

THE Nation.

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Alter-reviews:

Steve Tyrell at the Café Carlyle

Tammy Faye Starlite at Joe's Pub

Some Beatles-related stuff

Steve Tyrell's run at the Carlyle is now in its eleventh year, since he was chosen to replace the (nearly) immortal Bobby Short. It was a gutsy choice at the time, since Tyrell was a relative newcomer to the cabaret scene, having spent most of his career behind the scenes as a producer and arranger before, somehow, he got the luckiest of breaks by getting to sing on the soundtrack on *Father of the Bride* and becoming middle America's favorite wedding singer for that first dance.

That sounds a little snotty, but I don't mean it to be. Tyrell is a terrific entertainer and a multifaceted musical historian. When I first heard his voice, it put me in mind of Tom Waits and Dr. John, but it's gotten smoother and no longer sounds at all out of place singing something like "This Guy's in Love With You" (which he does exquisitely). I knew of some of his work as a producer with Blood, Sweat & Tears and others of a more Tin Pan Alley orientation from having heard the stories he's told at past gigs. I didn't know, however, how much experience he got as a young man at Scepter Records working with the Brill Building greats who helped invent rock 'n' roll.

At the opening night of this year's holiday run, called "That Lovin' Feelin'," he began with the standards, but then, I was quite pleased to see, he self-consciously sought to expand the "Great American Songbook" into the BB era, relying on King and Goffin, Leiber and Stoller, Mann and Weil, etc., and making them sound both new and classic at the same time. He forgot a few lyrics, but a splendid time was guaranteed for all, regardless of age (but not of wealth, of course). You can even take your parent and/or grandparents and nobody will leave unhappy.