



Delaney Westfall, who plays Pearl in *Starlight Express*, has her roller skate adjusted by Dustin Dubreuil, who plays Electra, before a performance at Tuacahn Amphitheatre. TREVOR CHRISTENSEN / THE SPECTRUM & DAILY NEWS

## Stage

Continued from D1

this incredibly gestural choreography in ‘Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious,’” Taylor said.

Delaney Westfall, recent Brigham Young University graduate on her way to New York City in October, plays Pearl in “*Starlight Express*.”

Westfall said the most difficult part of working in an outdoor theater such as Tuacahn is working in the heat. Practicing in high temperatures — especially in skates, a unique part of “*Starlight Express*” — allowed classmates to bond and help each other work through physical exhaustion that only Tuacahn actors can experience, she said.

Creating a cast with such a wide range of skill sets is no easy task for the team behind the scenes at Tuacahn. Ryan Norton, associate producer, and Scott Anderson, artistic director, spent weeks on the road, auditioning actors and actresses in northern Utah, Los Angeles and New York, searching for the appropriate level of talent all while tackling logistics such as including the right number of Actors’ Equity Association contracts and ultimately assembling the cast that would arrive in mid-April and open the shows by June.

“By the time we got back to St. George, we saw close to 1,500 people audition,” Norton said.

“I cannot imagine casting something like this from their perspective,” Taylor said. “It’s like a massive jigsaw puzzle and I’m really glad I didn’t have to solve it.”

Once the actors arrive

and are settled into the housing that Tuacahn provides, the behind-the-scenes work continues with rehearsals. This year, before they could even begin learning the choreography for “*Starlight Express*,” all of the actors had to learn to roller skate.

“I wish we would have videoed it from start to finish,” Norton said of the skate school Tuacahn conducted. “There were three who had skate backgrounds. Everyone else pretty much learned it all. Needless to say, there was a lot of blood, sweat and tears.”

After the shows are up and running, many of the actors can settle into a less rigorous routine that includes exploring the area during the day, traveling to see family and spending time on personal hobbies such as music or crochet that they simply don’t have time to pursue during the audition and rehearsal process.

Regardless of how they fill their days, every night, Taylor, Bennett and the rest of the cast and crew get to do what they love best: share the story with the audience.

“It’s your icing for all the work you’ve already done,” Taylor said.

Even if it feels like a reward, it can still be a tricky schedule, especially for those with children.

“Today my day started in Las Vegas at 8:30 a.m. and will end at 12:30 a.m. after the show,” Bennett said during a phone interview on Tuesday. From there, she plans to drive back to Las Vegas so she can see her 18-month-old daughter in the morning.

“It’s crazy, but it’s our life,” Bennett said. “I really adore what I do. I don’t know how many people can say, ‘when I go

to work I am the happiest,’ but I am. I really love it.”

Tuacahn’s season continues alternating “*Mary Poppins*,” “*Starlight Express*” and “*Thoroughly Modern Millie*” in the outdoor amphitheater through Oct. 25, with Disney’s “*Mulan*” in the Hafen indoor theater through Aug. 10. For showtimes and ticket prices, go to [www.tuacahn.org](http://www.tuacahn.org) or call 652-3300.

Follow Lisa on Twitter @SpectrumLisa.