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YANKEE DOODLE DANDY

Yankee Doodle Dandy

A one-act mini-musical
comedy spectacular

Music and lyrics by
George M. Cohan
and Bill Francoeur
Book by Arthur Zapel



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Contemporary Drama Service

PO Box 7710 • Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7710

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Speaker: A straight, non-character voice of a stage manager or the show's producer.

Voice: An Off-stage voice speaking over the P.A. system representing a spokesman for the Great Maestro in the Sky.

George M. Cohan: An angel musician without wings. Even in heaven he wears a striped coat, a straw hat and carries a cane until he dons his Stetson™. When he returns to earth he's the quintessential song and dance man, bright, fast-talking, and persuasive. He's the energetic music man who loves the stage and knows everything about performing and putting on a show.

1st Cowboy: He's a cowboy singer angel. He'd like to go back to earth for another "gig" if he could get the assignment.

2nd Cowboy: Another established male or female cowboy performer angel.

3rd Cowboy: Same as 2nd Cowboy

4th Cowboy: Same as 2nd Cowboy

Barney: A school janitor sweeping up the gymnasium for the town meeting.

Molly: Another school maintenance person helping him (Barney).

Teen Girl: She's a rock music band leader who has a patriotic rock song for all Snookersville to hear.

Teen Musicians: These are the three other musicians in the Teen Girl's musical group. They have a few lines at the beginning of the show and talk and sing at the show's climax.

Widow Emily Snooker: An embittered old tyrant. She walks with a cane. Respectfully they all call her "Mrs. Emily." She runs the town as President of the Historical Society, Superintendent of Schools, and President of the

Snookersville National Bank. It was her great, great grandfather, General Hoddington Snooker, who founded the city of Snookersville, and she won't let anyone forget it. She bullies everyone in town, especially the Mayor.

Mayor Dudley Gumper: A befuddled oaf. He wears a large cowboy hat and a shirt with a string tie. He flusters easily, inverting parts of his sentences. He desperately would like to be an eloquent politician — he recites fragments of familiar songs and poetry. A lovable old puffbag.

Mrs. Dudley Gumper: The mayor's wife. A ramrod. She tries to give Gumper the courage to stand up to Mrs. Emily and be the kind of resolute mayor he would like to be.

Darrell Brinkley: The newly-hired band director at the high school. He's hoping to get a firm contract for his job. He knows Mrs. Emily is the key to that. He's in love with Mrs. Emily's granddaughter, Julie, and wants to marry her if he can get his tenure contract. He's talented and a young man of principle. He believes in the kids and would like to help them if he could, but his assignment from Mrs. Emily to do the music and direct the Centennial show makes that difficult. This is just the opportunity he's been waiting for to lock in his job.

Julie Snooker: A pretty girl in her twenties, the granddaughter of old Mrs. Emily. She loves Darrell and wants to marry him for she believes he's a man of principle and courage. When she thinks that Darrell is turning cowardly because of her grandmother, she breaks up with him.

David: Darrell's student assistant in the band department. He's completely loyal to Darrell.

Mrs. Cunningham: The eccentric choral director at the high school. She bursts into boisterous song at the slightest excuse. She's a powerhouse. She can do any kind of music, will do what anyone asks for; she loves music and is eager to have her singers perform. Her clothes are eccentric in style.

Gwendolyn LaFever: The interpretive dance teacher. She operates on a different level from the rest of the world. Loves to be artsy. Loves approval and understanding.

Cohan gives her all of that, and she's putty in his hands. She dresses like a ballet teacher.

Courtney Earnshaw: The literature teacher of the high school. A frustrated, would-be poet. Everything he does is grandiose. But he has no talent for real dramatic writing. He toadies to Mrs. Emily but can be easily overwhelmed by a dynamic person like Cohan.

Principal Henrietta Motley: A stuffy bureaucrat totally under the thumb of Mrs. Emily. Her orders to the faculty are all Mrs. Emily's edicts. She doesn't want anything to rock the boat of her administration.

Johnny: Student actor in Earnshaw's version of the documentary drama. He speaks one line.

Acting General 1: He tries to act the role of General Snooker in Earnshaw's version of the drama.

Acting General 2: He begins to portray General Snooker in the revised version of the drama until The Real General Snooker takes over.

Boy 1 and Girl 1: One line speeches. May also perform as Pioneers 1 and 2.

Pioneer 1 and Pioneer 2: Short speeches. May also perform as Boy 1 and Girl 1.

Other Student Performers: Pantomime action but have no lines.

The Real General Snooker: He's the real thing as opposed to Acting General 1 and Acting General 2, who are students in military costume. He's bearded and attired in a more authentic Civil War general's uniform. He's totally honest and outspoken. He's warmly cantankerous. Comic.

