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Dispatches from The Fringe - And They Played Shang-A-Lang misses its mark

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6:55 PM MST

And They Played Shang-A-Lang

Rating: ★★★★★

Craft Theatre Company's production of Derek Douglas' [musical](#) *And They Played Shang-A-Lang* is a bargain basement tour of 70's nostalgia that failed to ignite. This despite the energetic efforts of its predominately young cast who certainly gave it their all.

Purporting to tell the story of Jim and how he became the man he was, *And They Played Shang-A-Lang* is a series of loosely related scenes built from Douglas' reminiscences of the 70's. Popular songs from the time move the clichés forward through a whistle stop tour of 70's school disco nostalgia. The end result is a musical that has neither enough charm, depth or kitsch to make it truly engaging. This is most notable during its forced attempt at poignancy by way of an underwhelming rendition of Bohemian Rhapsody. Poor direction and production values, with choreography and blocking that looked shambolic didn't help matters throughout. The use of Jim as narrator to contextualize each scene reinforced the feeling that Douglas just didn't trust his characters or story enough to stand on their own feet. Which is a pity, for when he did *And They Played Shang-A-Lang* showed moments of promise. Most notably during the slow dance and nativity scenes and the performance of the shows title song. But these only served to highlight what this show might have been, leaving a sense of an opportunity missed despite the best efforts of its cast.

And They Played Shang-A-Lang runs daily at the Stand Up Club III & IV, York Place, till August 26th. Doors open 12.50 p.m. and admission is £10.00

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