

• The children's take on Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat



KAREN ALMOND

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat features a youth ensemble.



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As Joseph, Sydney James Harcourt is the affecting, charismatic star of the Dallas Theater Center's dazzling rendition of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* at the Wylie Theatre. But as presented by director Joel Ferrell, so are the children who find the biblical tale in a museum and, like the dreamer at the heart of the story, bring the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical to life through the power of their imaginations.

It's the children's vision that accounts for such idiosyncrasies as iPods, a GPS and other modern details. And it's the children's importance that has earned them a chance to dance, sing and play alongside the Broadway and award-winning local actors in the cast.

Dressed in matching school uniforms ordered for this show, four students from Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and 33 younger ones in two rotating ensembles play the kids.

What impressed me even more than their considerable theatrical skills is that each had thought hard about how he or she could apply the lessons of Joseph's journey and his struggles with his brothers to their own lives.

Jonah Ortiz, 10, of Dallas talks about how Joseph "never gave up on himself," while Booker T. students Ruby Westfall, 16, and Chavis Humphrey, 18, of Dallas, say they hold tightly to the message.

"You really have to watch and pay attention because you can get lost in how fun it is," Ruby says. "It really stresses how important family is and that you should give people second chances because people can change."

Or as Chavis puts it: "I love that the story teaches the audience about forgiveness. I don't think we get enough of that."

Continues through Aug. 5 at the Wylie Theatre in the AT&T Performing Arts Center, 2400 Flora St., Dallas. \$15-\$85; prices subject to change. 214-880-0202. dallastheatercenter.org.

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YOUNG ACTORS IN THE SHOW



LILY AND MANON McCOLLUM

Sisters Lily, 9, and Manon, 10, of Dallas are the daughters of actors Rob and Kristin McCollum. They attend Stonewall Jackson Elementary School and like to do shows together; they shared the stage in Dallas Children's Theater's *Best Christmas Pageant Ever*.

Lily's favorite part: "Riding in the first part on someone's back and Potiphar's song because it's really funny. Also there's this huge picture frame that comes down and it makes me laugh."



JONAH ORTIZ

Jonah loves to dance and had never seen the show or even the Wylie Theatre before being cast.

His favorite part: "Go, Go, Go, Joseph," because it's so happy and everybody is dancing. It's just really fun. Also talking with friends during intermission and holding the corn for Pharaoh's dream."

What surprised him: "Just walking into the theater for the first time. I thought it was really cool finding out how big it is."



RUBY WESTFALL

Ruby, the child of married actors Chris Westfall and Lisa-Gabrielle Greene, is a veteran at WaterTower Theatre, Theatre Three and Garland Civic Theatre. She's making her debut at the Dallas Theater Center.

Her favorite part: "I love 'Go, Go, Go, Joseph' because of the energy of that song. I also like to play one of the adoring girls that hug on Sydney [Joseph]. He's so nice!"

The toughest part: "You have to make a physical effort to not laugh, especially any time Chamblee [Ferguson, who plays Potiphar, Pharaoh and Jacob] is onstage."



CHAVIS HUMPHREY

He's a dancer and Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts graduate, heading to Columbia College in Chicago in the fall.

His favorite part: "I love the high energy of the 'Megamix' at the very end. It's like a dance with the audience. I look forward to it every time."

What surprised him: "When I was in church and I studied the story of Joseph and his brothers, I thought it was kind of boring. Now I think it's really cool that it's a big, fun musical. The one person I've always wanted to see me perform is my grandmother, and my grandmother came on opening night. She was very familiar with the story of Joseph, but she'd never seen anything like this and was happy and overwhelmed to see it in musical form."