

# Jaymi Hensley on his dream role as Joseph

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat opens at the Edinburgh Playhouse tomorrow (Tuesday). Here, Union J star Jaymi Hensley, who plays Joseph, talks about making his musical theatre dream come true.

What is Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat about?

It's based on a biblical story about Joseph the dreamer. He has 11 brothers, but he's his father's favourite and his Dad gives him a coloured dreamcoat as a gift. His brothers get very jealous and hatch a plan to kill him, but instead he gets taken to Egypt as a slave and is sent to prison. Fate is on Joseph's side however and despite trying times, he eventually becomes the prince of Egypt.

Joseph has got something special. It has all these markers that made me think of my life. I had people, not brothers, but

contemporaries at school, who told me I couldn't be what I wanted to be. I'm a dreamer; I wanted to be a star. I also had something that made me different; being a gay man and finding out at a young age.

I always had my head in the clouds, but I was always sure of who I was and I never let what anyone said deter me. That's how I approached Joseph, with the message that as long as you stand by who you are, eventually the rest of the world will see how wonderful you are too.

**Is that what drew you to the role?**

It just felt right. Theatre was always my first love. I always envisioned myself on stage every day. But life took a different turn.

I believe in the universe giving you signs and the tools you need to make things happen. I did panto with Jimmy Osmond, who's done Joseph, and then I met Joe McElderry, who'd also played Joseph. All these signs were there. It was so bizarre. It just felt like I need to do this. And I've never felt like I'm more in the right place at the right time than I do right now.

**Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat is 50 years old this year. How do you think this show has stood the test of time?**

Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice are the best. They wrote this musical at university! The songs are timeless. I think that is the

one word to use. You have songs here that, in 2019, don't have to be modernised.

We're not changing anything at all. That's testament to how well written they are. I know how dated the music I released in the last seven years is already, just listening to the charts!

**How did it feel to put on theatre's most famous coat for the first time on stage?**

At my opening night in Windsor, that moment was when I got an out-of-body, hairs on the back of your neck moment. I had goosebumps everywhere and was rushing with emotion. This is just such an amazing show to be a part of. I'm honoured that they're letting me take the torch.

**What's most exciting about touring the show?**

What I love about a touring show is people are so grateful that you're coming to see them, that you're doing the leg work. People really appreciate that.

I'm really looking forward to going to places I've never been before and finding new audiences. I love being on the road. Although I've been a pop star for the last seven years, being on stage is the thing I've done the least. It was all about being on TV or in a studio. The stage is what I love. I love being live in front of an audience, so to do it 10 times a week, I couldn't be happier.

**What is it that  
makes live performance so special?**

It's the seeing sweat on someone's face, the passion and the being in the room with them. You can't beat that. Especially singing, you can't beat live music and hearing that passion come from someone's voice. As a performer, you have to impress there and then; there's no rerun, it's now or never. That added pressure is what makes theatre so amazing.

**At the start  
of 2019, you announced Union J were splitting for now. How do  
you look back on  
your time with that band?**

I have the fondest memories of that project, even when things were tough for us. You need to have those moments to give you a sense of how much it means to you. I'll be forever grateful to that band for giving me what it's given me and the joy we've had over the years. In my adult life I've only done what I love. Very few people can say that. I would never take that for granted.

People might think it a little self-indulgent, but I watch back our YouTube videos and listen to our music. I'm very proud of what we achieved as, initially, three young kids who set out to do something and made it happen. We were all so determined.

One day, hopefully, we can get back together and do a reunion and be together at a different time in life when it's right again. As

much as we were a band, we are individual people and we have individual passions, hopes and aspirations. In every good relationship you have to let the other person flourish.

**What can audiences expect from a trip to see Joseph?**

It's a real feel good musical. The music's fun, it's bright and colourful, and we have the most amazing, talented cast. The world at the moment is so depressing; I think everybody should come for a couple of hours of detachment from reality, and have a fun, uplifting time.

[Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat](#) is on at the Edinburgh Playhouse from Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019. Tickets [here](#).