

Society : **Starmaker Theatre Company**
Production : **Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat**
Date : **Thursday 8th October**
Venue : **Wild Theatre – Bracknell**
Report by : **Jeanette Maskell**

Show Report

I was delighted to be invited to review Starmaker's production of Joseph and was really looking forward to an enjoyable evening's entertainment. I was not disappointed!

The great thing about this society is the artistic team innate ability to play to the strengths of each individual utilising their skills in order to show them off in the best possible light.

Freya Foster / Rosie Sumner – (Narrator) – What a demanding role this is; however these two young ladies were excellent! Their diction was crisp clear and precise; with voices that blended immaculately and harmonies that were quite delightful. They moved animatedly and effortlessly from scene to scene engaging the audience in becoming the focal point in the telling of the story.

Henry Bearman – (Joseph) – This was an extraordinarily honest performance; it was humble and calming yet energetic and commanding. I would like first to say a few words about his diction. Not only was each word annunciated clearly but the consonants at the end and in the middle of every word were as clear as a bell. Sheer perfection! He has an amazing voice and the quality and timbre quite sublime. The emotion he produced in "Close every Door" was remarkable and the highlight of the evening. His movement was fluid and natural with flowing, fluent dance moves. (I thought he coped admirably with the wardrobe malfunction that occurred on the evening of my visit). An excellent performance with a well delineated character.

Joe Wilson – (Pharaoh/Levi/Canaan Dancer) – His characterisation of Pharaoh was such fun; he had all the traits of the King complete with knee shakes and hip thrusts. He emulated the unique characteristics of Elvis' voice perfectly; however there were occasions when I didn't quite catch all the words. That said this was a dynamic and lively performance.

Ben Tait – (Rueben/Canaan Dancer/Guard 1) – Just to confuse me this young man had the solo in "One more Angel in Heaven"! I loved the Country and Western twang which did not detract from his diction. His moves were excellent with an easy relaxed cowboy stance and bounce.

Nathan Isaac – (Simeon/Guard 2) – "Those Canaan Days" was transcendent; sung with great comic timing and an accent Maurice Chevalier would have been proud of. His facial expressions were humourous and whimsical so perfect for the role. He moved with lithesome agility and even managed to make his dance moves amusing.

Ajani Case – (Judah) – This young man certainly had a natural feel for the reggae style “Benjamin’s Calypso”; it was a fun packed number and he produced a good sound with clear diction. His movement was athletic and flowing (there was a point when I thought his legs were made of rubber) which befitted the number perfectly.

Alex Kitching – (Naphtali/Snake)

Austen Grigoleit – (Asher/Camel 1)

Alex Essery – (Issacher)

Will Fieldhouse – (Dan/Baker)

Ed Scott – (Zebulun)

Seth MacLeod – (Benjamin)

Louis Chad – (Gad) – **The Brothers** – Along with the four already mentioned these seven young men were outstanding. Their singing was euphonic harmonious and extremely well balanced. The harmonies they produced were strikingly refined and highly polished. They danced with exactitude and precision; bringing their own individual characters to the movement. Their respective characterisations; which were animated energetic and convivial, were maintained throughout whether they were singing dancing or just onlookers to the story.

Katie Weller – (Butler) – This was a delightful performance by this young lady. She had a powerful yet tuneful voice which carried well to the audience.

Matt Collins – (Jacob) –.I really enjoyed this patriarchal characterisation; it was amusing and entertaining. I applaud him for keeping his aged mannerisms throughout the action. What fun his reactions were in Canaan Days. Although he made his voice sound old to match his stance; I was pleased to note he was audible and his diction clear.

Corey Abery – (Potiphar) -. This was a captivatingly charismatic performance. For one so young he really understands the motivation behind the character and certainly knows how to woo an audience. He has a natural flair for comedy and his timing was spot on. He put the number over extremely well with power and clarity.

Oliver Widdis – (Ishmalite 1)

Samuel Guy – (Ishmalite 2)

Hayley Croft – (Ishmalite 3)

Aimee Lewis – (Goat Herder)

Lucy Turner – (Prisoner 1)

Harley Emmitt – (Prisoner 2) – These youngsters were well cast; the direction and movement they had been given complemented their skills ensuring they were able to cope with the roles they were portraying. They did so extremely well supporting the main cast with great aplomb.

