

Sting musical The Last Ship opens on Broadway

27/10/2014



[The New York Times](#) described it as "ambitious, earnest... and seductive" while identifying some "nagging flaws".

[Time Out New York](#), meanwhile, said it was "rollicking and often glorious" but lacked "sympathy-generating detail".

Sting, former frontman with The Police, described watching Sunday's opening night as "an out-of-body experience".

"You relinquish a lot of control," the 63-year-old [told the Playbill website](#). "But all of these people bring something to the process I can't."

Written by John Logan and Brian Yorkey, The Last Ship features songs from Sting's 2013 album of the same name.

Newcastle-born actor Jimmy Nail and Rachel Tucker, a finalist on BBC One talent show I'd Do Anything, are among the cast of Joe Mantello's production.



Billy Joel (right) was one of several music stars supporting Sting on Sunday

Set in Sting's home town of Wallsend, the musical tells of a group of unemployed shipbuilders who take over a closed factory to build one final vessel.

Its main character is Gordon, a prodigal son who returns after 14 years to find the town and its community close to economic collapse.

"Melancholy tones of sorrow and regret saturate this highly personal and intensely felt musical play," [wrote Variety's critic](#) Marilyn Stasio.

[Entertainment Weekly's](#) Kyle Anderson, however, said the show "trots out a series of dirges that lack the dynamism necessary to keep audiences fully engaged".

"This melancholy musical is without doubt a heartfelt, intensely personal project," wrote David Rooney [in The Hollywood Reporter](#).

Yet he went on to call the show "a bit of a yawn [that] doesn't hold water", with "a plot that - sorry - simply doesn't float".



Rachel Tucker (left) previously starred in *Wicked* in London

Writing in [The Guardian](#), Alexis Soloski called the musical's structure "slack", its book "indifferent", its love story "lopsided" and its gender politics "unreconstructed".

But she said Sting's "folk-inflected songs... are a pleasure" that are performed "with vigour and swagger and joy".

Singer Billy Joel, actor Alan Cumming and Sting's wife Trudie Styler were among the first night audience at the Neil Simon Theatre.

Bruce Springsteen, Blondie's Deborah Harry, actress Joely Richardson and celebrity blogger Perez Hilton were also in attendance.

---