

See kids at play

In 'Joseph' rock opera in Gilroy

By Billy Allstetter
Staff Writer

It's an improbable mixture. The biblical story comes from the book of Genesis. The nonstop music ranges from rock 'n' roll to western to calypso to a parody of a French cabaret song. There are two casts, and none of the actors are over 18.

But director KT Peterson, aided by Jim Calbreath, Ruth Mullins and several helpful parents, may pleasantly surprise South County audiences when *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* opens tonight at 8 p.m.

The rock opera, first performed in London in 1982, tells the story of Joseph, favorite son of Jacob, who received a beautiful coat of many colors. Joseph's vanity aroused the jealousy of his 11 brothers, who sold him as a slave and told their father he was dead. Joseph's ability to interpret dreams rescued him from a prison cell and eventually reunited him with his brothers, who turned into honest men.

The story is told completely in



Russ Curtis/Viva

Kristinia Anderson and Sarah Taylor, teen cast narrators

song, which varies widely in style throughout the play.

The rock opera will be presented by the young people's theater of the South Valley Civic Theatre at the Gilroy High School theater April 25-28 and May 2-4. Performances will begin at 8 p.m. with a 2 p.m. matinee also scheduled for April 28. The group is also offering special shows for

schools and church organizations. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. For information and reservations call 842-SHOW.

The production is divided into two casts; one of 6- to 13-year olds and another teen cast of 13 years and up. The younger-cast will perform on April 25 and 27 and May 2 and 4. The teen cast will perform April 26 and 28 and May 3.

"I think people who see these kids will be blown away that they can do what they do," said Peterson, who has choreographed several SVCT productions.

Acting part of the time like a drill sergeant and part of the time like a friend, Peterson has won the hearts and attention of the cast members.

"She's a great director. She gets her point across to you," said Erica Rizzi, 11, who sings a cowboy ballad in the play.

The actors dance and sing in time and with feeling. The dance kicks are emphatic and bop-bop-sha-wadas are loud and clear.

Peterson stands in front of the dancers, smoking a long brown cigarillo, watchings. She marches through two rows of dancers to Ryan Bangle who is playing Joseph in the younger cast.

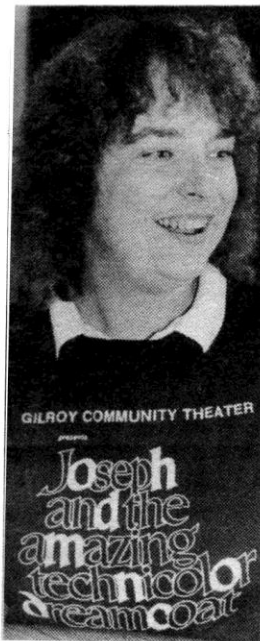
"Remember the word acting?" He nods his head affirmatively. "Act," Peterson says in a non-nonsense voice.

Throughout the evening rehearsal in a Brownell School classroom, Peterson alternates standing arms crossed, smoking her cigarillo, with walking into the middle of the dancing casts to give them directions.

The young people talk about how tough she is at the same time as they talk about how much they like her and how good a director she is.

"I try not to talk down to them because they are smarter than most people give them credit for," said Peterson during a brief rehearsal break.

Peterson, 30, began dancing when she was 4 and started appearing in shows by the age of 10. She has choreographed several shows for the South Valley Civic Theater, including *South Pacific* and *Hello, Dolly*, but this is her first directing assignment for SVCT.



KT Peterson

... 'gets her point across'

Kids do good job in 'Joseph'

By Bonnie Lemons
Staff Writer

Kids star in South Valley Civic Theatre's production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, but you don't have to have kids to enjoy the show. It's more than a school play.

From the time you walk into Gilroy High School theater and see the simple but elegant stage setting, you know professional effort is involved. The stage, which remains the same

throughout the 1½-hour play, features big, light-rimmed letters that spell J-O-S-E-P-H and a few silver stars that reflect the expertly-handled stage lights. That's all. And that's just right.

Joseph is a rock musical loosely based on the biblical story of Joseph, favorite son of Jacob, and his 11 jealous brothers.

The production has two casts — a teen-age cast and a younger cast — which alternate giving performances.

Musicals are always tricky, especially when you're dealing with kids. But this works — particularly with the teen cast. Most of the solo parts belong to two narrators, and they have good voices.

Voices are weaker in the younger cast, but that hasn't kept audiences from enjoying the show. Children, especially, like it.

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat continues at 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday at the Gilroy High School theater. Cost: \$5 adults, \$3 children. For reservations, call 842-SHOW.



Russ Curtis/Viva

Katie Porter and Liz Hepner lead chorus line for younger cast.