

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



ALL YOU NEED IS ‘LOVE’

LAS VEGAS — There are many entertainment options in Las Vegas, but “The Beatles LOVE,” which just celebrated its 10-year anniversary at The Mirage with a revamped show, is one that should not be missed — especially by fans of the Fab Four.

And even those who aren’t into Beatles music would likely enjoy the spectacle of the show, a nonstop flurry of activity that includes mind-blowing stunts and acrobatics, clever props, state-of-the-art technology, and over-the-top costumes.

The show’s creators (including musical director Giles Martin, who worked with his father, Beatles producer Sir George Martin, on the original “Beatles LOVE,” which opened in 2006 and won a Grammy Award for its soundtrack) have revamped the popular show with everything from new props to choreography to special effects. The venue’s 2,000-plus seats have had their speakers replaced, providing a fuller, richer sound that engulfs the audience in all-things Beatles — from the music to the conversations among the band mates that make it seem as if they are in the theater-in-the-round with the audience.

This was actually the case at the recent 10-year-anniversary celebration, which was attended by Paul McCartney and

Beatles show in Vegas celebrates 10 years

Ringo Starr — the two remaining Beatles — and an assortment of family and friends (including John Lennon’s widow, Yoko Ono, and George Harrison’s widow, Olivia).

Not only does the show chronicle the heyday of Beatlemania, with video footage of screaming young women as well as the Beatles performing many of their hits, it takes the audience back to the band members’ childhood days in Liverpool up through their final performance on a London rooftop in 1969.

“The Beatles LOVE” begins with an a cappella version of “Because,” and ends with a rousing trio of singalongs: “Hey Jude,” “Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band,” and “All You Need Is Love.” In between, the mood ranges from wistful — with beautiful aerial exercises during “Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds” and “Yesterday” — to whimsical, as the stage becomes an under-the-sea extravaganza for “Octopus’s Garden,” to more serious with political undertones during “Revolution,” which segues into “Back in the U.S.S.R.”

While some of the songs are re-imagined, with clever segues and overlaps, they are from the master tapes recorded at Abbey Road Studios, so when they are played

on the remarkable sound system, the audio is crystal clear.

In an interview before the anniversary performance, Giles Martin told me that he and director Dominic Champagne decided about two years ago to give the show a top-to-bottom makeover and said they focused on the word “vibrancy.”

“It was a good show, but we wanted to make it better,” he said. “We watched it with a critical eye and made changes that we thought would improve it.”

Some of the modifications included song changes, like dropping “I Am the Walrus” in favor of “Twist and Shout,” and adding a high-tech projection component that allows a performer to dance with a virtual partner during “While My Guitar Gently Weeps.”

“‘LOVE’ gives you a chance to put down your phone, forget about your e-mails, put your drink down, and just . . . takes you into a different world where you are immersed in the music — and let’s face it, it’s great music — and where you leave feeling better,” Martin said. “And that’s what shows should do.”

“The Beatles LOVE” is at The Mirage. Tickets start at \$79. For more information, visit www.cirquedusoleil.com or www.themirage.com.

Juliet Pennington can be reached at writeonjuliet@gmail.com.

HERE

HOLLYWOOD COMES TO VERMONT

Hang out with more than 1,500 producers, content creators, and TV fans at this year’s Independent Television Festival in West Dover, Vt., Oct. 5-9. The ITVFest, as it’s called, draws filmmakers, actors, writers, directors, producers, Hollywood execs, and fans to this laid-back town nestled in the Green Mountains of south-central Vermont. See some of the best new TV pilots, Web series, short films, and documentaries, and then chat about them around the fire pit with some of the industry’s top professionals. Everyone from college students to seasoned Emmy-winning veterans from 23 countries submitted 467 shows for consideration in this year’s festival; 80 made the cut. The event also includes more than 40 panel discussions and workshops with executives from HBO, The Hallmark Channel, NBCUniversal, and other companies on everything from visual effects to entertainment law, casting, and licensing. Passes start at \$35. www.itvfest.com.

A BIRD’S-EYE VIEW OF NEW ENGLAND’S FOLIAGE

Enjoy the foliage by foot, car, and helicopter on a luxurious weekend tour that averages \$4,000 a day for two guests. The Over the Top package, offered by Kimpton Marlowe Hotel in Cambridge and Kimpton Taconic Hotel in Manchester, Vt., includes a chartered helicopter excursion from Bedford to Manchester, as you soar over Littleton, the Connecticut River, Strat-

ton Mountain, and other towns and destinations en route, a half-day driving adventure by Land Rover to the Mount Equinox summit, and a guided foliage hike in Manchester. The 4-day, \$16,000 package includes a two-night VIP stay at the Hotel Marlowe’s Presidential Suite, and two nights in Taconic’s Bennett Cottage, transportation to and from the helipads and hotels, breakfasts and dinners at the hotel restaurants, and chef-packed picnic baskets for lunches. The trips run Sept. 29-Oct. 2, Oct. 6-10, and Oct. 13-17. 800-546-7866, www.hotel-marlowe.com.

THERE

MORE TITANIC ARTIFACTS ON DISPLAY NOW

Visit Las Vegas anytime through October and see six personal items belonging to First Officer William Murdoch, who was on the bridge when the Titanic hit an iceberg in 1912 and soon plunged to the ocean floor. The artifacts, on show to commemorate the 31st anniversary of the wreck site’s discovery, have been available for public viewing only once since 1912. See them during “Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition” at the Luxor Hotel and Casino. The items include a leather toiletry kit with Murdoch’s initials, a White Star Line officer’s button, a straight razor, and long Johns. Murdoch saved many lives before going down with the



ship. 800-557-7428, www.premierexhibitions.com.

