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OFF BEAT

# OFFBEAT: Lookingglass Theatre's 'Little Prince' soars to stage stardom

PHIL POTEMPA'S DAILY ENTERTAINMENT NEWS COLUMN



Photo by Liz Lauren

Actor Ian Barford is a stranded pilot, who must interpret the mysterious matters that surround his new young friend, the Little Prince played by Amelia Hefferon in Lookingglass Theatre's production of "The Little Prince."

January 09, 2014 12:00 am • [By Philip Potempa philip.potempa@nwi.com, \(219\) 852-4327](#)

First published in 1943, "**The Little Prince**," the novel by French writer, poet and pioneering aviator **Antoine de Saint-Exupéry**, is a favorite for teachers in the classroom since the work's symbolism lends itself to discussion.

**Lookingglass Theatre Company** in Chicago just announced an extension of the wonderful, inventive stage production of "The Little Prince," produced in association

**Today's Celebrity Birthdays for Thursday Jan. 9, 2014**

Author **Judith Krantz** is 86. Sports announcer **Dick Enberg** is 79. Singer **Joan Baez** is 73. Guitarist **Jimmy Page** of Led Zeppelin is 70.

with **The Actors Gymnasium**, by **Rick Cummins** and **John Scoullar**, and directed by Ensemble Member **David Catlin**.

The show, which now runs through Sunday, Feb. 23, is at Lookingglass Theatre Company, located inside Chicago's historic **Water Tower Water Works**, 821 N. Michigan Ave. at Pearson Street.

The 90-minute, no intermission, story captures imagination and unfolds with amazing feats of the talented cast, who not only seamlessly portray multiple characters, but also sing and play instruments.

Stuck, thirsty and alone, a pilot stranded in the Sahara Desert meets an enigmatic, charismatic young prince who has fallen from the sky from the tiny asteroid he once inhabited. He shares tales of his life among the stars, each representing important life themes. Billed as a "fully immersive theatrical interpretation of the beloved French novella," Catlin illustrates the story and his cast of fantastic characters by highlighting gravity-defying, awe-inspiring physical feats.

Actor **Ian Barford** is precise in his performance as the perplexed stranded pilot, who must interpret the mysterious matters that surround his new young friend. **Amelia Hefferon** dazzles as the title character, the Little Prince. Complex and cautiously guarded, tiny-voiced Hefferon embodies what is a challenging role.

Ensemble Member **Raymond Fox** plays the King and artistic associates **Lauren Hirte** as Desert Rose and **Louise Lamson** as Rose, are dynamic, as are **Kasey Foster** as a very animated and energetic wary fox and Adeoye as the most skilled multi-tasking lamp-lighter imaginable.

Actor **Kareem Bandedaly** is especially striking as the Snake.

As with any visit to a Lookingglass Theatre production, the surrounding staging and sets are amazing. For this run, the audience is treated to a virtual storybook that seems to swallow both the stage and the audience seating to insert every audience member in the middle of the action. The design team includes Artistic Associates **Rick Sims** for sound and **Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi** who masters the acrobatic/circus choreography with **Courtney O'Neill** dreaming up a page-by-page perfect set and **Salley Dolemba** producing a parade of ideally-planned costumes. **William Kirkham's** lighting and **Maria DeFabo's** properties compete the picture.

Performances for "The Little Prince" are 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays (except Jan. 21 and Feb. 4 and 18), 3 p.m. Thursdays (except Jan 30 and Feb 13 with Feb 6 showtimes at noon and 5 p.m.) and also at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. Fridays and 3 and 7:30 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Tickets are \$45 to \$75 with a limited number of student tickets available the day of the show for \$20 with valid student ID. Groups of 8 or more patrons save up to 20 percent. **FYI:** lookingglasstheatre.org or (312) 337-0665.

Singer **David Johansen** aka Buster Poindexter is 64. Singer **Crystal Gayle** is 63. Actor **J.K. Simmons** ("Juno," "Spider-Man" movies) is 59. Actress **Imelda Staunton** ("Harry Potter" movies, "Vera Drake") is 58. Guitarist **Eric Erlandson** (Hole) is 51. Actress **Joely Richardson** is 49. Guitarist **Carl Bell** of Fuel and singers **Steve Harwell** of Smash Mouth and **Dave Matthews** of the Dave Matthews Band are 47. Actress **Joey Lauren Adams** ("Chasing Amy," "Big Daddy") is 46. Singer **A.J. McLean** of the Backstreet Boys and football player **Chad Johnson** (formerly Chad Ochocinco) are 36. Guitarist **Drew Brown** of OneRepublic is 30. Singer **Paolo Nutini** is 27. Actress **Nina Dobrev** ("The Vampire Diaries") and basketball player **Michael Beasley** are 25.

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The opinions expressed are solely those of the writer. He can be reached at philip.potempa@nwi.com or (219) 852-4327.

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