

# REVIEWS: Quest & The Year I Didn't Go To School: Danzig Family Edition

[dadapalooza.com/2017/03/reviews-quest-year-i-didnt-go-to-school.html](http://dadapalooza.com/2017/03/reviews-quest-year-i-didnt-go-to-school.html)

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**Quest** at The Actor's Gymnasium and **The Year I Didn't Go To School** This is the last weekend for two great shows with a circus theme:

These shows have a lot in common;

- They both have a literary component (based on books)
- They both have circus at the center of them
- They both end March 19
- They both feature members of the Danzig family.
- Oh yes, and they are both great fun and worth seeing!



chicago  
children's  
theatre

## QUEST AT THE ACTOR'S GYMNASIUM

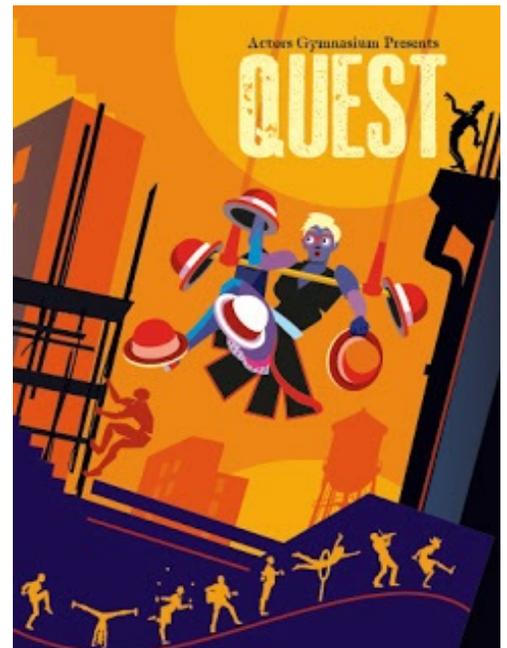
**Quest** is an original circus-theater production loosely based on Leo Tolstoy's short story *The Three Questions*. The show starts as a kind of wacky game show, where the contestants, answer and ask questions, and then one of the contestants asks three simple (but huge) questions, setting in motion a whirlwind journey filled with circus to find the answers.

Quest is a student work, featuring the very talented teen ensemble of the Actor's Gymnasium, along with a few even younger kids from their training program. As well, there are some professional circus artists/faculty members in the mix, leading the show as it goes through its various phases. The hat juggling routine performed by pro Amanda Crockett is phenomenal!

The teens and kids of the show are equally phenomenal, and do a variety of aerial tricks, a juggling routine, play music, and of course, all sorts of acrobatics. The kids are strong, flexible, and capable. If you bring a child, prepare for them to ask if they can take class at the Acto's Gym (which is a worthwhile endeavor!)

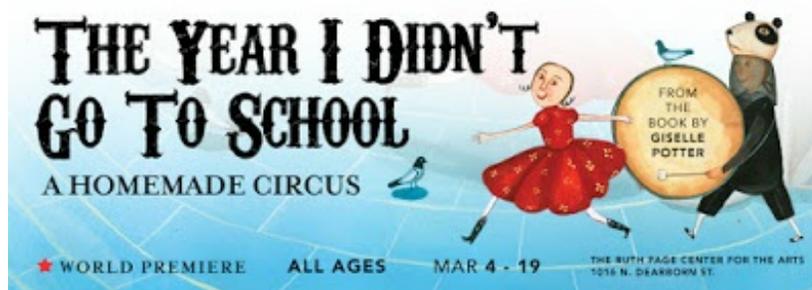
I mentioned the Danzig's above-- Leslie Danzig, who is a local circus/dance director and one of the co-founders of nationally acclaimed company 500 Clown, is the director/author of the piece, and her two children are part of the ensemble.

