**Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat**

**Audio description programme notes Act 1 (Gwen Furniss 24 to 28 June 2025)**

Welcome to Theatre Royal Plymouth for this performance of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, with lyrics by Tim Rice and Music by Andrew Lloyd-Webber. Produced by Michael Harrison, David and Hannah Mirvish and Jake Hine, this new production was first performed at the London Palladium in 2019. Joseph was first written by Rice and Lloyd-Webber as a school production in 1968. But it developed over the years and opened as a full-length musical production in 1974. It has remained popular ever since and tours regularly with various big name stars taking on the roles of Joseph, Pharoah and the Narrator. This production features a good number of children in the cast, some taking on the adult roles, for example as Joseph’s brothers. This reflects the spirit of the original school productions in the show’s early years.

My name is Gwen and I will be describing Act 1. There will be a 20 minute interval then my colleague Pauline will describe Act 2.

The story is based on the tale in Genesis, in the Bible, of Joseph and the coat of many colours. Before the show begins, the black front cloth bears the words “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” emblazoned across the centre in large multi-coloured letters. Around the edge of the front cloth is a strip of neon lighting. When the cloth rises, it reveals a starry sky backdrop with three groups of brighter stars, as constellations, suspended on frameworks. As the story begins, seven children in modern clothes enter, each carrying 18in high cubes. They sit on these cubes, placed in a circle around a central fire, which blazes in a black iron brazier, as the Narrator begins the story. The Narrator, a small and dynamic woman, has long dark wavy hair. She wears a black jumpsuit with deep v-neck and sparkly sleeves. As well as narrating, she also plays other parts, so she remains on stage for most of the show.

Joseph is a young man with short dark curly hair. He has an athletic build with well-muscled arms. He wears a multi-coloured full-skirted coat, ankle length and with long sleeves and a golden lining. The coat has some sequinned stripes and there is a star emblem on the back on the bodice. As he twirls around, the skirt of the coat swirls around him, revealing the gold lining. Under the coat he has on a white shirt and baggy white trousers. In a later scene he wears a brown, sheepskin-lined waistcoat, which he exchanges for the coat of many colours.

For much of Act 1, the backdrop features a large semi circle, which changes colour in brilliant and dazzling shades, varying from crimson to blazing orange to blue and then to sandy gold to reflect the pulsing desert heat of Canaan. From the lower edge of this semi circle, the circle of the sun is visible. In front of this backdrop, four wide strips of fabric are suspended, in faded colours and patterns of Middle Eastern design, these denote the tents lived in by Joseph’s nomadic family. Here we meet Joseph’s 11 brothers and their wives. The men wear traditional clothing of the period and location, belted tunics over baggy trousers, and cloth turbans or round caps. The brothers are of various ages and include children, who wear black stick-on beards. The women wear ankle-length dresses in bright colours: saffron, turquoise, amethyst and scarlet, cinched at the waist with sashes. They have long dark hair worn loose and sometimes covered with headscarves. Both men and women wear sandals, though for one of the numbers, the Narrator and the brothers wear tap shoes.

The Narrator plays the part of Joseph’s father, Jacob, in a brown and grey robe, with a shawl over the head and a false grey beard. In this role, she stoops, as an elderly person. Jacob’s favourite wife has long dark hair and wears a pink robe over a purple skirt.

A few sheep on wheels symbolise the flocks kept by the family. The Ishmaelite traders ride in in camels, which are semi-mechanical with camels’ heads and long necks, with their bodies as large tricycles ridden by the camel drivers. A goat is represented by a child wearing a headdress with curved horns.

Back at the family’s encampment, a Western-themed number is performed, and there is a covered wagon in the background with the words “Jacob and Sons” painted on the cover.

The story then moves to Egypt. Here the men are dressed in white linen loincloths or tunics while others are bare-chested. Joseph is bare-chested and wears white harem pants. For the scenes in Potiphar’s house, a gauze curtain is partly drawn across the stage from the left. Potiphar is played by a child, wearing a gold headdress and gold collar with a black and white robe. He is brought into the sitting riding ina litter carried on the shoulders of two slaves. Another slave places a cube-shaped stool to help him step off the litter. In his office, he sits behind a large desk. The Narrator plays the part of Potiphar’s wife, wearing a red velvet robe over her black jumpsuit and a golden headdress with black feather trim. She plays the role in vampish, slinky style. The other ladies of the household wear red dresses and red flapper-style headbands and stiletto shoes. There is a leopard skin rug on the floor, which at one point Potiphar’s wife drapes over herself.

The final scene of Act 1 takes place in a jail cell. Dank and gloomy, the only light comes from a shaft high above. A triangular grid portrays the prison bars, with rows of broken wooden slats and a sliding door at the bottom. The Narrator appears as a prison guard, wearing a hooded black cloak. Joseph’s fellow prisoners, a butler and a baker, are both played by children. The butler is a girl with long blond hair, wearing a grey waistcoat over a white shirt with white gloves and a black skirt over green trousers. The baker is a boy with a stick-on black moustache. He wears a chef’s hat and white jacket with black and white checked trousers.

