

## Pasatiempo January 19-25, 2007

**young@art**  
by Robert Nott

### All you need is a coat and a dream

Joseph is not only a dreamer; he can interpret dreams. But he's the sort of fellow who gets on his brothers' nerves. So, his 11 siblings decide to sell him to some passing traders. How Joseph overcomes the odds – and keeps true to his dreams – is the stuff that both biblical stories and popular Broadway musicals are made of.

The Old Testament tale of Joseph became the basis for Andrew Lloyd Webber and Time Rice's musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. National Dance Institute of New Mexico's School for the Performing Arts presents two performances of this show this weekend at The Dance Barns. Donna Scheer directs the cast of 37 that ranges in age from 9 to 17.

According to NDI-NM's Artistic Director, Russell Baker, most of these students started dancing with the organization's outreach program in New Mexico's elementary schools. The performing arts school, founded a few years ago, allows students to continue their training. It offers classes in a variety of dance techniques – ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop and modern – and now, musical theater.

The combination of singing and dancing is a formidable challenge for the students, who are more accustomed to just dancing. *Joseph's* score incorporates a wild variety of musical styles, including French cabaret, country western and calypso. "It's an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink type of show," Scheer said.

But, during a break in a recent rehearsal, Scheer – a professional singer, dancer and actress who took the job of the school's director last summer – said the score is manageable for her students. "I felt they could hook into the idea of doing a show that is basically a sing-through. These are songs they can sing without years and years of vocal technique."

Speaking of the score, 16-year-old Guy Mannick (who plays Joseph's brother Reuben) said, "It's pretty diverse – I like it." Eli Barnes, who plays brother Simeon and is also 16, agreed. Neither Mannick nor Barnes had read the bible story, but 17-year-old Katie Montoya, who plays a wife, did – a long time ago. The story has as much to do with the desire to dream as anything else, she noted, a point echoed by Scheer. "The show's message connects to Joseph's first song, 'Any Dream Will Do,' the director said. "It says that it doesn't matter what you choose to aspire to – as long as you aspire to something. You have to have a dream and the fact that Joseph has a dream allows him to survive, including those years in prison."

*Joseph* started out as a commissioned concert piece for the choir of London's St. Paul's Junior School in 1968. The initial show was about 20 minutes long, but through a string of almost unbelievable events (including a surprise positive review in *The Sunday Times*), a recording of the music was released, and Webber and Rice eventually expanded the piece to a full-length production. In various productions over the years, Joseph has been portrayed by an assortment of famous vocalists, among them Donny Osmond, David Cassidy and Andy Gibb.

In case you're wondering, the show ends happily, with Joseph coming out on top, his brothers delighted to see him again and his father, Jacob, ecstatic about it all. In the finale, the whole cast assembles to dance while crooning 'Any Dream Will Do'. Who could ask for anything more?