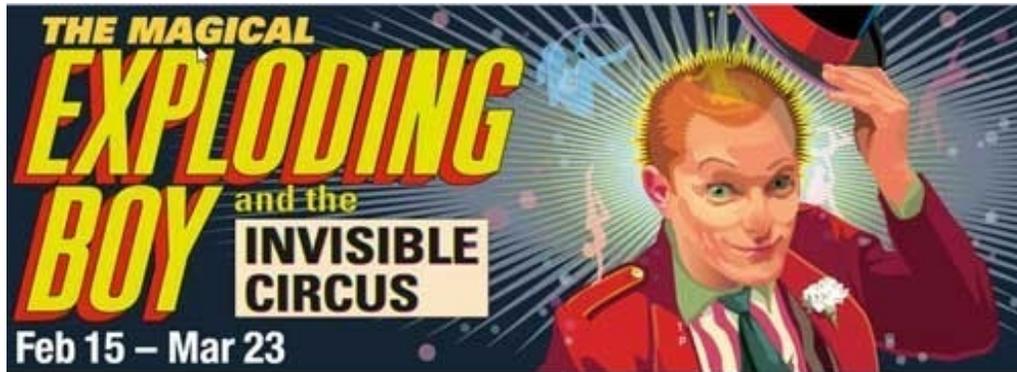


THE MAGICAL EXPLODING BOY AND THE INVISIBLE CIRCUS

Review – Actors' Gymnasium Charms Away the Winter Blahs

By [Patricia Simms](#)



[At Actor's Gymnasium until March 23](#)

Even if it were difficult to get to **The Actors Gymnasium**—it's not, it's at the Noyes stop on the Purple "L" line—it would be worth the trip to see **The Magical Exploding Boy and The Invisible Circus**. Don't miss it. This is, without a doubt, one of the most charming, inventive, surprising-at-every-turn, captivating theatrical events you're like to see in Chicago for a long time. And it's conveniently located by public transportation. And, it's very reasonably priced so it's an affordable family outing! Watch the trailer and see for yourself:

The Actors Gymnasium

has assembled a seamless ensemble of professional artists, equally proficient teen artists and astonishing fearless, intense middle school artists (in business suits, yet!) who gracefully blend their athleticism, choreography and story-telling craft into a spellbinding performance that is incredibly uplifting.



[What's up, Doc?](#)

No wonder the **The Actors Gymnasium**

can boast “At the Actors Gymnasium, people learn *learn to Fly—physically, emotionally and creatively.*” I would add that the audience flies, too. The *joie de vivre* the ensemble communicates through their multifaceted artistry is electric. I'm just going to blurt it out here: This is an extraordinary theatrical experience. But it is presented in such an organic way, I am relying on the comments of Co-Artistic Director and Director of **The Magical Exploding Boy and the Invisible Circus**, Larry Di Stasi's insights: “...Our **Annual Circus Extravaganza** has always been an extremely collaborative effort...Much of what you see the performers doing on stage today was created by those performers themselves...”



[Dean: Boy with Toy?](#)

I am particularly indebted to **Dean Evans** (the **Exploding Boy**) and **Lindsey Noel Whiting**

(Singing Circus Acrobat), whose mad imaginations, smashed together, are the heart of this show...” Add to that list one of my personal favorites, that mucho macho strong man, **Will Howard** who muscled his way right into my heart.



Upside Down?

What's it about? I'm leaving that to the show's composer, **Greg Hirte**, "**The Magical Exploding Boy and the Invisible Circus** is about the extraordinary person in all of us that's looking to get out, that sometimes thinks it shouldn't. He dreams into being these worlds that happen and pop. In a way they're so real they can't help but escape these fantastic thoughts. **Hirte** sums it up beautifully,



Does it fly?

“

I think it's a great reminder to think and dream...That's what's inspiring about it—the probable and impossible..before your eyes.”



Arms? Legs? How many Persons?

The collective enthusiasm and spirit of adventure of the troupe has resulted in a blend of several of **Dean's** mime pieces, a Chinese pole act, an alien queen performing contortions, young actors wearing business suits and talking snarky business-ese, acrobatics while playing the ukulele—the list is astonishing. Hang upside down? No problem! Balance on a pole? Why not. Twist in a multi-person pretzel? Hang in flight? When do we take off?



Lost in Space

Ah, me! It's breathtaking in its spontaneity, grace and confidence. Which, of course leads me back down to earth and some additional members of the brilliant Production Team:

Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi, Circus Choreographer

Topeka Ellis, Dance Choreographer

Charles Jolls, Lighting Designer

Rick Kubes, Percussion Composition

The MUST-SEE show closes on March 23. Visit the [Actors Gymnasium website](#) for tickets and more information.

Photos: Sam Fishkin and Kate Tabor