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Article published Mar 29, 2004

'One-Hit Wonders' is a delightful trip down memory lane

By [Jay Handelman](#)

SARASOTA -- You may quibble about how the songs were selected, but there's no denying the pleasure to be found in "One-Hit Wonders," Florida Studio Theatre's season-ending cabaret show.

"Hit" is a key word because all of the songs, for good or bad, reached the Top 20 on the Billboard magazine charts since the 1950s. So you hear everything from the silly "I'm Too Sexy" to the catchy "Angel of the Morning" or "Don't it Make My Brown Eyes Blue."

Director and choreographer Dennis Courtney has built a show around fragments of lyrics from Don McLean's "American Pie," an anthem for an era. For example, the line "I could make the people dance" leads into energetic performances of "Limbo Rock," "Macarena" and "The Loco-Motion."

Unfortunately, you never hear more than snippets of McLean's song, which technically doesn't belong in the show because he also had a Top 20 hit with "Vincent."

The show is performed by a four-member cast, including the always vibrant Jannie Jones and Jim Weaver, along with Julie Cardia and newcomer Gary Lindemann.

Jones puts spirit and power into everything she sings, particularly a powerful and surprisingly emotional "Me and Bobby McGee." She also teams nicely with Weaver on two duets, "Hey Paula" and "Will You Love Me Tomorrow," and Weaver leads "Spirit in the Sky," which builds into a gospel tune.

Cardia has fun taking on Jeannie C. Reilly's hit "Harper Valley PTA" and joining with Jones on Bobby McFerrin's "Don't Worry, Be Happy," which becomes medical advice for slightly off-kilter people who sing about the "Monster Mash," the "Purple People Eater" and "They're Coming to Take Me Away, Ha-Haaa!"

You'll hear two versions of Jimmy Webb's classic "MacArthur Park," and Courtney creates some comical stage pictures during instrumental hits such as "Gonna Fly Now" and "Chariots of Fire."

The arrangements and accompaniment by Michael Sebastian are sterling, and Marcella Beckwith's costumes create a sense of the entire era covered by the costumes. Day-glo colors of the 1960s blend nicely with more current fashions.

The title "One-Hit Wonders" suggests people who didn't make it. But the singers and songwriters whose work is represented actually succeeded, at least once, which is why many of the songs create a refreshing jolt down memory lane.
