

Not great, but how can you rap 'Little Johnny Jones'?

Credits

LITTLE JOHNNY JONES, by George M. Cohan. Adapted by Alfred Uhry. Directed by Gerald Sweeney. Choreography by Dan Siretta. Scenery and lighting by Robert Randolph. Costumes by David Toser. Sound design by Robert Kozmar. Musical direction by Lynn Criger. A Goodspeed Opera House revival produced at the Arie Crown Theatre by Steven Leber, David Krebs and James M. Nederlander. \$17.50 top. Phone 791-4000.

Johnny Jones	David Cassidy
Goddie Gates	Maureen Brennan
Amosby Amosby	Peter Van Norden
Mrs. Kenworthy	Anna McNeely
Florabelle Fly	Jane Galloway
Whitney Wilson	Ernie Sabella

With Jack Birner, Randal Easterbrook, Bruce Chew and 16 others.

The revival of George M. Cohan's 1904 musical "Little Johnny Jones," now at the Arie Crown, is a slick mixture of vaudeville, operetta and Fourth of July jubilee.

It's the kind of show you don't want to knock, for fear you'll receive a call from the House un-American Activities Committee.

That's all right. I don't really want to knock "Little Johnny Jones" anyway. It's a pretty show. And patriotic, but not overbearingly so.

It's just, well, kind of dull. Take this as an early warning, because I'm not going to say any more about it. As an American boy myself — born and bred in the great Midwest — I was raised not to pick on someone just because he's a little short. That goes for musicals, too. "Little Johnny Jones" is a little short on substance for my taste, but I've got to admire the condition it's in, especially after 77 years.

"LITTLE JOHNNY Jones" has its share of hit songs. "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "Give My Regards to Broadway" are the best-known, but I get a bigger charge out of "Oh You Wonderful Boy," probably more for

Scott Fosdick

Theater critic



the dancing of the chorus than for the song itself. The women just sort of waft around, like some antique penny postcard put in motion.

With this and other dances, choreographer Dan Siretta gives the show its biggest boost. There's no way to tell what the dancing was really like back then, what with the lack of dance notation, but Siretta achieves an entertainingly authentic look in his interpretations of Cohan's rhythms.

As the most unremittingly vaudevilian type, Ernie Sabella has a field day sprinkling one-line non sequiturs through a story that is otherwise as straightforward as a flagpole (or would you call a flagpole straight-up?).

Maureen Brennan has fun as Goddie Gates, especially when she dons a moustache to impersonate an earl. Anna McNeely lends an operatic quality to the comic ditty "The Voice in My Heart." She and Peter Van Norden raise laughs when, as cad and victim, their wooing turns to woofing.

DAVID CASSIDY is pleasant enough in the title role, though I think someone like Sandy Duncan might have made the All-American Boyishness a bit more palatable.

The sound isn't too bad. The Arie Crown has new curtains on the sides of the auditorium that take away some of



FORMER TEEN IDOL David Cassidy, seated, stars in the title role of "Little Johnny Jones," a slick mixture of vaudeville, operetta and patriotism by George M. Cohan now at the Arie Crown Theatre.

the tinyness.

All in all, it's an attractive show. Though for a supposed patriotic har-

burner, it seems to spend a long time in London before making it to America.