

## PHIL POTEPA: 'Whale-received' Lookingglass' 'Moby Dick' making big waves

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Centuries before today's fearless big-screen movie characters were chasing (and being chased by) dinosaurs, the monstrous white whale of literature, as dreamed up by **Herman Melville**, swam to the same scenario, joined by obsessed Captain Ahab and the rest of his crew.

"**Moby Dick**" is not a story accustomed to being adapted for the theater stage.

Sure, director **John Huston** did a 1956 film adaptation starring **Gregory Peck** as Ahab. And there's also the new **Ron Howard** directed film of the "Moby Dick" story, called "**In the Heart of the Sea**," set to open later this year. But film directors have the magic of movie special effects to bring the oh-so-pale demon whale to life.

My sailor's hat is tipped to **Lookingglass Theatre Company** in Chicago and director **David Catlin** with the World Premiere run of "Moby Dick," also adapted by ensemble member Catlin from Melville's book, produced in association with **The Actors Gymnasium**. It just opened last weekend and already, it's been extended until Aug. 28 and in a perfect home setting at Lookingglass Theatre Company, located inside Chicago's historic **Water Tower Water Works**, 821 N. Michigan Ave.

Running two and a half hours, with two 10-minute intermissions, the question on every audience member's mind is how will the white whale be brought to life?

Seeing is believing and the fun comes in the imaginative and thrilling final results, a riveting rivalry imaginatively conveyed with thrills and chills.

The cast of "Moby Dick" includes Lookingglass ensemble member **Anthony Fleming III** as the native-turned-harpoon wielding nautical nightmare named Queequeg. Never have I witnessed an actor so immersed in a role with such intensity. **Jamie Abelson** is our seafarer narrator Ishmael, entertainingly droll and yet believably driven. He is joined on this adventure by crew members **Raymond Fox** as Stubb and Lookingglass Artistic Associate **Kareem Bandedaly** as Starbuck, with **Javen Ulambayar** as Tashtego. The trio of actresses who lend themselves to multiple roles, all expertly and seamlessly served, are **Emma Cadd** billed as Fate #3, **Kasey Foster** as Fate #2 and **Monica West** as Fate #1.

And as the man in command, it is power-force **Christopher Donahue** as Captain Ahab. Donahue, in character, might have trouble capturing his swimming arch-nemesis of the seas. But as an actor, he captures every twisted-mind intent of the crazed sea captain so brilliantly described by Melville in his book.

From the sound effects and whale spouts to the foreboding look of the set design by **Courtney O'Neill** and the amazingly clever all-important costuming by **Carolyn Sullivan**, this "Moby Dick" is an experience that will long be remembered by audiences. **William C. Kirkham's** lighting design and **Rick Sims'** sound help transport everyone seated in the theater to a watery wake of intrigue.

Anyone who finds a ticket for this fateful trip of the whaling ship the Pequod will find themselves facing something far beyond just literature's most famous foe whale.

Tickets are \$40 to \$80 at (312) 337-0665 or [lookingglasstheatre.org](http://lookingglasstheatre.org).

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