

Godspell Jr

Godspell Jr. is a modified version of *Godspell* that is part of the Broadway Jr. 70-minute musicals provided by Music Theatre International.

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Godspell Junior

Question:

First off, Mr. Schwartz, you had me at "Join us..." and ever since my formal introduction to your work over 25 years ago when I was in our high school production of *Pippin*, I have enjoyed following your endeavors. (Funnily enough, years earlier I saw *The Magic Show* but perhaps then I was too young to make the connection to you or the music?) Anyway, my thanks and appreciation to you, for the impact you have made on American Theatre and in my life...And now on to the questions!

As its' director, I am currently in pre-production mode for *Godspell Jr.* and am challenged with several issues, the majority I believe resulting from it being the abridged version.

1. I am seeing difficulty in conveying to the audience the overall arc that these individuals will go through culminating in their becoming a community. While I believe I can highlight the ending unity of the group thru use of the obvious (dividing 40+ middle-schoolers into 6 groups; each dressed in one distinct color of the rainbow - by the song *LightOTW* all will be dressed in rainbow tie-dye.) I am concerned that the depth of their initial disparity will be overlooked. While *Tower of Babble* is not in *Godspell Junior*, perhaps due to its vocally challenging music, I was wondering if there was the possibility of incorporating it as discrete abridged monologues instead, immediately following Jesus' opening lines.

2. During *LightOFT* I would like to utilize a closed-circuit digital recorder and project images of audience members onto a large screen, thereby reinforcing that it is they who are light of the world and making up for the audience interaction that we lost with the removal of *Turn Back*. The *Godspell Jr* version of the song is shorter in length than I would like. Are we permitted to extend it? We are using the MTI provided CD and have the capability to cleanly splice additional measures in of the provided recording.3. I have a musical director who is crazy about the 2001 Tour version of *We Beseech Thee* (and with all due respect, I do find it to be brilliant.) For her sake I am asking if permission could be attained to use that arrangement instead and forgoe the current version? For my sake, in case the above answer is no, can the current version of *We Beseech Thee* then be extended. I would like there to be a "boom chicka" improv session mid-song for the kids to show off their personalities and being just kids. Thanks and hoping to hear from you soon! Ava DeGhetto

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Dear Ms. DeGhetto: From your questions, it seems clear to me you understand *GODSPELL* very well. The purpose of creating *GODSPELL, Jr.* was, as you no doubt have assumed, to make it doable for younger performers. Of course if you feel your cast can handle a slightly longer format, and you are able to handle it musically, I have no objection to your putting back in some of the excised materials, such as the examples you cite. I would be careful about making monologues from "*Tower of Babble*", however, as young children reciting monologues can be pretty difficult theatrically. But again, you know your

specific cast and I don't. By the way, I LOVE your idea of showing the audience during "Light of the World". That's a great idea for any production, "Jr." or no, that's using closed-circuit cameras. Thanks for your questions, and I hope your production is a smashing success and a wonderful experience for your performers. Sincerely, Stephen Schwartz

Prepare Ye help

Question:

Hello! I'm directing Godspell Jr. show for a Middle School. First of all, I'd like to say how excited I am because our talent is out of this world. However, since we are a Middle School, we have a no cut policy...which leaves us with quite a large ensemble. At the beginning of the show, I'd like to have the entire cast participate in Prepare Ye. As it is, the apostles are the only ones running up to John to be baptized after he enters from the rear of the auditorium. However, it looks a bit sloppy since I have the entire cast on stage. I don't think there's enough differentiation between the apostles and the ensemble. I've been debating whether I could have the apostles stand from the audience as John passes them and then follow him up on stage to be baptized. Then, when the curtain opens, the rest of the ensemble could run in. I'm just looking for input. I want the show to be the best it can be. Thanks so much!! Lisa

Answer from Stephen Schwartz:

Dear Lisa: I think your idea sounds good. Why don't you try it? Hope the show goes well. Best wishes, Stephen Schwartz

Godspell Jr Set

Question:

We are getting ready for a production of Godspell Jr. I have been put in charge of sets. No experience is killing me. I have seen the Godspell performance on DVD and loved it. Can you give any ideas on a great set idea for these kids who will be performing in your young version of this play? Thank you

Answer from Forum Visitor

Dear Susan, Godspell can be done in an almost infinite number of ways. And Godspell jr. is a shorter version, but essentially the same show. One suggestion I have is to meet with others working on the show and get their ideas. Maybe that's obvious, but it's actually part of how GODSPELL works. The performance works best, in my opinion, when a group builds the show together and the feeling of connection between everybody exudes from the stage.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

See other GODSPELL sections of this Forum archive.

For licensing see

<http://www.broadwayjr.com/store/showkitproduct.asp?oid=12>