Pageant Choir: This is a group of four to eight singers. They may also double as the dancing chorus.

Student Narrator: Chosen by Darrell to be the narrator of the

true General Snooker story. He could be reading his part from a script. The second group of student actors pantomime his narration. This part could be played by a female actor.

Four Dancers: These female dancers must be able to do a silly interpretive dance as well as a lively “Rockette’s High Kick.”

Four Singers: These singers, male and female, also must be versatile enough to act as a singing chorus throughout the musical comedy. They may also be used in place of a quartet in Act 1.

Optional Extras: These extras can be part of the crowd at the show’s beginning and at the end. They can also be the “police” that try to subdue the parents and students at the order of the Mayor.

NOTE: In addition to the character speaking roles listed above, there are many other one or two line parts that can be spoken by members of the chorus, pageant choir, or extras On-stage. The singing roles are also listed in the songbook.

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE CAST:

The storyline of the show allows for a large cast of performers allowing many people with a variety of talents to participate. There are roles for leading characters, short walk-on parts, singers, dancers, and crowd extras. Many parts can be doubled if necessary. The singers can be a minimum of six, but twelve or more can participate depending on stage space available. The dance group should be no more than six dancers to keep rehearsals manageable. It would be acceptable to use adults in the cast for the roles of Cohan, Mrs. Emily, the Mayor and his Wife, Barney, Molly, Principal, Gwendolyn, Earnshaw, Mrs. Cunningham, and The Real General Snooker. Darrell Brinkley and Julie Snooker could be college-age performers, but many teens with proper makeup and dress could do just as well. With proper makeup and costuming all roles could be performed by teens.

COMEDY STYLE:

The humor of this script comes largely from the situations and the characterization. This is not a show of funny one-liners but a comedy of action. Everything must move briskly along with everyone picking up their cues and stopping only briefly for laughs. Speak into laughs before they die. If you must repeat the line to be heard, OK, but don't wait too long after the laugh. Keep the audience on edge, don't give them a moment's respite or the show will lose momentum. Cohan is always in motion, always talking, always alive like Professor Hill in the classic *Music Man* musical.

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS:

A CD or cassette tape of the show's music is available from the publisher. The instrumental portion of this rehearsal performance recording may be used "as is," or you may choose to "sweeten" the sound with the addition of live instruments using the music from the Piano/Conductor score.

The recorded professional performers may be used in rehearsals by the student performers to learn the timing and style needed when they perform with the instrumental track. Because the music at the end of the show is mostly continuous, it is important that the student performers learn the timing to minimize any cuing problems.

A crowd sound effect recording will help both at the beginning and end of the show to add excitement and believability.

COSTUMES:

Since Snookersville is located in the Rocky Mountains somewhere, western garb is appropriate. The students wouldn't necessarily be wearing cowboy hats, but jeans would be acceptable for the students, parents, and the general crowd. The Mayor needs to wear a big Stetson™, a western jacket, and a white shirt with a black string tie. Mrs. Emily (a widow) can be dressed in an out-of-style, severe dress. The teachers and the principal should dress as befits their specialty and character. Cohan should be costumed as a turn-of-the-century song and dance man with striped coat, straw hat, and cane.

REHEARSALS:

The singers and the dancers can rehearse their parts separately to save time and confusion until time for blocking and technical rehearsals.

MUSIC CUES:

All musical selections are numbered in the script, the Piano/Conductor score, and the Vocal score. These numbers correspond to the cue numbers listed on the cassette recording and the CD labels. The cassette recording has the demonstration professional performers' presentation of the songs on one side of the cassette tape and the identical instrumental version on the opposite side. The performers may rehearse with the professional singers to determine pace and style, then sing to the instrumental version.

The CD contains only the instrumental version for convenient cuing by number. The professional singers' version is not on the CD for want of space.

LIGHTING:

Standard stage lighting will suffice, but a spotlight is needed in several scenes as indicated in the script.

THE SET:

One full stage set is all that is needed to stage this production. The set is a high school gymnasium that is a multi-purpose room used as an auditorium and for indoor

sports. A basketball hoop at one end may be helpful in identifying the room, but it is not necessary. Spectator risers are necessary to establish that the room is used as an auditorium. (See Floor Plan Diagram.) They are used at both the beginning and end of the show for enough people to suggest a crowd. The risers can be permanently placed Upstage Left on a diagonal. Placing a few people on chairs Downstage Left will suggest that the risers are in a wide circle. This will permit the performing platform at Center Stage to face in the direction of the audience.

The Mayor's speaker's podium is Upstage Right with chairs flanking it and a few other less wide risers at Stage Right to suggest the total circle of spectator seats.

The primary performing area for the scenes of rehearsals and the final performance of the "pageant" is Center Stage.