The main cast are as follows:

Adam Felipe as Joseph

Christina Bianco as Narrator

Joe McElderry as Pharoah

The rest of the cast play the parts of the brothers and their wives, the children, the Ishmaelites, the Egyptians, Potiphar’s and Pharoah’s households, and the guards. Pharoah doesn’t appear until Act 2 so there will be a description of him in the Act 2 introduction.

Theatre Royal Plymouth

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

Audio described performance June 28th 2025 @ 2.30p.m.

Welcome back to Act  2 of this colourful production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat with lyrics by Tim Rice and music composed by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber.

The show will  leave here on Saturday and move to Leicester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Cardiff, Glasgow, and finish in Milton Keynes in August.( It was last here in Plymouth in 2022)

This Act will run for approximately 50 minutes with 10 scenes and  almost continuous singing and dancing.   I will  endeavour to describe   the action  without spoiling your enjoyment.

There will be 12 songs accompanying the dance routines and these are **A Pharaoh's Story , Poor Poor Pharaoh,Song of the King, Pharaoh’s Dreams Explained,Stone the Crows,Those Canaan Days,the Brothers come to Egypt/ Grovel Grovel, Who’s the Thief? Benjamin Calypso,Joseph All The Time,Jacob in Egypt, and Any Dream Will Do.**

The curtain is down with the distinctive  show title.

My name is Pauline, your audio describer for this Act.

**There will be  loud music, and  flashing  coloured lights and strobe effects**

The action is seamless with the narrator present in all of  the scenes  as it is told to the children. There are very few props and the dancing sequences involve the majority of the cast which includes children of various ages. Coloured flashing lights  illuminate the action.

The orchestra perform a medley of tunes  as the lights pulsate around the proscenium before the curtain rises on the narrator ushering in  the  four girls and  four boys ,  dressed in casual clothes into the  brightly lit room to sit on illuminated cubes arranged in a semi circle and a boy  assists the Narrator in her endeavours  to activate the screen at the back of the room to show shadows of  the characters as  she  relates the story. Everywhere is bathed in  a bright blue light with six star constellations above them and stars scattered around the proscenium.

We left Joseph languishing in the Pharaoh’s jail and this is where the narrator takes up the story. He would remain there but for the Pharaoh’s butler hearing of Joseph’s interpretation of the other prisoner’s dreams and telling   this to his master, the Pharaoh and  it results in Joseph , in manacles, being thrown into   the  lavish predominantly gold  throne room to await   the Pharaoh      as he is   borne  through the open doors in the rear wall  which is decorated  with large hieroglyphics and is  guarded by tall guards wearing full head masks. He is accompanied by an entourage of four male  guards and eight scantily dressed female slaves in gold bikini tops and harem trousers.  The Pharaoh  is muscular  with a gold strap crossways over his  bare chest  which holds a short white and gold cape in place with the word KIng emblazoned on the back , an elaborate white and gold skirt, gold boots and a  white and gold egyptian headdress complete the costume.  He is lowered  on his throne into the centre of the room. Two large egyptian statues stand sentinel on either side of the room; these represent Ra, The God of Light and Anubis, the protector of Graves, God of Death.

Two male fan bearers stand discreetly at a distance behind the Pharaoh and a thick set bare chested bodyguard stands behind his throne.

The Pharaoh's Dreams are related to the kneeling Joseph in the singing style of Elvis Presley as a large  flashing blue and red neon sign is swung above the Pharaoh's  head,’ Welcome to Fabulous Egypt’

Joseph, eventually , interpreting the Pharaoh’s  dreams satisfactorily,  is rewarded by the grateful Pharoah and becomes his No 2. Joseph  is dressed in rich clothes by the female slaves  in between two  swashes of gold cloth held by the children,   in front of a blue pyramid illuminated by a low slung moon.

Seven years have passed and his brothers have fallen on hard times and they decide to travel to   Egypt to ask for help. Their decision is told whilst lounging in  a cafe style room in an exaggerated dramatic,  french cabaret style,   sitting and lounging  by two  black and white gingham clothed tables or laid prone on the floor   as they are starving and clutching their stomachs. All the brothers are in grey  loose trousers, grey  tops under boleros or jackets and some of the brothers wear grey  turbans with some of the younger brothers sporting  dark full beards. The narrator joins in singing in a seductive french style, wearing a beret.

They reminisce of days in Canaan and the  female dancers  perform a Can Can routine in their  colourful many petticoated skirts over white bloomers. Simeon finds this  inappropriate as he was talking of Canaan.

The narrator tells the brothers’ story  as they travel to Egypt and the Pharaoh’s palace  where they are greeted   by the now adult  Joseph, dressed in  a short loin cloth, bare chested with an egyptian headdress and gold sandals. The brothers do not recognise him and he   enjoys making his brothers grovel and decides to tease them by accusing one of the younger brothers of theft.

Joseph  eventually makes himself known and dons his old coat handed to him by his father Jacob  as Joseph stands on his  gold chariot. Joseph  sings a familiar refrain and is joined by the Pharaoh, who relates another dream to us before the action comes to a close and we are treated to a  lively megamix of songs.

The next audio described  performance for the  visually impaired  will be Tina-the Tina Turner Musical  on Saturday July 5th @ 2.30p.m. Please indicate when booking that you require the access performance. The show will  be  captioned for the Deaf on Thursday July 10th @7.30 p.m.