

Leader of the Pack Opening Night, Palms at Crown



Eve Prideaux and Darius Mendoza

IF YOU were asked to nominate song writing legends still living, who would spring to mind?

Paul Mc Cartney, Elton John/ Bernie Taupin, Brian Wilson from the Beach Boys. They certainly qualify. Would the name Elli Greenwich be among them? – SHE SHOULD!!

The opening night audience at the newly revamped Crown showroom, now called Palms



Rosemarie Stuhlemer and Dianne Summerjoy

at Crown were clapping and applauding to hit after hit after hit, by this remarkable child prodigy songstress.

Million sellers like **Be My Baby**, **Chapel of Love**, **River Deep Mountain High**, kept flowing from this amazing talent.

Leader of the Pack is Ellie's journey from being a gawky teenager living in Brooklyn New York, to the worlds recording stage. Her songs have sold over 100 million records and earned her an amazing 25 gold and platinum records.

What made this evening even more special for us was that the lady herself was in the audience.

This woman's life had just been poured out on a stage in front of a Melbourne first night audience, a daunting prospect if you don't "Cut It". She received a standing ovation, as did the excellent cast.

Before I discuss the show in more detail, I would like to make a comment on the venue. The Palms reminded me of a Las Vegas style showroom with tiered seating and ice buckets full of whatever people were drinking.

Unlike traditional theater the audience are positioned in cabaret style seating. Being so informal some of them may have felt they were in their own lounge rooms and thus comfortable talking during the performance.

My only comment is "Quiet Please" there are performers on stage. It may have been the alcohol or the natural exuberance of a first night crowd, but I feel and always will that consideration for the performers and your fellow theater-goer is paramount.

Now back to the show. The large stage, was used most effectively – with "flats" (scenery) sliding in from prompt corner (stage

left) and O.P. (opposite prompt - stage right) to denote different time periods, as the show begins in the fifties through to the seventies

A clever ramp enabled the Harley motor bike to make a spectacular entrance, maneuvered with great dexterity by Harley rider **Joe Paolucci**.

The solo numbers were shared among the company with stand outs **Amanda Harrison** playing Elli, **Julie O'Brien** playing her mum Rosie, and **Natalie Alexopoulos** as Shelly. The harmonies from the entire company were excellent.



John Paul Young

The surprise packet on the night was **John Paul Young** playing Brill Building record producer Gus Sharkey.

I always knew **J.P.Y** or **Squeak** as he is known to his friends in the industry could sing, but as I told him at the after party his acting and depth of characterization was very impressive. I would like to see John doing more dramatic roles. Producers please take note.

The leads were all of a very high standard not a weak link, and the "kids" worked their butts off. The six-piece band on stage for the entire performance never missed a beat either.



by Ken James

Having two shows in town with similar genres is an unfortunate coincidence but **Dirty Dancing** at the Princess Theatre, will not suffer because of **Leader of The Pack** and vice versa, neither show will disappoint.

Leader of the Pack will run till August 28. Performances are Tuesday - Friday 8pm, Saturday 5pm - 8.30pm, Sunday 2.30pm and 6.30pm. Bookings through Ticketek 132849

Apology: In last month's review of **Dirty Dancing**, I mistakenly inverted the names of a character with its actress. Of course **Nadia Coote** played Penny Johnson.



Gary Turner and partner

Victorian Snow Scene

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