

## 'Icarus' prepares to take flight at Lookingglass Theatre

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*Author: Mary Houlihan, The Chicago Sun-Times*

Lookingglass Theatre has long been interested in flying and defying gravity. With that in mind, the ensemble has reached into Greek mythology and found the perfect story for its newest production.

Artistic director David Catlin has adapted the classic Greek tale of Icarus, the unfortunate young man with wings of feathers and wax who flew a bit too close to the sun.

"As a theater, we love to adapt stories," Catlin said. "Especially, great enduring stories that hit at some human truth."

"Icarus" opens Sunday and stars Lindsey Whiting as Icarus and Larry DiStasi as his father, Daedalus. Catlin directs; Sylvia Hernandez DiStasi contributes the high-flying choreography.

The adaptation was commissioned by the J. Paul Getty Museum, a California organization interested in new work based on Greek and Roman stories.

Catlin dug into the story and was drawn to Icarus' father, Daedalus, a great architect and inventor who created the aforementioned wings in an effort to escape imprisonment on Crete by King Minos.

Suddenly, the story took on a deeper meaning for Catlin.

"I was struck by how, even though the father was trying to save his son, the wings ultimately caused his death," Catlin said. "How does a parent survive that and the guilt you have to carry around with you?"

Catlin began to think about parents, children and the ideas of imbuing your children with the ability to make the right choices.

"This show is a great opportunity to explore flight and the desire to fly from a realistic perspective and also explore the idea of taking risks and the fear that goes with that territory."

With the gravity-defying choreography, the company goes beyond the simple fact that Icarus dons his wings and is seduced by the euphoria of soaring through the skies.

Hernandez has choreographed several movement pieces that incorporate ideas of flight into the realities of life. For instance, there's a courtship dance between Daedalus and his wife that Catlin says captures the tie-in between falling in love and flying.

"It's a getting-to-know-you kind of choreography, which culminates with the woman being borne off into the air in the way that love can be a sort of soaring feeling," Catlin said.

The challenge with "Icarus," as with any new Lookingglass work, is making sure the visual storytelling is something more than "just a pretty picture," that it has some deeper resonance.

The fact that Greek myths, dramas and comedies, which have been passed down through the ages, touch on some big human truths doesn't hurt.

"These are stories that get at basic human experiences and emotions," Catlin said. "They

helped people deal with the tough elements of life long ago."

The ancient stories have stood the test of time, Catlin said, because "we continue to deal with these same human behaviors" through the ages.

- "Icarus" opens Sunday at Lookingglass Theatre, Water Tower Water Works, 821 N. Michigan. For tickets (\$18-\$62), call (312) 337-0665; [www.lookingglasstheatre.org](http://www.lookingglasstheatre.org).

**Caption:** Photo: Lindsey Whiting wears the wings in the title role of "Icarus," which opens this weekend at Lookingglass Theatre, Water Tower Water Works.

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