Sophie Tate – (Jochebed/Canaan Dancer)

Amelia Dorey – (Bilhah/Canaan Dancer)

Emily Hawkes – (Dinah)

Lucy Turner – (Tamar)

Paige Foote – (Basemath)

Abi Burrows – (Adon/Solo Soprano)

Natalie Cox – (Hezaqa)

Jen Whelan – (Elfalet)

Molly Barnett – (Merishah)

Robyn Warrick-Clarke – (Ijasaka)

Katie Weller – (Uzith) – **The Wives** – These young ladies displayed peppy and spirited characters. They sang with verve and zeal changing their temperament to suit the mood of the action and song. Their movement was competent and enthusiastic and they were visually animated at all times. Special mention to Abi Burrows for her solo in “One more Angel”; her voice was pure and true with an ethereal quality that floated over the main tune blending effortlessly.

Saffron Harrington – (Mrs. Potiphar) – This was a sassy performance as the scheming wife intent on leading Joseph to her bed chamber. She moved with feline smoothness that was quite beguiling.

Ensemble – Everyone in this ensemble played their part in making this a first rate production. They all moved and sang with meticulous attention to detail and it was obvious they were enjoying every minute. They should be extremely proud of what they achieved.

Matthew Harcourt – (Director/Musical Director) – As director this young man had worked on characterisations which proved most beneficial to the cast. He brought out all the humour of the piece and I really liked the way he integrated the varied styles from Old Testament to the 60's in an exuberant magical mix. It really worked! His staging was faultless with some terrific blocking. My only criticism is the upstaging that occurred in the cells, with Joseph coming so far forward he had no choice other than to look back at the butler and baker. However this was a fun packed production which had been exceptionally well cast and directed. It was innovative in many ways and the end with Joseph on the rostra shrouded in a circular cycloramic cloth was inspired. – As Musical Director he empowered the cast with the innate ability to believe they were capable of anything. He had obviously spent a lot of hours with the principals and ensemble alike ensuring there was plenty of light shade with perfect diction and inflection. He controlled the small orchestra with expertise guaranteeing a perfect balance between pit and stage

Rhi O'Keefe – (Production Apprentice/Projection Operator) – This young lady not only assisted with the production but operated the projection as well. I hope she found her time as apprentice rewarding and fruitful; she certainly had a good mentor. As projectionist she did not miss a beat; meticulously picking up every cue, ensuring the smooth running of the show.

Emma-Joy Hopkins – (Choreographer) – Choreography was imaginative and varied fitting each number perfectly. She had drilled the cast so every move was natural and in total unison. In all numbers she had created either dramatic comedic, athletic, or balletic moves utilising the talents of those most suited to the movement of the song. I complement you on “Those Canaan Days” which showed off some great dancers and was fun from start to finish.

Alan Smith – (Production Manager) – What a production to put together, every detail from front of house to the running of the stage worked ensuring the smooth running of the show.

Alistair McKay – (Stage Manager) – This was an extremely well run stage, with wings kept clear to ensure cast were able to enter and exit with ease. Changes were effected smoothly and unobtrusively creating a seamless transition from scene to scene.

Michelle Palin/Mike Quirke/Keith Baker – (DSM/ASMs) – These three along with the **Crew** played their part in operating the stage to create a fast moving pacey production.

Becca Simons/Louis Martin/Sam Tait/ Matthew Morris – (Lighting) – This was a fabulous plot! It was atmospheric, psychedelic and enhanced the overall action. There was a brilliant use of spot lights which were expertly operated.

Tom Horrox – (Sound Design/Operator) – On the evening of my visit there were a few missed cues at the start of the first act. Mics were brought up late meaning we missed part of the action. Once that had been sorted out it was excellent with a good balance of on stage sound for the cast.

Gemma Wilson/Matthew Harcourt – (Video Sequences) – These had been well put together and fitted the action perfectly. I really enjoyed the opening sequence with the clouds scudding across the stage.

Jessica Costello/James England – (Properties) – They had been well collated and appropriate for the piece.

Matthew Harcourt/Alan Smith/Dave Savage – (Set) – The set looked superb! It gave depth to the action with the director utilising the differing levels to great effect.

Cathie Savage/Glynis Smith/Starmaker Costume Hire – (Costumes) – Costumes were appropriate to the piece; with modern costumes thrown in where required. The opening of Act 2 looked stunning with everyone in black and gold. I could find no fault with the costume plot at all

Make-up – This had been applied to complement the national dress. It was dark enough not to disappear under the lights, but not so dark it looked over the top.

Front of House – All members of the front of house team were well presented, easily identified and friendly.

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Jeanette Maskell - NODA Representative - London Region - Area 13