



Fantastic Beatles tribute takes audience back in time

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- With a band like the Beatles, everyone comes bearing their own expectations. Frankly, I expected to be mildly amused and possibly appalled or disappointed by the tribute band concert Sunday. I could not have been more wrong. The Liverpool Legends blew me away. At times, if I closed my eyes, it was like listening to a Beatles record. They were absolutely spot on.

This was the first concert of the Community Music Association's 2012-13 season. If this show is any indication of the expected crowd turnout and quality of their future musical acts, I suggest you buy your tickets now. The new venue at the University of Charleston may offer less seating than the Municipal Auditorium but it makes for a more personal and enjoyable experience.

Liverpool Legends, composed of Kevin Mantegna (John), Bob Beahon (Paul), Marty Scott (George) and Greg George (Ringo), are actor/musicians handpicked by the late George Harrison's sister, and what a wonderful job she did. These four look and sound so much like the original Fab Four that at times it is uncanny, especially John. Watching Mantegna play the late great Lennon was like watching a ghost of the legend take the stage.

The first half of the show was composed of their early pop songs and I expected this to be an entertaining, sing-a-long feel. It was great. They wore the iconic Ed Sullivan suits that everyone associates with their early years. They sported mop top wigs and sang and bopped about to everyone's favorites from "All My Loving" to "Day Tripper" to "Twist and Shout." I expected to be pleased with this portion of the show.

What I did not expect was how impressed I would be with the second half. After all, anyone can pull off those pop numbers, but not just anyone can recreate the magic of and the mastery of the later albums like "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and "Yellow Submarine." The Liverpool Legends can and did. I was blown away. The costumes, wigs and body language evolved through the show much as it did through the Beatles' career, making the audience not only feel as if they had slipped through a time warp but that they were traveling at lightening speed through years of their favorite music.

I know that a two-hour concert cannot incorporate every song from a catalogue as large as what the Beatles amassed, but I am sad to say that a few of my favorites were absent from the lineup. However, much was forgiven and forgotten with a fabulous album-worthy cover of "Hey Jude." What a perfect end to a fantastic fantasy.