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'Billy Elliot' and Inside Broadway show 1,000 city kids how magic is made in a musical

BY JOE DZIEMIANOWICZ

It's nearly the last dance for "Billy Elliot."

The 2009 Best Musical Tony winner wraps its run on Jan. 8.

But there's still magic in the show, and last week the arts-education nonprofit Inside Broadway gave city kids from 23 schools a behind-the-scenes look at how it's made. The Dec. 8 event sponsored by the nearly 30-year-old organization whose programs cultivate young audiences featured talks and performances by actors, crew and designers. Memorable moments included Tade Biesinger (at left), one of the boys who plays Billy, the miner's son who was born to dance, twirling his way through "Born to Boogie" and "Electricity."

And then there was production carpenter Chad Heulitt's nifty entrance: He rose up from below the stage. He later explained that the pit dug to accommodate the show's scenic elements will all be restored when "Billy" sashays out of the Imperial Theatre.

Among the estimated 1,000 students were eighth graders Annie Moran and Tyriq Nelson and seventh grader Bailey Wilkinson who attend IS 278 in Marine Park, Brooklyn. All three have been in school productions.

Tyriq said he hoped to get tips on time management since handing homework and chores and rehearsing a show is tricky.

The trio said they hope they have the chance to do such a juggling act. They were not sure that their school would have a big production this year.

The reason? "Budget cuts," they said in unison. "But," Bailey added, "we still have hope."