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SPOTLIGHT

'Leader of the Pack' a fun, mindless romp

By David Bates
Emerald Contributor

Every time I see a musical, I usually walk out feeling emotionally exhilarated and somehow spiritually complete. Let's face it. Musicals are supposed to be fun, and they usually are.

This isn't how I felt after seeing "Leader of the Pack"

Review

at the Hull Center last week.

It wouldn't be fair, however, to criticize the folks with Mainstage Cabaret who presented the West Coast premiere of "Pack" for doing a poor job. All things considered, they gave an exceptional performance. The dancing, the singing, and even the acting (which is something you often don't see in a musical) were all top-notch.

My problem with the show is one that I imagine many young people will have. "Leader of the Pack" chronicles the backstage life of Ellie Greenwich, whose collaboration with husband Jeff Barry produced a fair amount of popular music during the first half of the

'60s. The tunes of Greenwich are easily characterized by that teen-girl sound associated with most groups whose swan songs were the hallmark of popular culture 20 years ago.

As one might suspect, "Leader of the Pack" overflows with songs by Greenwich. By any standards of musical theatre, "Pack" may very well have more songs than a musical has a moral right to. It would be interesting to know the relationship between Greenwich and playwright Melanie Minz, who wrote the mindless script. But one would be hard-pressed to prove that Minz was trying to spark a nationwide revival of Greenwich's music. The intentions of the play are far more innocent than that.

"Leader of the Pack" is nothing more than a nostalgic romp through the music of the '60s. More accurately, it's a romp through Ellie Greenwich's music of the '60s, which I can only assume is definitive of that period. If you're a bouncing baby boomer, the Ellie Greenwich musical is a must-see. Music-lovers of all ages and tastes will probably be safe, but beware: this isn't Rodgers and Hammerstein.

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INFORMATION TABLE:

Tues.-Wed, Nov. 3-4
EMU Lobby
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

FILMS & SEMINARS: PUBLIC INVITED

Tues., Nov. 3, 12:30 p.m.
"The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love" (film).
EMU 108

Tues. evening, Nov. 3, 7:00 p.m.
"Pacific Northwest Volunteers" (video).
EMU Maple Room

Wed., Nov. 4, 3:30 p.m.
"Peace Corps Programs for Educators"
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