



Search input field with a 'Search' button.

[Get home delivery](#)

Home Nation World China Business Opinion Science Technology Arts & Entertainment Health Life Sports Topics Print Edition

Theater Review: 'The Patsy' and 'Jonas'

One actor makes all characters believable

By Judd Hollander

Created: Jul 28, 2011

Last Updated: Aug 1, 2011

TEXT SIZE | PRINT | EMAIL | FEEDBACK

0 0 2
Recommend

[Related articles](#) : [Arts & Entertainment](#) > [Theatre](#)



David Greenspan performs the entire [play](#) himself in 'The Patsy.' (Carol Rosegg)

NEW YORK—Actor David Greenspan takes center stage and owns it, in *The Patsy* and *Jonas*, two very different one-person works presented by the Transport Group at The Duke on 42nd Street.

Written by Barry Conners as a multiple character play, *The Patsy* had a respectable 245 [performance](#) run on Broadway in 1925.

It is the story of the Harrington clan: a father who makes a living selling groceries; his wife who likes the finer things in life and who's humiliated that she has to take a streetcar wherever she goes; Grace, their pretty and spoiled daughter, who is engaged to marry Billy Caldwell; and Patricia, the not-as-pretty, quieter daughter who's [in love with](#) Tony Anderson, a former beau of Grace's.

Originally billed as a comedy in three acts, the story has been abridged somewhat by Greenspan, Jack Cummings III, and Kristina Corcoran Williams and turned into a vehicle for Greenspan who plays all the people in the story. He also drops in stage directions when needed and presents the entire work in 1 hour and 25 minutes (without intermission).

ET The Epoch Times on Facebook
Like
2,732 people like The Epoch Times.
Jessica Digo Chris Tony Harvey
Georgeta Terrence Reinhard Mark Bonny
Facebook social plugin

@epochtimes · 2,634 followers

Selected Topics from The Epoch Times



At first it's somewhat disconcerting to watch Greenspan switching from one character to another, but it quickly becomes apparent which persona he's assuming, using at different times elements of parody and realism to open a window on a time long ago.

Greenspan not only brings to life each of the characters, but also the era in which the tale takes place—a time when streetcars actually ran on a set [schedule](#) and kept to it; when \$12 was a lot of money; and where “all the world's a stage—but most of us are only stagehands.”



Written and performed by David Greenspan, 'Jonas' keeps the audience moving from one character and setting to another. (Carol Rosegg)

Greenspan and director Cummings also give the work touches of melodrama, parental angst, sibling rivalry, and most of all, heart. The sequences between Patricia and Tony are quite touching as they begin the flowering of a romance with a kissing scene that is as poignant as it is funny.

shakespeare
with Craig

July 19 - August 28

COMEDY ERRORS
by William Shakespeare

the Three Mice
by Alper, Langworthy, and Metropolis

HENRY IV
by William Shakespeare

Selected Topics from The Epoch Times

with L

NOW ON SALE!

Ads by Google

- [Broadway Theater](#)
- [Play](#)
- [Theatre Tickets](#)
- [Theatre Lights](#)
- [Patsy Cline](#)

Ads by Google

- [Theater Script](#)
- [Theatre Curtain](#)
- [Musical Theater](#)
- [Discount Theater](#)
- [New York Tickets](#)

Latest News from The Epoch Times

- [Jamaica Buried in Mountain of Debt, Despite Restructuring](#)
- [Theater Review: 'The Adventures of Pinocchio'](#)
- [Tropical Storm Emily Forms in Atlantic](#)
- [Heading Off a Securities Market Panic](#)
- [Libya Rebel's Probe Into Leader's Death Welcomed by US](#)

SCIENCE
in quotes

SHEN YUN
Performing Arts
VISIT OUR SPECIAL SECTION

CHINASCOPE
A Window to Reality
Briefings, Reports, Analysis

Search

While *The Patsy* is grounded in its basic framework and depends a lot on the physical movements of Greenspan, things take a sharp turn into the shadows of imagination with *Jonas*. It is a monologue written and performed by Greenspan.

In *Jonas*, the actor tells “of a character I once played” named Jonas, someone who was 50 years of age in 1927. Jonas then recalls a character named McQuaid and McQuaid’s life in raucous bars and honky-tonks—a world of narrow streets where unsavory characters roamed; of cigarettes with smoke that spiraled to the ceiling.

The Patsy and Jonas

The Duke on 42nd Street
229 West 42nd Street
Tickets: 646-223-3010 or www.transportgroup.org
Running Time: “The Patsy”: 1 hour, 25 minutes; “Jonas”: 40 minutes
Closes: Aug. 13

Sitting on a stool for the entire 40-minute piece, Greenspan seamlessly switches from one point of view to another, while also wondering if he did justice to his interpretation of Jonas in this play he once did. He also wonders if he, Greenspan, had as much a hand in the creation of the character as did the writer and director. Greenspan says all of this is done without

a hint of self-absorption (“it’s all about me”), a common trap befalling many one-person shows.

As Greenspan says at one point, “I have often thought in a play it is not a matter of what is probable, but what can be made believable.” It’s the effective execution of this idea that makes one believe Jonas is 50 years old in 1927 and 133 years old in the present day.

At one minute the audience is walking down those narrow streets in 1927, and in another they’re feeling the pain of unrequited love from Patricia Harrington as she tries to win the man of her dreams.

His ability to make each character believable is why in *The Patsy* we quickly find ourselves pulling for the romantic leads, and why in *Jonas* we eagerly follow Greenspan’s circular and complex narrative in order to see where the tale leads.

Direction by Cummings for *The Patsy* is quite good, working hand in glove with Greenspan in giving new life to a somewhat old story.

Dane Laffrey’s set of the Harrington [living room](#) is fine, the space looking at first like a diorama into which Greenspan literally inserts himself.

Lighting by Mark Barton is well done and the sound design by Michael Rasbury—deliberately made to appear as if it’s coming from an old-fashioned recording—is appropriate.

Related Articles

- [Theater Review: ‘Master Class’](#)

While both shows are quite entertaining, this is not necessarily something everyone will enjoy. But for fans of David Greenspan and Transport Group, not to mention a chance to see a completely new take on a 1925 comedy, they’re definitely worth a look.

Judd Hollander is the New York correspondent for the London publication The Stage.

50% Off Theater Tickets

Half-Price Tickets To Your Favorite Musicals & Broadway Shows!

www.goldstar.com

Tickets To Broadway Shows

Wicked, Hair, Jersey Boys & More Get great seats now at Broadway.com

www.Broadway.com

San Leandro Stage Lights

Visit Our Stage Lighting Rental Company To Light Your Event

Qavs.com

www.shakespearesantacruz.org



shakespeare
San Cruz

NOW ON SALE!



© 2000-2011 Shakespeare Santa Cruz
July 19 - August 28

www.shakespearesantacruz.org

[Home](#) | [About Us](#)

[New Zealand](#)

[Spanish](#) | [Japanese](#)

© 2000-2011

[Privacy](#) | [Rights](#)

[Bulgarian](#) | [Slovak](#) | [Swedish](#) | [Indonesian](#) | [Vietnamese](#)