

Orchestra overwhelms vocals in Globe Productions' Joseph

By **TED BROWN**
Staff Writer

It was such a waste.

Georgetown Globe Productions opened a short run of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* this past weekend at Milton Centre for the Arts (while Halton Hills Cultural Centre is currently under construction).

And the show, a colourful, spirited, rousing musical at the best of times, had the potential to entertain to the nines.

The costumes were outstanding, the lighting dramatic, the choreography bang-on, the sets were well designed.

Only one problem—the sound.

It was simply deplorable, a situation where the more than 90 percent of the lyrics were lost, simply due to the levels on the orchestra being cranked up way too high.

It's a musical folks, not a rock concert.

And one of the key components of a musical is being able to hear what is being sung. At the opening night of *Joseph*, apart from the rare moments when there was singing performed 'a cappella,' the lyrics totally were lost.

Most of Joseph's singing (Chris Ning) was unrecognizable, as were the fine vocals by the narrator Erica Harvey. Both performers have great voices—you just couldn't hear them.

Larger than life Doug Feggans, playing

the parts of both Jacob and Potiphar fared a bit better due to his stronger vocals, but Matt Willis' super-charged performance as an Elvis-like Pharaoh was a total loss. Only a couple of the lyrics from his solo were actually understandable.

And all because the orchestra was too loud.

A musical's heart and soul is the lyrics, not the music. If one attended a stage play and could hear none of the dialogue, one would feel like they were wasting their time. Like so with a musical—if one can't understand the lyrics, then it is impossible to follow the story.

The Milton venue is a beautiful, well-appointed facility, and Globe will be back in May 2012 to perform *Annie*.

It's to be hoped that someone will learn how to balance the sound levels before that show opens.

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