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Television: Preparing for liftoff at Disney



Matt Klitscher, Disney Xd

Joey Pollari in "Skyrunners"

A Twin Cities teenager hopes a new Disney movie will rocket him to fame.

By **NEAL JUSTIN**, Star Tribune

Last update: November 26, 2009 - 3:34 PM

Joey Pollari's image is about to go into high orbit. The Mounds View High School sophomore stars in "Skyrunners," an adventure movie about two brothers who stumble across a decked-out spaceship

that's sought after by both FBI agents and space creatures.

It premieres Friday night on Disney XD, formerly known as Toon Disney and now targeted at young males. Because it's part of the Disney family, it's also aimed at turning unknowns into household names. Pollari, who trained at StageCoach Theatre Arts and has appeared in local productions at the Guthrie, the Ordway and SteppingStone Theatre, says he's ready for the ride.

Q How did you get into the business?

A When I was 6 years old, there was a scouting event in downtown Minneapolis, and I went with my mom. She wasn't too keen on the idea, but the next day we got some callbacks from agents who wanted to represent me.

Q I can't blame her. Moms are supposed to be nervous about these kinds of things.

A Yeah, she was worried about the rejection, and I've had so much of it. I'm approaching almost 10 years of doing this, and I've heard "no" a lot more times than I've heard "yes."

This business isn't for every kid. I won't lie. There were some times I cried about things.

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Q There's quite a bit of special effects in this film. What's it like having a green screen as your co-star?

A The great thing about this one is that everything wasn't completely in my imagination. There was actually an actor playing the alien, and he was scary. The first time I saw him, I just screamed, "This is so cool!" When we did our scenes together, the lighting was so dim you couldn't even see the cameras, so when the alien is trudging towards me, there's some genuine fear.

Q So if the movie takes off, are you ready for the attention? Will you be joining the Jonas Brothers or dating Miley Cyrus or cutting a record?

A I don't think you want to hear me sing. I'm so blessed that Disney has taken a liking to me.

Q Would you consider moving to Los Angeles?

A We would always keep our home in Minnesota. We love it way too much to leave. Maybe down the road, if a series got picked up or something like that, we would have to make that decision, but for now, we're

staying here.

Q What's school going to be like on Monday?

A I think it will be a challenging day. I think it will be good. It's up to people how they react. Most people are really, really supportive, but I'm really open. If someone says they didn't like it, no sweat.

Q What's the nightmare scenario?

A Too much attention. Too many people trying to be my best friend. I don't really like to talk about what I do. I try to live my own little Hannah Montana fantasy.

Q What TV series would you most like to appear in?

A "The Office." I don't know how they'd fit a 15-year-old in, but that show is funny as all get out. That's a ritual for me. Steve Carell is awesome. They all are. I hope I get to meet them someday.

njustin@startribune.com • 612-673-7431

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