

Film Review: 'Yesterday,' a rom-com with a soundtrack of Beatles hits



CHENNAI: Fantasy plays an important part in English director Danny Boyle's latest work, "Yesterday" — just as it did in his 2008 drama "Slumdog Millionaire," which traced the magical journey of two impoverished children in India. "Yesterday" has a liberal dose of the incredible and the ingenious.

Boyle directs a script by Richard Curtis ("Four Weddings and a Funeral," "Love Actually") in which singer-songwriter Jack Malik (Himesh Patel) is struggling to maintain his career in the face of public apathy. Apart from his best friend and manager Ellie (Lily James), and a few other pals, no one shows any interest in Malik's music.

But a mysterious worldwide blackout comes as a heaven-sent boon. Mailk gets hit by a bus, and he lands in hospital. When he wakes up, he finds that everyone in the world except for him has forgotten the songs of arguably the most famous pop band in history, The Beatles.

Malik takes full advantage of this collective memory loss, and begins to pass off The Beatles' hits — “Yesterday,” “She Loves You,” “Let It Be” and more — as his own work.

But “Yesterday” is not a film about The Beatles' music. The songs are just the vehicle that carries the plot, which has more to do with love and price of fame. Whether by design or accident, Boyle fails to recreate the magical allure of The Beatles performing their songs — perhaps understandably, since it would be near-impossible to replicate the electricity and insanity of their live shows — instead settling for a narrative that winds its way through romance, disappointment, hurt, humiliation and guilt.

Many media outlets, including The Guardian, have branded the film “predictable,” and it is. While audiences will no doubt enjoy the soundtrack and the film's undeniable feel-good charm, there is no real exploration of the secrets behind “Beatlemania” and how the band managed to capture hearts all over the world as they did.

Nonetheless, “Yesterday” is sugary fun, funny, and will no doubt have you singing along to your favorite Beatles tunes throughout the summer.
