

## "The Little Prince" (Lookingglass Theatre): Fantasy Turned Spectacle

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Lookingglass Theatre, in association with The Actors Gymnasium, presents **THE LITTLE PRINCE**.

The novella **Le Petit Prince** was first published in 1943. Since its genesis, the children's book has been translated into over 250 languages and dialects. The classic tale is about a lost aviator meeting a young prince from another world. The prince charms the aviator with his intergalactic adventures. His stories muse traditional adult issues as universal absurdities. Lookingglass Theatre turns Antoine de Saint-Exupery's fantasy into a full-blown spectacle.



From the start, Director David Catlin uses his design team to create unforgettable visual moments. A miniature plane on a string glides through the audience. Cue a crash, Rick Sims (Sound) and William Kirkham (lighting). Boom and flash! The billowing curtain is whisked away. Behind it, the set (by Courtney O'Neill) has the smashed full-size plane to the right. In the center is a smooth white monstrosity that looks partly like a page scroll and mostly like an amusement park super slide. It adds to the whimsy. Ian Barford (Aviator) uses the oversized drawing board to sketch boxed sheep and other oddities. In addition, the ensemble climbs and slides up and down the hard surface. The set also has unexpected openings for a baobab tree, flower or entire world to sprout up out of it.

The design elements are vibrantly imaginative. Costume Designer Salley Dolemba adds her special touches with the princely outfit perfectly matching the original book cover and a rose that has layers of intricate petals. Dolemba's fanciful looks pop on O'Neill's stark platform.

Co-Artistic Director, Co-Founder and Master Teacher at The Actors Gymnasium, Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi serves as the acrobatic/circus choreographer. Hernandez-DiStasi has the ensemble walking on balls on the ground and in the air. Performers dangle from orbital spheres suspended from the ceiling. A flock of birds magically fly in uniformity. The play is riddled with these unexpected feats of daredevil enchantment.

Barford serves as the narrator of this fable. Barford's earthy voice provides a nice contrast to the otherworldly animation of the story. He and the childlike Amelia Hefferon (Little Prince) build a sweet synergy as misplaced misfits. The entire talented ensemble combine their acting and musical talents to make **THE LITTLE PRINCE** an entertaining lesson in being tamed.

Is it a children's story? As a kid, I found "*The Little Prince*" a sleepy school assignment. I wasn't engaged in the book's inventive take on grown-up lunacies until I hit adulthood. Lookingglass does a marvelous job of bringing the page to stage with clever theatrical touches. The story is the story. And the narration is lengthy in spots. The gaggle of little gals behind me (I'm guessing 6-9 years old) were restlessly moving and loudly yawning throughout chunks of prose.

*Running Time: 100 minutes with no intermission*

At Lookingglass Theatre, 821 N. Michigan

Based on the book by Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Adapted by Rick Cummings and John Scoullar

Directed by David Catlin

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays at 7:30pm

(Except: January 7 & 21, February 4 & 18)

Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays at 3pm

(Except: January 30 and February 13; February 6 showtimes are 12pm and 5pm)

Thru February 23rd

Buy Tickets at [www.lookingglasstheatre.org](http://www.lookingglasstheatre.org)

Production photo by Liz Lauren

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