

# 'One and Only' 's wonderful

The Little Theatre-On the Square in Sullivan is closing out the season with the musical *My One and Only*.



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determined to be first across the Atlantic who woos and eventually wins an English aquacade star who was third across the Channel. It has an all-George Gershwin score, drawn mostly from *Funny Face* — songs like *He Loves and She Loves*, *I Can't Be Bothered Now*, *Strike Up the Band* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It*.

The Little's Richard Ruth, in his debut as a full-fledged solo choreographer, has devised some nifty dances to go with them, including one in which boy and girl tap barefoot in a wading pool. And director M. Seth Reines keeps it all light and airy.

Ruth, starring in the Fred role, works well both as a dapper "high hat" and a gangly "aw-shucks" Texan. He has a good, strong singing voice a big boyish smile that's irresistible, and limber limbs and tappy toes with almost a life of their own. Shannon McHuh, complete with a Julie Andrews intonation, makes a lovely Ginger.

There are times when the show could use an Edward Everett Horton or Eric Blore, but it does have Barbara Early in the Helen Broderick role, Ruth's spunky mechanic who doubles as an FBI agent, and Jack Milo in the Erik Rhodes role, as the dastardly, devious villain, Prince Nicolai Er-ralyovitch Tchat-chavadze, or Nikki for short, and together they make delightful music in the *Funny Face* number, with a nice little burleycue flourish at the end.

Jeff Coopwood, in his best role of the season, as a "minister to the distressed spirit by day, minister of the distilled spirit by night," puts zip into *Kickin' the Clouds Away*. Josh Rhodes, Roger Seyer and Paul Gritton set a good pace as the New Rhythm Boys.

And there's one magical moment, the title number, in which Ruth and Charles Bell, as an elderly figure named Mr. Magix, carry on a savvy tap conversation about the delicacies of seduction.

Robert C. Matin's art-deco set and Susan Branch's flapper-era costumes are elegant. And David Fehr at the piano and his four musicians are in fine fettle.

To borrow from a Gershwin tune not in the show, who could ask for anything more? 'S wonderful, 's marvelous, a tiptop finis to a first-rate season.

There are performances daily except Monday, through Aug. 20. Call 217/728-775.

The show became something of a phenomenon in 1983. Before its Broadway opening, it went through a series of crises that made *The Perils of Pauline* pale by comparison. This is usually the kiss of death for a show. But, miracle of miracles, it went on to become one of the year's biggest hits and win three Tony awards. It has one of those fluffy Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers plots about a '20 American aviator



Artwork by Carl Lebovitz