

## NEW REVIEWS

**I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO CRY ABOUT!**

One day young Jonathan Rosenthal received a phone call from a stranger named Bobbie Coogan (brother of actor Jackie Coogan), who claimed to be his real father. His mother confirmed the story, saying that Coogan had wanted her to abort him. Suddenly he was Jonathan Coogan, and his whole life was a lie. The man he had feared and loved as his father wasn't his father, his kid brother was his half-

brother, and his mother was — well, not what he thought she was. Yet his strongest bond was with his adoptive father, an irascible bully who combined affection and loyalty with violent physical abuse. This may sound like material for tragedy, but Coogan's indestructible sense of the absurd makes his cumulative disasters hilarious. With co-writer and director Dan Frischman, he turns his chaotic life story into a rich comedy about disillusion, disappointment, failure, recovery, resentment, love and forgiveness. It might seem corny if Coogan's com-

ic skills were less prodigious, but sentimentality is kept at bay by his wicked wit, flawless timing, talent for impersonation and ability to create loving portraits of the people he cares about. Houdanny Productions at the Two Roads Theater, 4348 Tujunga Ave., Studio City; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m. (no perfs July 2-3); thru July 24. (818) 569-5640. (Neal Weaver)