

Audience is delighted by colorful tale of Joseph

By Tom Carter

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Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat opened last night at the Opera House to close out the current Broadway Nights series. And it did it with a bang.

The audience even accorded the show the best kind of standing ovation — the kind where nobody looks at anybody else as they get to their feet.

And for those who didn't know David Cas-

sidy well enough to think he could help make this show shine

... surprise. Cassidy,

though perhaps at one time on the road to being the Fabian Forte of his generation, is a strong, Las Vegas-style performer with a voice to match his stage presence.

But the key to everything is the production. *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* is an entertainment filet, a show disarmingly fun to watch and to laugh at.

Written by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Joseph* can't lay claim to a line of dialogue. And the songs are forgettable to a fault. But the show's absurdity clears the way for surprise after surprise. It contains just about every pop music form imaginable, and is a curious mix of elements.

The story, from the Bible, follows Joseph



David Cassidy stars as "Joseph."

(Cassidy) as he is sold into slavery by the 11 brothers who bear him all sorts of malice because he is his father's favorite. In an opening scene where Joseph is showing off the ring and the coat of many colors given to him by his father, the brothers make nutty faces and throw mock punches when Joseph's back is

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turned.

Then to cover the gloom of his sudden disappearance, they sing and shuffle to the country song, *One More Angel in Heaven*.

The men's ensemble, the 11 brothers, sing and dance to perfection and are aglow with mischievous expressions. Many in this group danced in the Broadway version of *Joseph*, and their performance is a mirror of the excellence that New York audiences expect.

Joseph's gift of reading dreams comes to the attention of the pharaoh, and Joseph endears himself by warning the country of a famine. The pharaoh (Hal Davis) is perhaps the play's biggest surprise and it won't be spoiled here. But Davis' depiction is on target.

The play is held together by the singing commentary of the narrator (Robin Boudreau), who has the best voice in the company.

Due to the range of songs, Boudreau probably sings as much different

material as the leading lady of any standard musical. She is bright, full of energy and a delightful asset.

Joseph is staged very well, with many scene changes, good lighting and a pace that keeps everything in motion. Some of the production techniques were quite original, particularly a sequence when the brothers pile into one boat and row their way to Egypt.

As the audience filed out after the extended bows and applause, there was much talk about the show. This is not a common situation. In too many cases, audience members strolling to their cars are discussing everything but the show they just saw. But not last night.

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat is a theater fusion of sorts, since it combines elements of contemporary musical theater, the pace of television and the gentle irreverence of sophisticated burlesque.