Childhood days come alive in 'Tom Sawyer'

By JIM WINDELL
The National Theatre Company has vividly brought to life the carefree days of childhood in a small Missouri town along the Mississippi. Their staging of the "Adventures of Tom Sawyer" Friday at the Birmingham Theatre seemed perfectly suited to the sultry days of August. It was a fast-paced musical fulled with childish sets paced musical fulled by the company of the set of the stage of the set of the s

adventures of growing up.

STOCKLIN HAS included most of the best-loved incidents and characters and the players in the National Theatre Company have ably combined singing and acting to please both young and old in the audience.

Tom Sawyer, as played by Peter tormenting his brother Sidney, as straight-laced, ingraliating, bespectacled boy, or attempting to catch the eye of the new girl in St. PETERS-BURG, Becky Thatcher.

Annie Willette is the apple-cheeked, freckle-covered 11 year old who is the epitome of little girls. She hates dead cats, is fearful of bats, somewhat shy, and has little use for doorknots.

Aunt Polly, Susan Terry's character, is a dumpling of a woman who enjoys cooking, is a real soft at heart and has a cross to bear in trying to raise Tom Sawyer property.

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Review

Annette Leistan's lyrics sung by Tom introduce the con job Tom is going to pull on Huck and other boys to that Tom can avoid whitewashing the fence as Aunt Polly has ordered. "It's not every day a boy gets to paint a fence," he brags to Huck who is tricked into trading a whole apple for the privilege of using the brush on the fence.

fence.

MICHAEL McGRATH as Huck Fini is an appealing, curly-haired boy who is the envy of all other boys because Huck has no rules and can wear patched and ragged clothes and probably never has to wash. He warns Tom that girls "don't know nothing," and adjusted the state of the

them ever tell what they have seen. In between the suspense of their guilty secret and the trial of the innoent Muff Potter, Torn woos Becky and gives her a brass doorknob as an engagement gift. Torn explains about engagements if, "Twe got a better plan for me and you; We'll get engaged to be engaged."

When he let's gift hat he once kissed Amy, Becky is miffed and they have their lirist lovers' quarrel. Soon after

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Garage in despair Tom agrees to run away with Huck to become pirates. Tom and Huck float off to Jackson

Island and fantasize wonderful adven-tures, while Aunt Polly has given Tom up for dead and his funeral is planned. The gloomy atmosphere is relieved when Tom and Huck reveal them-selves and the errant boys are wel-comed with open arms.

THE SCENE changes to Muff Pot-'s murder trial and a nervous Tom ntifies Injun Joe as the wielder of

the fatal knife. After swearing revenge on Tom, the Indian bolts the court-room. In a slight deviation from Twain, the story next turns to a birtical party for Beeky. Tom and Beeky explore a cave during the party and become hopelessly lost.

They stumble upon lipin Joe and his hidden treasure. While trying to kill the two children lipin Joe falls over a

precipice and is himself killed. The treasure is recovered. Tom and Beeky are found, and the play ends happily as Tom and Huck are heros. St. Petersburg is once more a quiet little hamlet and at a country fair Tom and Huck receive irobusts for braven; Th National Theatre Company and director Rick Atwell can be com-mended for an action-packed, spar-

ook. The unfortunate part is that this production was only scheduled for one day, Aug. 4, and many children will be deprived of an opportunity to see a loveable musical.



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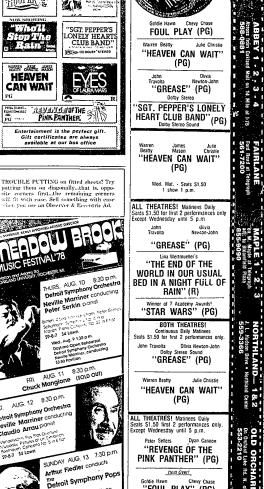
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