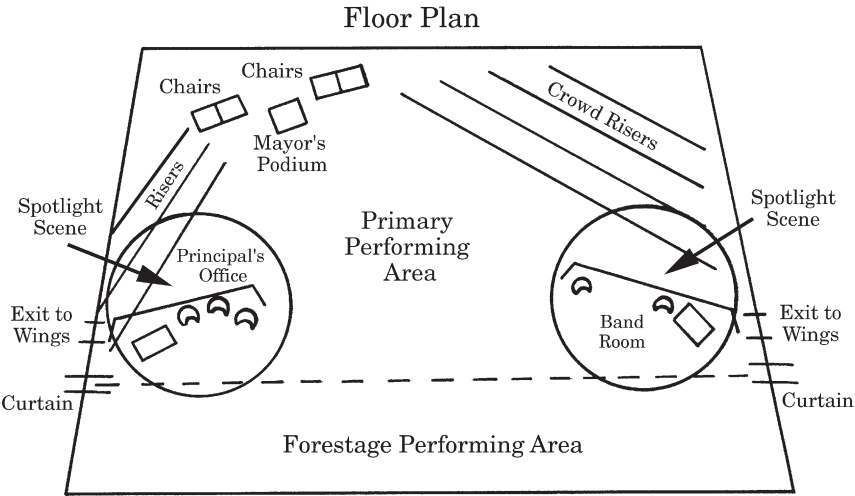
A curtain is needed to separate scenes. At the show's climax we are seeing action both in front of the curtain and behind it. Scene 8 begins behind the curtain. The audience should believe they are backstage before the Mayor announces the big pageant show. This can be accomplished by having actors and performers walking by and by the word "backstage" spoken by the Mayor's Wife. After the dialog between the Mayor and his Wife, the lights should fade to black to give the audience a chance to adjust to the idea that we've returned to a front stage view when the Mayor steps out from behind the curtain.

There are several times during the show when you may choose to do sections in front of the curtain to allow a modification of props backstage. These decisions will depend on the size of the stage and the space out in front of the curtain. Certainly in the big climax of the show you will want to use the entire stage area.

The show's two "spotlight" scenes are Downstage Right and Downstage Left. In both instances a simple flat may be rolled out from the wings to suggest the back wall of the Principal's office and Darrell's band room. A desk and chairs are accessory props that can be quickly brought in when the curtain closes on the previous scenes. Only the circled area is lit with a spotlight or other selective stage lighting; the remaining area of the stage is dark. These temporary flats are removed after each of these spotlight scenes is completed.

For the prologue of the show the dancers and singers can perform in the forestage area in front of the curtain. The

Mayor also can stand in front of the curtain when he announces the major presentation at the climax of the show. When the curtain opens on this big ending, the entire stage (including the area of the forestage) may be used to have everyone on stage for maximum excitement and “Broadway pizzazz.” After the performers take their bows and do their encore, they can retreat Upstage so the curtain can be closed.



SONG LIST (CUE SHEET)

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. The Yankee Doodle Song and Dance Man, Prologue — <i>Company</i> | 1 |
| 2. Sweet Colorado — <i>Cohan, Cowboys</i> | 4 |
| 3. Centennial Rock — <i>Teen Group</i> | 7 |
| 4. Fear and Panic (La Donna e Mobile) — <i>Three Dancers</i> | 14 |
| 5. He Is Our Hero — <i>Pageant Choir</i> | 14 |
| 6. Yankee Doodle Dandy — <i>Cohan</i> | 17 |
| 7. Give My Regards to Broadway — <i>Cohan, Darrell, Chorus</i> | 18 |
| 8. Give My Regards to Broadway, Underscore | 20 |
| 9. He Is Our Hero — <i>Pageant Choir</i> | 20 |
| 10. Harrigan, That's Me — <i>Cohan, Darrell, Students</i> | 21 |
| 11. Yankee Doodle Dandy / You're a Grand Old Flag Medley — <i>Cohan, Darrell, Students</i> | 23 |
| 12. He Is Our Hero — <i>Pageant Choir</i> | 33 |
| 13. Lucky General Snooker, First Version — <i>Acting General 1, Pioneer 1</i> | 34 |
| 14. Lucky General Snooker, Second Version — <i>The Real General Snooker, Acting General 2, Pioneer 2, Student Narrator, All Student Actors</i> | 34 |
| 15. The Lucky General Snooker March, Underscore | 37 |
| 16. Yankee Doodle Dandy, Underscore | 37 |
| 17. Centennial Ragtime Rock — <i>Teen Group, Company</i> | 38 |

SCENE 1

(Stagelights. COMPANY of singers and dancers enters, in front of the curtain, from both wings.)

