Beatles smug, uninteresting

By Steve Gerst

Considering the prosaic nature of the Beatles’ new material, it is probably pointless to give an evaluation of “Yellow Submarine” and The Beatles, because we’ve been told all along that whatever the Beatles do, it has to be the ne plus ultra of pop. If the Beatles were new on the music scene, their newest productions would certainly be met with widespread disfavor. It would make more sense, then, to consider their new animated cartoon and new album on their own merits rather than as a continuation of a series of works that we’ve believed all along to be good, fashionable making “Yellow Submarine” and The Beatles great.

Could the Beatles really make a success of movie-type books which are not widely liked, considering their past successes?

If your seven-year-old brother or sister is looking for something to do on a Saturday afternoon, send the little darling to see “Yellow Submarine.” It’s full of Star Wars, the Brood, and other instances of the current little counterculture you ever saw. And if you’re in a little mood yourself, you might want to go along too. (Five to one you come back that night “It’s like the Beatles, you know, you can’t lose.”)

By this time, both the instigators and paws of this madness who harangued between psychiatrist personalities so maddeningly that one hoped when the play ended Deborah Harford (and all the rest of the Harford) would dissolve too.

The deep personification felt for the Harfords is the cast’s and producer’s own testament to its efficiency. If anything, it is the play, and not the production, that will be remembered. The Beatles also shows signs that the very eyes are now much more content to rest on their laurels. Seldom are we created to any of the enthusiasm that made those first few albums great, “Happiness Is A Warm Gun” doesn’t begin to compare with the Mothers’ new Crusing With Ruben and the Jets LP as a parody of the wonderful garage rock and roll acid to be before 1964. “Revolution I” (somewhat different from the single version) has none of the high-pitched intensity of the Rolling Stones’ “Street Fighting Man” – the Beatles themselves obviously could not have cared less. On the other hand, with Mark Ager’s success, “The Time is Right for Violent Revolution,” you better believe he meant it.

Two bright spots do shine through. “OH-Oh-Oh-La-La” has a catchy tune and a simple but restorative story about “Dendre and Molly Jones,” with whom nobody need doubt immediately falls in love. “Way Don’t We Do It in the Road” is ramrod and ironic – we can go out in the middle of Mass. Ave. and do anything we like, and people will just shut it out of their minds: “I didn’t really see that.” These two songs have got, something the Beatles have been worryfully short on as of late. It’s a shame the Beatles can find instant acceptance with everything they do. None of their stuff has had any event in it since these early days. They’ve become lethargic and self-satisfied, knowing perfectly well that it doesn’t make the slightest bit of difference how good their records are. At this point they could do an album of their own making, and people would look for some deep meaning in it, failing to see for what it is, thinking, “It must be great or they wouldn’t have done it.”

Once the kitchen-sink Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band got the success it did this was inevitable. It’s too bad to wonder why the Beatles even bother to make records anymore. They will probably be acclaimed as “brilliant” for some time to come, but it’s obvious they don’t have their hearts in it.

The Beatles have lost their soul, their influence on other groups, and their stature as the World’s Best Group. Give me the Who, the Stones, or the Airplane any day. They still care.