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Times Square Chronicles

**Bliss Street Three Hours I Will Never Get Back**

**OFF BROADWAY**

# Bliss Street Three Hours I Will Never Get Back



Published

By

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*Bliss Street* the new musical playing at Theatre For The New City, claims to recount a significant chapter of New York's iconic 70's Rock & Roll history, however what it really is a three hour scrapbook of the life of Charlie Sub whose life is seriously not that interesting. Sadly Sub, co-writer and co-conception conspirators Abra Bigham and Rich Brotman, can not write lyric or script.

*Bliss Street* follows the Subs father Paul (Jef Canter, who has wonderful rock vocal chops), mother (a connected Alyson Reim) and son Charlie (Blaize Adler-Ivanbrook). Paul founded and ran music clubs in the 1970's. These included the short-lived Popcorn Pub (1972-3) and Coventry on Bliss Street in Queens (1974-76), where artists such as Kiss, The Ramones and The New York Dolls debuted. Charlie, feeling stymied by his father and his friend Cliff's (a sensitive Thomas Deen Baker) mental illness, quits his non existent musical career, to move to California, but ultimately comes back to NY and his father's to find his Rock 'n Roll voice as leader of the band Charlie Sub & Sound Dogs. They were never a big hit and after seeing this musical I can see why. Charlie owns a club, Ethyl's on the UES.

Narrating the show is Ethyl normally played by Marlain Angelides, but on the night I saw it by the wonderful Sarah MacDonnell. I can not imagine anyone else playing this role as Ms. MacDonnell draws you in, is personable, with a Stevie Nicks vocal. She kept the dialogue going along at a nice clip which was amazing considering this show drags. Her drawing in of the audience and heartfelt moments gave the show a light that was desperately needed. I find it amazing that she was only given one rehearsal and was this fabulous.

The direction by Lisa Moira keeps what little of the script there is in tact, which is difficult as the story is all over the map. Though how and why the song "Beast" happened and why is beyond me. The choreography by Sage Buchalter, does not incorporate any of the dance styles of the day into what is redundantly seen.



Ella Baldwin, Alyson Reim, Sage Buchalter and Sarah McDonnell in a scene from the new musical “Bliss Street” at Theater for the New City (Photo credit: Jonathan Slaff)

Ella Baldwin has a voice that you want to hear more of, as well as Felice Rose’s dancing.



Blaize Alder-Ivanbrook (with deed) and Jef Canter and Alyson Reim (right) in a scene from the new musical “Bliss Street” at Theater for the New City (Photo credit: Jonathan Slaff)

Most of the roles in the show seem like community theatre and one wonders why they were written such as Louie.

What is done well is the multimedia designed by Andrew Levin of StageTrip Industries and Carlos Almonte of MotionBlur, though it doesn’t portray what it is we really are seeing.

Mr. Sub would have been better served by just having a concert of his songs sung by Ms MacDonald, Mr. Cantor, Mr. Baker and Ms. Baldwin, but to do that a better sound design by Franklyn Rodriguez is needed. The sound is unbalanced, with vocals either too loud or soft, most off-key.



*Bliss Street*: Theatre For The New City, 155 First Avenue, until May 20th.

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Suzanna, co-owns and publishes the newspaper Times Square Chronicles or T2C. At one point a working actress, she has performed in numerous productions in film, TV, cabaret, opera and theatre. She has performed at The New Orleans Jazz festival, The United Nations and Carnegie Hall. She has a screenplay and a TV show in the works, which she developed with her mentor and friend the late Arthur Herzog. She is a proud member of the Drama Desk and the Outer Critics Circle and was a nominator. Email: [suzanna@t2conline.com](mailto:suzanna@t2conline.com)