible to seeing the fabled Beatles reunion in person. For all the effort and personal talent, it predictably falls light years short of that goal.

The *Beatlemania* has been increasing its outlets since John Lennon's murder reeks of hype as well. The man themselves through their own PAs (and hear better due to the absence of thousands of screaming girls), and they are meticulously bound by the limits of credible imitation.

1960s backdrop

Also accompanying the *Beatlemania* show is a visually striking backdrop of slides and film, dissolving in and out

of the music. As *Beatlemania* strives to capture the era as well as the group, scenes of Martin Luther King, Timothy Leary, Bobby Kennedy and considerable 1960s protest footage float through the show. The creators take a few too many liberties with this concept as the ethereal child-like fantasy of "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds" is who portrayed Lennon (with general physical accuracy) received the largest hand from the crowd during the encore, in which the musicians revealed their true identities. He reacted with an uncharacteristic thumbs up sign.

The Sunday night crowd at the Orpheum treated the show with surprising enthusiasm, standing ovations and vigorous encores. It was a chance to bop, sing and reminisce to live versions of some of rock music's greatest works. And that, perhaps, is the only way *Beatlemania* should be taken.

Small talk yields small results

By T. Marni Vos

Do you ever call up old friends to "chew the fat?" "Marni? ... Marni who?"

Do you ever feel as though that one special person who was meant for you and only you was hit by the school bus when he or she was 6?

humor

Do you ever find yourself seeking out shallow pleasures? Sitting in the tub till your skin wrinkles? Showing people your Under-Alls? Or compulsively eating? Are you worried that the next time you go jogging you'll measure on the Richter scale?

If the answers to the previous questions were yes, yes, yes, sometimes and yes, then I have two things to say:

1) Wow, and I thought I had problems.
2) Boy, do you need to get out and meet a few people. Now I know meeting people isn't always easy so here are some great opening lines from my past and from *Social Intercourse* by Mark Knapp:

1. Hi, some people think I look like Cheryl Ladd, but I don't even pay attention because I know it's personality that counts. ... right?

2. Hi, I'm from out of town and I was wondering what people around here do for fun.

3. Hi, I've lived here for eight years and I was wondering what people around here do for fun.

4. Hi, I noticed you were sitting by yourself with the exception of that girl who just went to the bathroom.

5. Excuse me, I think your zipper's down. Here, let me get it.

After introducing yourself, small talk occurs and the slow unveiling of a new-found friend might progress in this fashion:

0 to 15 minutes:

I'm from Nebraska.
I have a dog.

15 to 30 minutes:

My name is Nancy.
I had a fun summer.

30 to 45 minutes:

Plants are like people - they thrive on love.
I get nervous meeting people for the first time.
The sight of blood makes me puke.

45 to 60 minutes:

I hate small talk.
I don't think age is really that important.

60 minutes to one hour and 15 minutes:

I don't like people who smile all the time.
I don't believe in evolution.

One hour and 15 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes:

I think I'm losing my hair.
My parents were embarrassed to discuss sex with me.

One hour and 30 minutes to one hour and 45 minutes:

I have a violent temper.
I dye my hair. Maybe that's why it falls out.

One hour and 45 minutes to two hours:

I wonder why people stare at me wherever I go.
I talk to my tub of Parkay.

I'm wanted in eight states for murder.
I think I should go call some old friends.

Lincoln concert canceled due to Clapton's ulcer

The Eric Clapton concert scheduled for March 22 has been canceled, according to Paul Schneider, spokesman for the Bob Devaney Sports Complex.

Schneider said Clapton was at Madison, Wis., only the second concert of his 1981 tour, when he became terribly ill and had a pain killing injection to continue the performance. After the show, doctors verified that Clapton had a bleeding ulcer and, as a result, had to be hospitalized.

In an Associated Press wire story released Monday morning, Clapton's personal manager Roger Forrester attributed Clapton's ulcer to the "general way we live. There's a lot of bad hours and bad food and we're not health fanatics."

According to Forrester, the 36-year-old Clapton "can't possibly work for the rest of the year."

Clapton has cancelled his remaining tour of 55 performances.

Refunds can be obtained at the ticket holder's original place of purchase starting at noon Wednesday. Tickets must be returned in order to receive the funds.

"We are sorry this had to happen," said Schneider, "because it looked like a sell-out performance."