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Lighthouse Christian student living technicolor dream on stage

Lawson sings, dances in 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'

**Nate Hulings
of the Gateway**

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Paige Lawson loves just about every part of being involved with a professional musical.

Whether its dancing or belting out harmonies in the 5th Avenue Theatre's production of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," the 9-year-old fourth-grader at Lighthouse Christian School in Gig Harbor is experiencing an unparalleled level of excitement and exposure.

"The thing I don't really like about it is the drive," Lawson said.

Beginning in mid-August, Lawson and her mother have been commuting to Seattle for afternoon rehearsals. Since September, the rehearsals have been four days a week and lasted from 2 p.m. until nearly 10 p.m.

Opening night for the musical was last Thursday.



For Lawson, the difference between rehearsals and performances in front of packed houses is negligible.

"It's actually no different," she said. "Except there's people watching you."

The nerves? Leave that to her mother.

"You couldn't get me up on that stage," Maurie-Lynn Lawson said.

The commitment level of daily rehearsals hasn't come without sacrifices. Lawson has had to put aside dancing, piano and gymnastics since she joined the cast.

But that's fine with her. Lawson's role is part of a children's ensemble that sings and dances in the musical, a combination of some of her best talents.

Unlike many of her fellow ensemble members, Lawson is not home schooled and has had to balance academics and performance.

A lot of her homework time comes during the commutes to and from Seattle.

"She's keeping on top of all her work," her mother said. "The school has been very accommo Lawson said her favorite part is the dancing component. She also finds certain vocal sections musical very moving.

"In one specific part, I love to hear the harmony," she said. "It just makes me feel really goo it."

Once she steps out of her parents' car, puts her homework aside and gets onto the 5th Aven Lawson joins a cast of professional theatrical musicians, including a former "American Idol" s Anthony Fedorov, a fourth-place finisher during the 2005 season of "American Idol," plays th role of Joseph. The musical chronicles the Bible's story of Joseph, son of Jacob.

Lawson has even had the chance to chat with the star.

"He said, 'Good job,'" Lawson said.

Lawson has been performing since she was 6, when she sang at Chapel Hill Presbyterian Chu Gig Harbor for a Veterans Day service.

The following summer, she won a Tacoma Idol contest in the 14-and-younger category and v runner-up at the state competition. Lawson also has performed the national anthem prior to Rainiers and Pacific Lutheran University sporting events.

Musical theater could be a big part of her future.

"It's been a great experience, and I think I might want to try out for some Broadway plays,"

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Photo courtesy of Maurie-Lynn Lawson

Paige Lawson, 9, of Gig Harbor poses with , Fedorov, star of Seattle's 5th Avenue Theater's of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dre Lawson, a Lighthouse Christian student, dance in a children's ensemble for the music