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By Dave DePino

Arguably one of the most difficult genres to sell as an evening's entertainment is the one-person show. Before attempting to tread the boards, the one-person in question had better possess at least two of the following: a good story well-written with more humor than self-pity; an audio or visual talent such as singing, juggling, or clogging; a modicum of good looks or a dark ski mask; a winning personality and great, expressive face; enough friends and family to fill the theatre; and a security guard to prevent anyone, especially critics, from leaving before the show is over. With this particular solo show our boy, writer-performer John Ciccolini, proves to have all the positives in abundance. He will immediately steal his audience's heart.

John started out as an adorable, skinny, little, nerdy Italian kid from the ol' neighborhood in Jersey. His coming-of-age story isn't so different than most, except, as a boy, he watches his father romance his mother while singing Sinatra songs to her and dancing her around the kitchen. Destined to be a helpless, horny romantic — with a terrific voice — John now has to face the real world, where lines of romance and sex get blurred. Channeling the spirit of Old Blue Eyes, who also started out as an adorable, skinny Italian kid from Jersey, John sets out to sort through this thing called love. He does so with a song in his heart.

Ciccolini's script (with additional material by Michael Ciccolini and director Wendy Kamenoff) is a barrage of belly laughs, half the laughs coming from Ciccolini's expert comedic timing and sharp delivery as he takes command of the stage. This is lightly sprinkled with memorably touching interludes of sentimentality, kept in perfect balance by Kamenoff. Sound editing and design (Andrew Tarr and George Vennes respectively) add much to the atmosphere.

Presented by and at The Hayworth, 2509 Wilshire Blvd., L.A. Sat. 8 p.m. Aug. 26-Sep. 30. (800) 838-3006.