

Theater Review: Overstuffed But Entertaining ‘The Cher Show’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on July 2, 2018 - 12:10pm

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CHICAGO – Has anybody in show business had more “comebacks” than Cher... or if you added her many last names Cher Sarkisian La Piere Bono Allman? All of the triumphs and downturns are shoehorned into “The Cher Show,” now in Chicago in a pre-Broadway run through July 15, 2018. [Click here](#) [21] for more details, including ticket information.



Play Rating: **3.5/5.0**

The huge entertainment in the show is provided by the three women portraying Cher in different life eras... Babe (Micaela Diamond), Lady (Teal Wicks) and Star (Stephanie J. Block). All have transcendent talent, because they transcend the fragmented and overstuffed story with their singing, dancing and performance chops. In what must be a whirlwind of a show for the three, they interact throughout and ponder Cher like the ghosts of “A Christmas Carol,” but with much more show biz and sex appeal.



My 3 Chers: Lady (Teal Wicks), Star (Stephanie J. Block) and Babe (Micaela Diamond) in ‘The Cher Show’

Photo credit: Joan Marcus for The Cher Show

“The Cher Show” is set up like a TV variety special designed to tell the life story of the former Cherlyn Sarkisian. Born half Caucasian and half Armenian (gasp!), the child Cher seeks acceptance from her peers and multi-marrying mother (Emily Skinner). Her fortunes change at 16 years old, when she meets Salvatore “Sonny” Bono (Jarrod Spector) and becomes a star with their husband-and-wife act “Sonny and Cher”... but at the height of their 1970s fame and CBS-TV show, they divorce. Cher then marries rocker Gregg Allman (Matthew Hydzik), only to see that quickly dissolve. On her own in 1979, she becomes a multi-faceted Oscar winning actress, chart topping performer and feminist icon.

I will get this over with, the show needs a lot of work in organizing her life, music and multiple partners – her younger boyfriend from the 1980s, Rob Camilletti (Michael Campayno) is also depicted – Cher has simply had too much history to encapsulate in one show. But this “TV Variety” format is game to try, and the performers and stagecraft literally sweat the details to deliver the overwhelming amount of Cher info. This is in a “pre-Broadway” run in Chicago, but it feels more like a Branson (Missouri) or Las Vegas revue than something that would play on the Great White Way.

Having said that, if you love Cher you’re going to love the show, because it’s all Cher all the time. I happen to love Cher, and could get over the weirdly drawn and stuffed story telling by simply sitting back and letting it be. The Star Cher was the anchor of the proceedings, presumably directing the variety show from her point of view. Ms. Block had that “star” quality necessary to pull off the icon, and her doppelgängers from different eras... Babe (as in “I Got You Babe”) and Lady... both deliver their respective Cher eras with an energy and verve that is endearing. It’s as if the women made a pact to deliver the icon with all the sizzle they could muster, and did their damn-dest to soar.



Turn Back Time: Joe Arce Photo of Cher in 1998 Predicts ‘The Cher Show’

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck photo for HollywoodChicago.com

There were two important male roles, and both are excellent. Jarrod Spector delivers Sonny Bono with a perfect rendition of his nasally vocals, and also Sonny’s tendency to be an a-hole towards Cher, which was too bad. There is a song (Cher’s 1970s hit “Dark Lady”) that becomes a duet between Sonny and Gregg Allman, which sounds like a freakish horror but actually is a highlight of the show... remember, it’s a TV variety show. The second male is fashion designer Bob Mackie (Michael Berresse), who does a “fabulous” song-and-dance showcase to a runway show of Cher’s many fashions. Oy, what spectacle!

And geez, how about the music? The Three Chers are magnificent as they deliver hits like “The Beat Goes On,” “(Bang Bang) My Baby Shot Me Down,” “If I Can Turn Back Time,” and of course the mega-hit “Believe.” The show is stuffed with music, sequins, bright lights and hope...

which perfectly describes the life and times of the superstar known as Cher.

“The Cher Show” has a pre-Broadway run through Sunday, July 15th, 2018, at the Oriental Theatre – 24 West Randolph Street in Chicago. Featuring Stephanie J. Block, Teal Wicks, Miceala Diamond, Emily Skinner, Jarrod Spector, Matthew Hydzik, Michael Campayno and Michael Berresse. Book by Rick Elice. Directed by Jason Moore. For the HollywoodChicago.com coverage of “The Cher Show” press conference, [click here](#). [22]



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