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Life of Brian

In Chicago, Brian Lane Green slips into the Dreamcoat once again as he returns to his most famous role.

By: [Michael Portantiere](#)

Brian Lane Green's angelic visage and gorgeous singing voice make him a natural for the title role in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, so it's not too surprising that he's about to take on the part for the seventh or eighth time (even he has lost count).



Brian Lane Green

Green has run the gamut in his still young career, having played everything from Huckleberry Finn in *Big River* to the street hustler JoJo in *The Life* (a part he inherited from Sam Harris). Soap opera fans will remember him as Brian Bodine on *All My Children*, Sam Fowler on *Another World*, and Alan Brand on *Days of Our Lives*. His prime time TV credits include *Matlock*, *Murder, She Wrote*, and *Highway to Heaven*, and he has lately been doing some film work...but he keeps coming back to *Joseph*, or it keeps coming back to him.

I spoke with Brian just before he left for Chicago, where he is again trying on the Dreamcoat for size in a production at the Royal George Theatre.

THEATERMANIA: I knew you had done *Joseph* several times before, but I didn't realize until I read your bio that you did the national tour of the Really Useful Company production.

BRIAN LANE GREEN: Yeah, I replaced Sam [Harris] in the tour and I did it for a year. The people who are putting together this production in Chicago had to get permission to do the Really Useful version of the show rather than the original version. Every time I do *Joseph*, I think it's going to be the last time. "Let's move on to something else now," I tell myself--but it consistently seems to pop up. And that's fine, because I love the show. It always feeds my soul when I do it. So I'm donning

the loincloth again...which is why I've been going to the gym a lot!

TM: Yes, productions of *Joseph* do tend to show off the leading man in all his glory. Do you know the *Forbidden Broadway* parody of "Any Dream Will Do?"

BLG: No, I haven't heard it.

TM: Oh my god, it's hilarious. It starts out like this: "When you revive a Webber-Rice show, / Though it's a nice show, it's not so new. / So get a hot, good-looking dummy who bares his tummy: / Any hunk will do." Then it goes on to make fun of the some of the guys who've played Joseph: "Give them a TV star, / A daytime TV star. / Give them a TV star / A naked TV star!"

BLG: [laughing] That's funny! Well, there's got to be some truth in parody or else it doesn't work.



Brian Lane Green in the national tour of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*

TM: It is a terrific parody. But that song is also great in its original version. It may be the most beautiful song Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice ever wrote.

BLG: You know, before I did the national tour, I did a regional theater version of the show and I never understood that song. I *thought* I did--but, the more I sang it on the road, the more I understood it. It's extremely intelligent and multi-faceted. If you walk down the hallways of each line, it's magical. It can have a specific meaning for each person but there's also a universal message: "You need to have a vision in life because, if you don't, there's no hope."

TM: I've never actually seen you do Joseph, but the part seems so perfect for you.

BLG: I don't take it lightly. If it didn't mean so much to me, I wouldn't do it. For one thing, it whips me into physical shape because of the naked-soap-actor factor. But, also, it brings my heart and my head and my spiritual being into focus. And that's more important now than ever before.

TM: Let me get this straight: The first time you did the show was in Santa Barbara in 1995, and you've done it seven or eight times since then?

BLG: Yeah, I've been in it at least once a year. I think I'm closing in the 1,500th performance mark. This new production opens in Chicago on November 1. I haven't been to Chicago since I did the first national tour of *Big River*, so it'll be fun to do a show there again.

TM: You have another exciting project coming up: That star-studded Actors' Fund salute to Jerry Herman in L.A. on November 10. Do you have a specific connection to Jerry Herman or his work that helped get you into the show?

BLG: There's a song that I used to do at the S.T.A.G.E. benefits in Los Angeles called "Kiss Her Now," from *Dear World*. I'm going to be singing that again for this

event.

TM: It should be nice for you to take a break from *Joseph*. I'll never forget how good you were in *The Life*, playing a character who turns out to be a real scuzzball. Seeing you in that made me wonder: Do you think you get a chance to stretch your acting muscles as often as you might, or are you pigeonholed because of your looks?

BLG: It's hard for me to answer that. Playing JoJo in *The Life* was such a departure; my mother came to see it and she didn't talk to me in between shows. I asked her, "What's wrong?" and she said, "Brian, you're such a sleaze in this. I'd much rather see you do something like Joseph." So she's happy right now! But I love doing that kind of part. I used to do a lot of episodic television and I was usually cast as the unexpected bad guy. I've played a lot of those kinds of people--mass murderers and stuff like that. I really enjoyed my experience in *The Life*, though it was very difficult for me in the beginning. I don't know if you know the whole story...

TM: I guess not.

BLG: Well, at the end of my rehearsal process, my voice started freaking out on me. It kind of disintegrated. I was misdiagnosed by the famous ear, nose, and throat doctor who works on everybody in New York and the medicines he gave me were just making it worse. So I missed my opening night. Within the first two weeks of being in *The Life*, I had to leave. The producer said, "Go away, get better, do whatever you need to do. We love you, but what's up?" So I went back to L.A., where I was diagnosed properly: I had acid reflux laryngitis. I eventually had the opportunity to go back into the show and do what I do. That was a blessing.

TM: It sounds like an awful situation.

BLG: It was weird. I didn't have a clue as to what was wrong with me and neither did anybody else. The cast of *The Life* didn't know me from Adam, so they weren't sure what to think. I was on stage trying to perform and they must have been, like, "What the fuck is he doing here? He can't even sing!" Coming back to the role was hard, but it was a personal triumph. Whether I was good or bad or indifferent in the part didn't even matter to me so much; the fact that I came back was the important thing, because I could have just drifted away and never been heard from again.

TM: I'm glad that story had a happy ending. Anything else you'd like to talk about before I let you go?

BLG: I have these two movies that are circulating around the international film festivals. One of them is winning all kinds of comedy awards and the other is very dark and risqué. *Circuit* is the dark one. It's about drug abuse and sexuality and parties--that whole world. The other movie is like the flip side of the coin. It's called *Friends and Family* and it's sort of a slapstick comedy with me and Tovah Feldshuh and Tony LoBianco. To tell you the truth, it's hard to talk about that one because of the subject matter: Tovah plays a terrorist in it. Honest to God. She's over the top and very funny in it, but the timing of the



Another shot of BLG as the golden boy of the Old Testament

release...well, let's just say that the movie takes on a whole other flavor now. I also have a lot of other irons in the fire. If anything comes of them, I'll let you know!

[Click here for information on the Royal George Theatre production of [*Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*](#). To keep tabs on Brian Lane Green, visit the website www.brianlanegreen.com.]

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