

**PAGEANT**  
THEATRE  
JULY 5 - 11  
A FILM BY RON HOWARD  
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## REEL WORLD



## Let it be, please

### Vapid film makes **The Beatles** boring

**Yesterday** takes an interesting premise—"What would the world be like if the music of The Beatles didn't exist?"—and totally squanders it.

Danny Boyle (*127 Hours*, *Slumdog Millionaire*) directs the strained saga of Jack Malik (Himesh Patel), a wannabe musician working part-time in a grocery store while also busking on street corners and playing small solo gigs with his trusty guitar. Jack's music career is managed by Ellie (Lily James), who nurtures a decades-old crush on Jack as she books him gigs at hotels and music-fest side-tents.

by  
**Bob Grimm**  
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**Yesterday**  
Starring Himesh  
Patel and Lily  
James. Directed  
by Danny Boyle.  
Cinemark 14,  
Feather River  
Cinemas. Rated  
PG-13.

One day while riding his bike home—at the same time the world suffers some sort of momentary power loss—Jack gets hit by a bus. The wreck knocks out a couple of his teeth and busts his guitar. Just before his accident, he'd sworn to end his music career—probably a good idea because he totally sucks.

Post-accident, Ellie and some friends gift Jack a new guitar and suggest he bust out a song for them.

He goes with "Yesterday" by The Beatles, and they are moved, as if hearing the song for the first time. That's because they *are* hearing it for the first time. A quick Google check by Jack confirms the impossible: Somehow, somehow, he now lives in a parallel world where John, Paul, George and Ringo never came together to make music.

So what does Jack do? Why, he plagiarizes The Beatles catalog. He plasters Post-its for their songs all over his room, and starts re-creating their tracks. He struggles with the lyrics to "Eleanor Rigby," but he gets enough right to catch the ears of agents and producers everywhere. Jack does not look like a rock star, but no matter. With the music of The Beatles propelling him, this average kid starts to go places.

Now, this act—stealing the music of the best group in rock history—is a grievous action, is it not? Only a true prick would steal music and try to pass it off as his own, right? And this is where the film goes terribly wrong. Rather than explore the dark side of plagiarism in a comedic way, or seriously address a world without The Beatles, the movie seems scared of itself and becomes nothing but a lame rom-com. An opportunity for some mind-bending alternate reality is squandered for an exercise in whether Jack and Ellie will kiss.

Movies that feature The Beatles' music can be great. *Across the Universe* stands as a fine exercise on how to use their tunes in film. *Yesterday* is a vapid, unimaginative mess. Given the mode in which it's presented, I actually winced when the music came on.

You have to really screw up to make The Beatles boring. □



Poor



Fair



Good



Very Good



Excellent