



Travel

BROADWAY REVIEW



Ain't Too Proud - *The Life and Times of the Temptations*

By Mike Cohen

NEW YORK - Last year I saw *Motown the Musical* at Place des Arts, the American dream story of Motown founder Berry Gordy's journey from featherweight boxer to the heavyweight music mogul who launched the careers of Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Smokey Robinson and many more. I loved every minute of it. So, when I visited New York City recently, I was naturally drawn to *Ain't Too Proud - The Life and Times of the Temptations*. It won a 2019 Tony Award for Best Choreography and had 12 nominations.

The Temptations is an American vocal group who released a series of successful singles and albums with **Motown** during the 1960s and 70s. Featuring five male vocalists and dancers, the group formed in 1960 in Detroit, Michigan, under the name **The Elgins** and gave us such memorable hits as *My Girl*, *Ain't Too Proud to Beg*, *I Wish It Would Rain*, *Treat Her Like a Lady*, *Just My Imagination (Running Away with Me)* and *For Once In My Life*, *What Becomes of the Broken Hearted* and more. They earned three Grammy Awards.

Otis Williams is the last living member of the Temptations. His book about the group is the basis for the Broadway show. Williams in fact continues to perform, using the Temptations name.

Ain't Too Proud, currently playing at the Imperial Theatre on West 45th Street until at least US Thanksgiving Weekend 2020, is the electrifying new musical that follows The Temptations' extraordinary journey from the streets of Detroit to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. With their signature dance moves and unmistakable harmonies, they rose to the top of the charts creating an amazing 42 Top 10 hits with 14 reaching number one. The rest is history — how they met, the groundbreaking heights they hit and how personal and political conflicts threatened to tear the group apart as the United States fell into civil unrest. This thrilling story of brotherhood, family, loyalty and betrayal is a beautiful production.

Tony Award nominee **Derrick Baskin** portrays Otis Williams and is the glue to the show. He narrates the entire history of the Temptations from the opening number until the conclusion. Before walking into the theatre, I simply knew the songs which made the Temptations so successful, but this is a



A scene from Ain't Too Proud. (Photo, Matthew Murphy)

true history lesson and it pulls no punches. There have been 24 members of the Temptations since this group was first established. Williams had to continually make the hard decisions and drop members who were not comporting themselves properly. At one point two of the singers who were let go returned for a reunion tour, but they could not turn over a new leaf. Williams himself was an absentee father and husband, focused exclusively on the business. I loved the show so much that the greatest hits of The Temptations are now loaded on my iPhone.

After breaking house records at both Berkeley Rep and The Kennedy Center, this musical is written by three-time Obie Award winner Dominique Morisseau, directed by two-time Tony Award winner Des McAnuff (*Jersey Boys*), and featuring choreography by Tony nominee Sergio Trujillo (*Jersey Boys, On Your Feet*).

Leading the current cast of *Ain't Too Proud* as *The Temptations* is Tony Award nominee **Derrick Baskin** as **Otis Williams**, **James Harkness** as **Paul Williams**, **Jawan M. Jackson** as **Melvin Franklin**, **Jelani Remy** as **Eddie Kendricks**, and Tony Award nominee **Ephraim Sykes** as **David Ruffin**. *Ain't Too Proud* also features *Saint Aubyn*, *Shawn Bowers*, *E. Clayton Cornelious*, *Taylor Symone Jackson*, *Jahi Kears*, *Jarvis B. Manning, Jr.*, *Joshua Morgan*, *Rashidra Scott*, *Nasia Thomas*, *Christian Thompson*, *Candice Marie Woods*, *Esther Antoine*, *Marcus Paul James*, *Correy West*, *Drew Wildman Foster*, *Curtis Wiley* and *Jamari Johnson Williams*.

The Imperial Theatre provides accommodations for patrons who are blind, deaf, partially sighted, and/or have hearing loss. The

theatre provides infrared assistive listening devices for every performance. In addition, beginning four weeks after a show's official opening night performance, hand-held audio description devices and hand-held captioning devices are available, and there is unlimited access to downloadable audio description and/or captioning for person-

al mobile devices free of charge. If you have questions, contact Shubert Audience Services at (212) 944-3700 or audience-services@shubertorg.com. There is also a representative at the Shubert Audience Services kiosk at every performance to assist any patron with any of their devices, software, or technology.

Seating is accessible to all parts of the orchestra without steps. There are no steps to the designated wheelchair seating location. Handrails are available at the end of every stepped seat row in the Mezzanine. There are no elevators, but a wheelchair accessible restroom (unisex) is located on the main level. Tickets for *Ain't Too Proud* are available by visiting www.Telecharge.com, by calling (800) 447-7400, or by visiting the Imperial Theatre Box Office (249 West 45th Street). For groups of 10 or more, visit www.BroadwayInbound.com or call (866) 302-0995. The show runs two and a half hours. Due to COVID-19, theatres are closed until at least April 12.

20/20 Vision

The Roadmap to Foster Resilience
In Ourselves, Clients & Communities

Thursday May 21, 2020

8:30 AM – 3:45 PM

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Registration & Costs

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| Register Online: www.qae-aeq.com www.eventbrite.ca | Early rate, prior to March 1: \$70 QAE Member (after March 1): \$80 Regular (after March 1): \$95 | Student: \$25 Late (after May 1): \$125 On-Site: \$140 |
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Includes networking lunch and workshop materials