



Mad Mag meets Bible

Do you remember what Marvin the Paranoid Android replied when asked if it could read someone's mind?

Answer: "Yes, and it amazes me how you manage to live in something that small."

I feel the same way about David Cassidy, who is managing to live in the world's smallest musical. He's at the O'Keefe through next week as the title caricature in *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

It was never intended for professional production. Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice wrote it, before Cassidy was even a Partridge, for the junior school choir at St. Paul's in London, which gave the 25-minute pastiche its premiere on the afternoon of March 1, 1968 for an audience of "reluctant parents".

It was expanded to fill an album, which went nowhere. But that version proved popular with hams, and with consumers thereof; it has been performed all over the world by schools and colleges, and by amateur and professional companies.

Meanwhile Rice & Webber had become became box-office names with *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita*, and it was thought (correctly) that even a juvenile work of theirs would sell on Broadway — if an intermission were added. And sure enough, the show might still be running now if Donnie & Marie could have been persuaded to replace Cassidy and the narrator after their six-month contract was concluded.

For the occasion, Rice & Webber were

**WILDER
PENFIELD III**



called on to beef up the score once more. The touring version at the O'Keefe includes their new overture/prologue, some entr'acte music, some hoedown dance music, and a medley reprising all of the existing songs for the end.

Even so, what you are being asked to spend \$17.50 to \$25.50 on is two 35-minute acts. And there hasn't been much compensation for brevity with soul or wit. This is still a flip Mad-Ave *Mad Mag* modernization of the Bible story draped over a handful of jingles in broad styles that range from country to calypso. The visual presentation is more than usually vivid, with Egyptian choreography out of Steve Martin, and ensemble interplay out of *Godspell*. Pharaoh is a spirited Elvis Presley (Hal Davis), the narrator is a spunky Janis Ian (Robin Boudreau), and Joseph is a teen idol.

But times have changed. A decade ago, if Cassidy had leaped into the audience he would have been torn apart by screaming fans. Now, when he makes this vault of mindless fellowship, it's Vegas vaudeville, one more exuberant attention grabber in a lively little show for lively little people with extravagant mommies and daddies.