1. The Yankee Doodle Song and Dance Man, Prologue

COMPANY: *(Singing)*

He's the Yankee Doodle Song and Dance Man.
The undisputed star of the show.
He'll have you clapping to the beat,
You'll be tapping your feet.
He's a one-man dynamo!

He's the Yankee Doodle Song and Dance Man;
A composer quite extraordinaire.
He'll have you singing out loud, one of many in the crowd,
Marching to the music in the air!

SPEAKER: Yes, folks, we're talking about the incomparable
George M. Cohan, the Yankee Doodle Song and Dance
Man. While on this earth, George gave the world many
memorable songs. I'm sure you'll remember ...

COMPANY: *(Singing)*

You're a grand old flag, you're a high flying flag;
And forever in peace may you wave.
You're the emblem of the land I love,
The home of the free and the brave.

Ev'ry heart beats true under Red, White and Blue,
Where there's never a boast or brag.
But should auld acquaintance be forgot,
Keep your eye on the grand old flag!

1 **GALS:** *(Singing)* Give my regards to Broadway,
2 Remember me to Herald Square.
3 Tell all the gang at Forty-Second Street
4 That I will soon be there.

5
6 Whisper of how I'm yearning
7 To mingle with the old time throng.

8
9 **ALL:** *(Singing)* Give my regards to old Broadway
10 And say that I'll be there ere long!

11
12 **SPEAKER:** *(Off-Stage on P.A.)* Yes folks, these are just a few of
13 the many songs written by the Yankee Doodle Song and
14 Dance Man. But now, it's time to move on to our story.
15 It seems there's trouble over in Snookersville City and
16 George is about to make a celestial visit to help out. So
17 sit back, relax, and have a Yankee Doodle evening.

18
19 **COMPANY:** *(Singing)*
20 He's the Yankee Doodle Song and Dance Man.
21 The undisputed star of the show.
22 He'll have you clapping to the beat,
23 You'll be tapping your feet.
24 He's a one-man dynamo!
25
26 He's the Yankee Doodle Song and Dance Man;
27 A composer quite extraordinaire.
28 He'll have you singing out loud, one of many in the crowd,
29 Marching to the music in the air!

30
31 He's the Yankee Doodle Song and Dance Man!

32
33 *(Curtain opens partway to reveal a stylized set. It can be a*
34 *standing lattice wall with fake clouds attached. It suggests the*
35 *location is a place in heaven. It blocks out the full stage set*

1 *behind it. Several COWBOY MUSICIANS in white robes, white*
2 *cowboy hats, some with wings, are loitering about with guitars*
3 *and fiddles. They stop when a loud voice from above speaks.)*
4 **VOICE:** *(Business-like delivery with echo effect as spotlights pulse*
5 *off and on)* **George ... M. ... Cohan!** *(Pause)* **George ... M. ...**
6 **Cohan!** *(Pause)* **George M. Cohan, song and dance man!**
7 *(GEORGE M. COHAN walks briskly to Center Stage from the*
8 *wings dressed in a white robe and a vaudeville straw hat. He's*
9 *carrying a dancer's bamboo cane.)*
10 **COHAN:** *(He looks up.)* **Yes, yes, George M. Cohan here, at**
11 **your service.**
12 **VOICE:** *(Flat, business-like delivery)* **Celestial instructions.**
13 **There will soon be a musical event on earth in dire need**
14 **of celestial intervention. Your song and dance talent is**
15 **required.**
16 **COHAN:** *(Comes to attention, clicks heels.)* **Ready to go, your**
17 **highest excellency, sir!** *(Smiles and twirls his cane*
18 *flippantly.)* **Twenty-three skidoo. What can I do?**
19 **VOICE:** *(Flat)* **A centennial pageant on earth needs the spirit**
20 **of a Yankee Doodle Dandy. Your assignment: bring the**
21 **soul spirit of Broadway to Snookersville, Colorado.**
22 **COHAN:** **As the Great Maestro may command.** *(Bows with*
23 *straw hat and cane.)*
24 **1st COWBOY:** *(To COHAN)* **Snookersville, huh?**
25 **COHAN:** **That's right, boys. Did a vaudeville performance**
26 **there with my family, "The Four Cohans!" back in 1902.**
27 **And what a humdinger of a show it was!**
28 **2nd COWBOY:** **Lucky for you. You git to go back fer awhile.**
29 **3rd COWBOY:** **Maybe even earn yer wings.**
30 **COHAN:** *(Hopefully)* **Maybe.**
31 **1st COWBOY:** *(Dreamily)* **Colorado ... Sure miss them Rocky**
32 **Mountains.**
33 **4th COWBOY:** **Me, too.**
34 **COHAN:** **You boys from Colorado, are you?**
35 **1st COWBOY:** **Born and raised.**

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