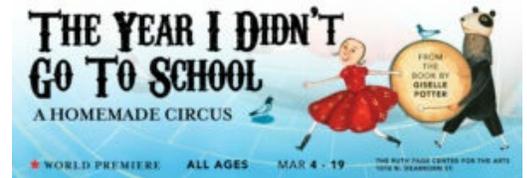


# “The Year I Didn’t Go To School: A Homemade Circus” review by Carol Moore

[aroundthetownchicago.com/theatre-reviews/the-year-i-didnt-go-to-school-a-homemade-circus-review-by-carol-moore/](http://aroundthetownchicago.com/theatre-reviews/the-year-i-didnt-go-to-school-a-homemade-circus-review-by-carol-moore/)

3/12/2017

**Highly Recommended \*\*\*\*** According to my almost-8-year-old granddaughter, Molly, “The Year I Didn’t Go To School: A Homemade Circus” was really good! I know she liked it because she whispered positive comments to me throughout the show. Molly’s favorite part of the whimsical story were the circus parts. She was especially fascinated by an act involving lots of hula hoops spinning all at the same time. Good show for kids – 4 Spotlights.



Author/illustrator Giselle Potter kept a journal, drawing pictures and jotting down all the marvelous things that happened during the year she toured Italy with her family’s traveling theater troupe/puppet show. When she grew up, she wrote and illustrated “The Year I Didn’t Go To School”, based on that journal.

One day, Mom (Lindsey Noel Whiting) and Dad (Matthew C. Yee) told their daughters, Giselle (Samantha Rae Jenkins/Emily Zimmerman) and Chloe (Audrey Edwards/Ava Tommasone) that the whole family was going to travel around Italy for a whole year and that the Mystic Paper Beasts would be performing wherever they went. When she saw the mother, Molly recognized her as Mrs. Pennyworth from Lookingglass Theatre’s “Mr. and Mrs. Pennyworth”.



They packed up their trunks, said goodbye to Grandma (Julie Greenberg) and Grandpa (Adrian Danzig), and flew off to Italy. The family carries a model of an airplane over their heads as they swoop around the stage. After they landed in Italy, they painted the company name, the Mystic Paper Beasts, on the truck, filled it up with all their trunks, and drove off on their adventure. On their very first stop, they were almost arrested because they didn’t have a license.

The girls learned to speak a little Italian and made friends everywhere they went. One lady gave them each a pair of cowboy boots. Another taught them how to eat spaghetti with an egg on top. In some performances they wore animal heads; in others they wore costumes. They did tumbling tricks and added some circus elements to their act. When they reached Rome, they met a Circus Artist (Aerial Emery), who could spin hula hoops in different directions all over her body. She even taught the girls trapeze skills which they incorporated into the family’s act.

Chicago Children’s Theatre produced “The Year I Didn’t Go To School” in association with The Actors Gymnasium. Co-creator (with Caroline Macon) Heidi Stillman directed.

Circus choreography is by Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi.

The cast has some serious circus chops. Julie Greenberg, who plays Grandma, is co-founder of Chicago’s circus arts company, The Midnight Circus. Her daughter, Samantha Jenkins plays Giselle. Adrian Danzig, co-founder of physical theater company,



500 Clowns, plays Grandpa. Aerial Emery is a terrific circus performer, while Lindsey Noel Whiting is an experienced puppeteer at Lookingglass.

Chicago Children's Theatre's production of "The Year I Didn't Go To School: A Homemade Circus" runs through March 26<sup>th</sup> at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago.

Running time is just under an hour.

Performances are Tuesday through Friday at 10:00 am

Saturday at 10:30 am, 12:30 pm and 7:00 pm

Sunday at 10:30 am and 12:30 pm.

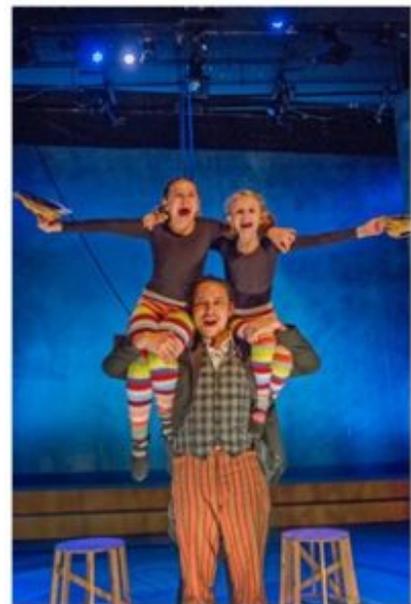
Tickets range from \$10-\$39.

Check with the Ruth Page Center concierge desk for reduced rate parking vouchers for the Newberry Plaza, 1030 N. State St.; or to validate the parking stub for LAZ Parking, next to the Hotel Indigo at 1250 N. Dearborn St.

To order tickets call (872) 222-9555 or [www.chicagochildrenstheatre.org](http://www.chicagochildrenstheatre.org).

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