

Lakewood Actor Gabriel Ebert Wins a TONY!

Gabriel Ebert. If you don't recognize the name, you soon will! This 26-year-old Lakewood, Colorado actor is experiencing a remarkable year. On June 9, he won the 2013 Tony Award saluting excellence in Broadway Theater for his portrayal of Mr. Harry Wormwood in *Matilda, the Musical*. Eight shows a week at the legendary Shubert Theater in New York City, Gabriel torments one of the four young Matilda's who portray his daughter in the musical adaptation of Roald Dahl's classic children's novel.

Critics call *Matilda* the "standout musical of the decade." The show is sold-out months in advance, and enthusiastic audiences, which include actors Tom Hanks, Robert De Niro, and Barbra Streisand, delight in Gabriel's broad comedic abilities. Children patiently wait after each performance to meet him and get his autograph and *Pretty Woman's* Julia Roberts sends cookies backstage with a note of congratulations.

Pretty heady stuff, everyone agrees. How has fame impacted this Lakewood native son? "I still have to go to work every day," Gabriel says matter-of-factly. Besides *Matilda*, he remains busy auditioning for new shows, recording the *Matilda* Broadway Cast Album, and starring in an independent film which will be released in 2014, entitled *Jane Wants a Boyfriend*. "I get to play the boyfriend!" he shares happily. Gabriel also manages to find time to play outfield on the *Matilda Maggots Softball Team* and also practice his stride piano technique and the ukulele.

New York City is where Gabriel Ebert is living his dream, but "Jefferson County is home," he says, emphatically. "In all the madness of the 'Big Apple,' I remember the



mountains, and I remember the fields of Carmody." Gabriel, son of Rev. Barry and Stephanie Ebert, and brother of Jesse, had a "wonderful childhood" in Lakewood, he says, and credits Mile Hi Church, at

Alameda and Garrison, for giving him lots of early acting opportunities. He first appeared on the Mile Hi stage when he was five as the Angel Gabriel in the annual Christmas Pageant, and at eight he



debuted in a speaking role in the church's mini-musical production of *The Music Man*. Later with his brother and Dad, who is a minister at Mile Hi, he was a participant in the church's *Spirit of Independence* service. Gabriel also credits the *Colorado Children's Chorale* and *The Denver School of the Arts* for guiding him in his acting path.

Lakewood is the place where Gabriel Ebert returns to ground and anchor himself. In October, he came home for a few quiet

days with his family. The Ebert Tribe cherished their precious family time and just as quickly, Gabriel headed back to NYC for a performance of *Matilda*. Acting is in his blood. "I want to work on a large scale," he says. To that end, Gabriel has lined up his next Broadway show. After his *Matilda* contract expires in March 2014, he will be a lead performer in a new play opening April 1, entitled *Casa Valentina*. Look for him at next year's Tony Awards!

—Kent Rautenstrauss



Oona Laurence (one of four girls who share the title role) and Gabriel Ebert (Mr. Wormwood) in *Matilda The Musical*.

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