The show is performed at the Actor's Gymnasium (927 Noyes Street in Evanston) and runs Fridays at 7:30pm,



Saturdays 4:30 pm and 7:30 pm, and Sundays at 3:00 pm through March 19. [BUY TICKETS TO QUEST](#)

## THE YEAR I DIDN'T GO TO SCHOOL AT CHICAGO CHILDREN'S THEATRE

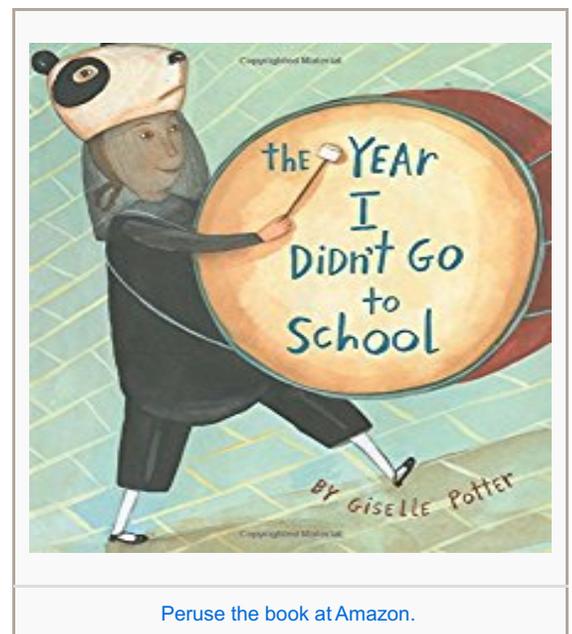


**The Year I Didn't Go To School: A HomeMade Circus** is based on the true life adventures of illustrator/author Giselle Potter. When she was 7 her parents took her out of school and the whole family toured Italy for a year performing on streets, theatres, and at festivals with her Dad's puppet theatre company The Mystic Paper Beasts.

This was one of my favorite books to read to my son, especially considering my work as a performer. I've always had a secret dream to bring my son and wife on a family tour, although no doubt my wife would balk, and my son would probably really like it until all of the audience members showed up!

The adventures of Giselle and her sister Chloe make a good and faithful transition to the stage. They witness the wonder of eating spaghetti with a fried egg on it, getting chased by the police for not having a permit, getting their car stuck between two buildings and having to get some nuns to help push them out, and more. The show is slightly more educational than the book, and features a couple of nice teachable moments about Italy and ways to cope with sudden change.

The acting in the show is wonderful, including Leslie Danzig (remember her?)'s husband Adrian, also of 500 Clown, who plays the Grandfather (and a number of other characters, including a crothy old Italian gentleman who sips his espresso as he watches the nuns help the family push their truck.)



[Peruse the book at Amazon.](#)



The family performs their show in *The Year I Didn't Go To School*.

Julie Greenberg (of the [Midnight Circus](#)) plays Giselle's grandmother, as well as other characters, and each of her and Adrian's characters are drawn deftly.

There's a further family connection, as her daughter Samantha Jenkins (also of the [Midnight Circus](#)) shares the role of Giselle, (and was there the day I saw it). She was terrific and brought a great tenderness to the role. Her sister Chloe (and her parents, played by Mathew Yee and Lindsey Whiting, were also great. Aerial Emery (of the [Midnight Circus](#), and of the [National Tour of Pippin](#)) does a terrific Hula Hoop and aerial act, which Samantha also mirrors.

All in all, the show is a wonderful and moving hour of theatre, and is suitable for all ages.

**The Year I Didn't Go To School** is performed at the Ruth Page Center for the Arts, 1016 N. Dearborn St, Chicago.

Shows this weekend are Friday at 10 am, Saturday at 10:30 am, 12:30 pm, and 7 pm, and Sunday at 10:30 am and 12:30 pm. Running time is 60 minutes. Tickets are \$28-\$39 each.

To find out more or to purchase tickets, visit <http://chicagochildrenstheatre.org/shows/the-year-i-didnt-go-to-school-a-homemade-circus/>