

"Count To Ten"

When: today through July 1 at 8 p.m., with benefit performance at 8 p.m. June 27

Where: 14th Street Theater, 344 E. 14th St., Manhattan

Cost: \$20 (\$35 for the benefit performance)

Tickets, information: 212-352-3101 or 1-866-811-4111

Online: www.CountToTenTheMusical.com



Josiah Marcarelli, 13, of Pearl River rehearses for "Count to Ten."

3 teenagers savor roles in Manhattan musical

Philip Goldstein
The Journal News

Samantha Pearlman has been involved in musical theater since she was 7 years old, which adds a bit of realism to her appearance in the new musical "Count To Ten."

"It's nice because it's my first big-shot show in New York," she said. "It takes place at a performing arts camp. And I went to performance art camp my whole life, so it's a nice homage to my younger days."

Pearlman, 17, of Bedford, is appearing in the musical along with two other Lower Hudson Valley teens — Ricky Jones, 16, of New City and Josiah Marcarelli, 13, of Pearl River. The three were selected over 200 other teens to appear in the show, which opens today.

Each has been involved with musical theater for several years.

Pearlman is part of a young artists repertory company in Westchester County. Performing is an experience like none other, she said.

"It's really just a positive release

of all the positive energy that you have," she said. "Going on the stage feels amazing."

The process of bringing the musical to the stage started with auditions in January, followed by several months of rehearsals, Pearlman said. After workshoping it for industry feedback, the musical was readied for its two-week run.

"It's a long process, but it's definitely fulfilling," Pearlman said.

Jones said he found out about the musical, like Pearlman, through the show's executive producer Justin Boccitto. Jones had worked on "four or five" shows with Boccitto.

"He sent out an e-mail," Jones said. "So I said, 'Might as well give it a shot. I know the guy.' So it worked out pretty well, I guess."

Marcarelli said he found out about a possible audition from his mother, and they investigated further. He said he has been involved with theater since he was "about 6," and had performed in the past with various programs through the John Harms Theater in Englewood, N.J.



Actors, from left, Tyler Rai, 16, of Wyckoff, N.J., partners with Ricky Jones, 16, of New City in rehearsal for "Count to Ten" at the 14th Street Y in Manhattan.

Photos by Angela Gaul / The Journal News

Jones added that what made this experience different from other musicals he has done was the journey the production went on from conception to finish.

"I think it's been a really, really interesting process to see it go from script to rehearsal to workshop to being picked up," he said.

Getting "Count To Ten" to its current form was a fluid process, Jones said.

"The script wasn't set in stone. It wasn't written in ink," he said. "If something needed to be changed, if someone thought they needed to rearrange the whole second act, which they did, they did that."

Marcarelli and Pearlman said

they found the show's tap dancing numbers to be the most enjoyable aspect of the production for them.

For Jones, the show provided a mixture for all audiences.

"It's a mostly kids' show," he said. "There's kid humor. But there's adult humor in there that people like. It's a good show for kids to come see and parents to bring their kids to."

All three teens said they were amazed by the number of teenagers they came into contact with from the tri-state area while working on the production.

"You just got to meet some really cool people rather than the one small area that you live in," Marcarelli said.

Jones said he was surprised

that teenagers from as far away as Hackettstown, N.J., were involved in the production.

"We've all made friendships and family bonds," he said. "It's a lot of fun to meet these people because you have this lesser view of the world. There are kids just like me who love to perform."

Pearlman agreed, and said though all the participants came from different areas, they had one goal in mind.

"There's a bunch of people around you, and you meet new faces and unite forces behind something we all believe in," she said.

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