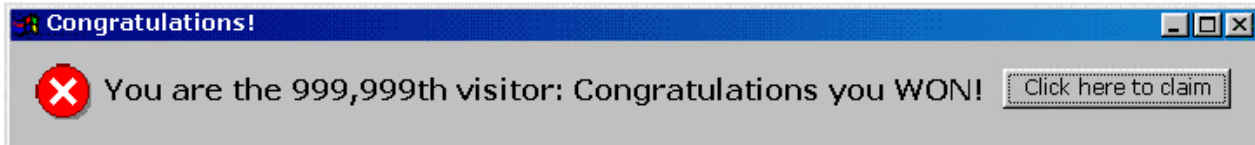


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George M! tops in music, dance

[Journal Record, The \(Oklahoma City\)](#), [Jul 9, 1998](#) by [Joan Gilmore](#)

Newcomer to Lyric Theatre Eddie Korbich took the title role in the hit Broadway musical production George M! as the third production in the summer season of musicals. He did the role with great panache and enthusiasm. However, by the time the rousing musical ended, many in the audience felt they had watched it on a VCR's "fast forward."

Korbich, as well as most of the cast, talked, danced, sang and marched faster than a twister. One might almost call it a frenetic show.

To be honest, musicals and dramas too often drag along, so probably it's better to go fast than to go too slow.

Basically the story of George M. Cohan, early-day vaudeville performer, composer, lyricist, dancer, singer and producer, this musical is well known for its patriotic music such as Grand Old Flag, Yankee Doodle Dandy and Over There. Other familiar tunes are Give My Regards to Broadway, Mary's a Grand Old Name and Harrigan.

The story begins at his birth in 1878, goes into his vaudeville days and Broadway hits, ending with 1939 when he's about to make a big return to Broadway, which he used to say he owned.

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Korbich, whose background includes stage, television and radio, is a dynamic personality on stage, full of vim, vigor and talent. While he's certainly not James Cagney, who played the film role, he certainly could have been Georgie Cohan. He sings well, is an excellent dancer and exudes personality. He ages from a good looking young man to a senior citizen and the aging of him was so startling that it was distracting to many.

Cy Young was outstanding as Georgie's father, a long-time vaudevillian who works hard to keep up with his talented son on the way to Broadway. Young handles the comedy roles as well as the pathos with great aplomb and is especially pleasurable in the duo of Harrigan, where he does fisticuffs in a bar with his son, Georgie. Rebecca Miller and Amanda Martin were exemplary in the respective roles of Nellie, Georgie's mother, and Josie, his sister. Cohan's two wives were portrayed by Beth Pollock and Heather Heinecke, both of whom evidence dramatic as well as comedy talents and who sing and dance well.

Ever since Jane Hall has been an actress -- and that's too many years to recall -- she has been a scene stealer. She's still a great actress, excellent singer and even better scene stealer. She plays two roles in this musical, the first as Madame Grimaldi, owner of a boarding house where the Cohan family lives, and second as Ma Templeton, mother of a singing star and contemporary of Georgie's, a role played by Karen Hinds.

The ensemble of young singers and dancers is outstanding as they tap and soft-shoe their way through the various types of musicals done in those early years. Outstanding was Enrique Brown, lead dancer in a special number. Also a dancer with Ballet Oklahoma, he has real talent and should go far.

Dennis Courtney directed this musical and also did the intricate and fast-paced choreography. Doug Getzoff did the great set designs and thrilled the audience to applause in the patriotic scene when colorful flags appeared from just everywhere. Producing Artistic Director of Lyric, Jim Alexander, continues his pre-performance "conversations" with the audience, which always give an insight into upcoming happenings at the theater.

American Fidelity Group co-produced the show with Lyric and orchestra sponsors are Jack Beller, Robert Lambert, Credit Bureau of Oklahoma City and OG&E. Media sponsors are Cox Communications and KGOU-KROU FM.

This show plays through Saturday and tickets are available.

Next show up will be Andrew Lloyd Webber's Song & Dance, starring Cindy Robinson, which will open July 14 for two weeks.

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