

Go, Go, Go, Go and See Marquee's production of Joseph this week



By Brock Weir

Its message of love, forgiveness and, most importantly, fun has kept audiences around the world enraptured for over four decades, but now is your chance to take part in the phenomenon this week as Aurora's Marquee Theatrical Productions opens its production of *Joseph & The Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat*.

The curtain rises this Thursday, November 3, at Newmarket Theatre and runs on select dates through Sunday, November 13.

It brings together a cast of adult actors from all corners of York Region ? and as far away as Parry Sound ? to bring to life the iconic Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, which is based on the Biblical story of Joseph and his coat of many colours.

?It is such a great family show,? says Marquee's Sheryl Thomas. ?We wanted to go with a really classic family subscription series this year and Joseph is just one that connects to so many people and any age can come to it. It is fully appropriate, fully enjoyable and families can also be in the show. The way Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote the show, the music just hits every single genre of music. There is a variety that keeps you intrigued and focused, and it doesn't get monotonous ? ever!?

Mounting a production like this requires a great artistic team, says Ms. Thomas, noting a show is only as strong as the team. Once that team is in place, it is time to put out an open call for auditions and the reception was enormous.

?What I have heard from some of our members is they are all doing it because it is their hobby,? she says. ?They love to be in a show and there is a huge camaraderie component that comes along with it. They have become like a little mini-family?

Importantly, they are all volunteers. Ms. Thomas says to put on a show like this would be a \$50,000 venture, but relying on volunteers to do costumes, build sets, and take on just about any challenge, they are able to make ends meet.

?Quite often there is quite a stigma attached to community theatre being really poor quality or they are forgiving of the quality because it is ?just' community theatre,? says Ms. Thomas, requesting that ?just? be put in quotation marks. ?Marquee has become known in the community for doing really high end, good quality shows, and in many cases, we're compared to Mirvish-quality productions.

?Just because these people are volunteering, it doesn't mean the quality of their performance is low. Not at all. In fact, these professional performers who all perform in the professional companies downtown always have second jobs and that is exactly what these people do. Some of them work for IBM or as school teachers. This is their passion. It is very difficult to make a living in a passion, so this becomes a hobby but their caliber is so, so strong.?

Now, however, is a chance to see their caliber in action ? practically right in our own back yard ? and contribute to the community at the same time. All proceeds from the show will go back to Marquee towards their community outreach programs, covering tuition for low-income and at-risk youth to take part in their youth programs. There is even a ?ladies night? featuring wine and cheese scheduled for November 12 at 7.30 p.m. to add to the merriment.

?Ultimately, through putting on a show for the community, the community that comes to see the shows is helping the community,? says Ms. Thomas. ?It is a win-win. I know they will be pleasantly surprised by the caliber of the show and the message of the show as well because it is particularly beautiful. It is about love and forgiveness and all good stuff.?

For more information, including tickets and show times, visit www.marqueetp.com.