ALL ABOARD COLORADO’S SKI TRAIN

Starting to plan your winter adventures? Head to Colorado between Jan. 7 and March 26 and you can travel between the airport and ski resorts by train. Passengers arriving at Denver International Airport can hop a new commuter rail train to Union Station, opt to spend a night downtown, and then jump on Amtrak’s Winter Park Express, which takes people on a two-hour ride up to the mountains. The Winter Park train, which launched service in 1912, runs on Saturdays, Sundays, and some holidays. It leaves Denver at 7 a.m. and departs Winter Park for the return trip at 4:30 p.m. Rates: \$9 commuter rail between the airport and Union Station; \$39-\$59 between downtown Denver and Winter Park. 303-299-6000, www.rtd-denver.com/a-line.shtml; 888-923-7275,

www.amtrak.com/WinterParkExpress.

EVERYWHERE

A LIGHTWEIGHT LAPTOP CORD FOR YOUR TRAVELS

Leave your bulky laptop cord at home and bring a Dart on your travels. This mini laptop charger is made by FIN-six, a company founded by a group of MIT graduate students. It weighs just 5.25 ounces and fits in the palm of your hand, yet can deliver up to 65 watts of power to charge your laptop. The 6-foot cord also has a 2.1A USB charger for refueling a USB device at full speed. The Dart comes with nine interchangeable DC power connectors, or tips, making it compatible with most major laptop brands, including Dell, HP, Lenovo, Samsung, Sony, and Toshiba (it does not work with Apple MacBook or Microsoft Sur-

face laptops). The charger has over-voltage, short-circuit, and over-temperature protection, so it’s safe to use with your laptop. \$99. www.fin-six.com.

THE PERFECT HEADSET FOR CHALLENGING CONDITIONS

Plantronics’ new Voyager 5200 headset lets you make clear calls even when you’re dashing through the airport, riding the train, or standing in a noisy coffee shop. The comfortable headset offers Plantronics’ impressive noise-canceling and proprietary WindSmart technology for dampening the sounds of wind, cars, airplane engines, and chattering people. The Bluetooth-compatible device lets you stream music, directions from your phone, and even podcasts while on the go, and provides audio alerts including caller ID and updates on battery level and connection status. It can also stay connected to two devices at once, such as personal and work cellphones or a smartphone and tablet. Dock the Voyager 5200 in the optional charging case and gain an additional 14 hours of talk time. \$119.99 headset; \$39.99 docking station. 888-752-6876, www.plantronics.com.

KARI BODNARCHUK



TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER | CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

Airline misspelled name on my ticket

Q I recently booked a flight from Frankfurt to Orlando using CheapOair. I spoke with a representative at an Indian call center, who helped me make the reservation.

The booking number was issued under the name of Jutta Monica Baumgaster. The correct spelling should have been “Jutta Monica Baumgarten.” Ongoing e-mail and telephone conversations between myself and upper management at CheapOair did not resolve this problem.

The only option I had, according to a manager at CheapOair, was to purchase a new airline ticket and throw away the first ticket, which was nonrefundable. So I paid \$697 for a new ticket.

I expect CheapOair to assume full responsibility for this matter. I expect to be reimbursed for the total value of my second airline ticket. Outsourcing services to a foreign country invites room for error because of language barriers. Can you help me?

JUTTA MONICA BAUMGARTEN, Deland, Fla.

A CheapOair should have spelled your name correctly. When you book an airline ticket, you have 24 hours to cancel and receive a full refund, unless you’re within one week of flying. If you’d reviewed your itinerary within a day of making the reservation, and spotted the error, you easily could have fixed this.

It’s hard to know what happened. Did the agent have a hard time understanding you, or was it just a bad connection? Did CheapOair not send you your confirmation until sometime after the 24 hours? What we do know is that you were stuck with a ticket that had the wrong name after the one-day grace period.

There’s an easy way to fix

this and a hard way. The easy way is to show up early at the airport and ask your airline to fix an obvious typographical error on your ticket. That’s been known to work in the past — but no guarantees.

The hard way is to push this with CheapOair. You didn’t enter the wrong name; a CheapOair employee did. You tried to resolve this, but in the end, a manager told you that you had to buy a new ticket.

CheapOair records its calls for “quality assurance” purposes, so it easily can go back to the tape to figure out what went wrong. I’ve always believed, and still do, that you should have the same right to record a conversation with a call center. That way, you can know for certain if you misspoke or were misinterpreted.

In this particular case, I think CheapOair goofed. You know how to spell your own name, no doubt about it. I think you’re right, this was a language issue. I’m not sure that moving the call center back to the States is the solution. I’ve spoken with plenty of call-center employees who work right here in the US of A, and we had similar communication challenges. The workaround? Make your reservation online next time.

You could have appealed this to someone higher up at CheapOair. I list the names, numbers, and e-mail addresses of its parent company’s executives on my website: elliott.org/company-contacts/fareportal/.

I contacted CheapOair on your behalf, and the company refunded your second ticket.

Christopher Elliott is the ombudsman for National Geographic Traveler magazine and the author of “How to Be the World’s Smartest Traveler.” You can read more travel tips on his blog, elliott.org, or reach him at chris@elliott.org.