

# Review “Quest” (The Actors Gymnasium): “OH MY GOSH!”

 [thefourthwalsh.com/2017/02/review-quest-the-actors-gymnasium-oh-my-gosh/](http://thefourthwalsh.com/2017/02/review-quest-the-actors-gymnasium-oh-my-gosh/)

2/14/2017



The Actors Gymnasium presents the world premiere of QUEST, an original circus-theatre production.

The show starts out with Flora Bare facilitating an animated game show. The contestants must answer questions before the buzzer goes off. The Q&A pace is rapid-fire until Kate Braland pauses to ask three important questions.

The questions stump the panel and send her on a quest for the truth. Adapter and Director Leslie Buxbaum Danzig loosely based the show on Leo Tolstoy’s short story “The Three Questions.” Although the story adds purpose to the circus acts, it’s the actual feats that will keep you engaged and gaping.





Danzig relies on the seasoned expertise of Bare, Braland, David Corlew, Amanda Crockett, and Edgar Ortiz to perform death-defying antics within the fairly intimate space. The fivesome create a sense of journey with only a rope as a prop. They use their bodies and rope-outlined-openings as the path over and under obstructions. Their synchronized floorwork is tight as they collectively move in unison. They often escape to the rafters by scurrying up a pole or twirling up on silks. The action seems effortless as they narrate the story, sometimes upside down.

Braland and Corlew, in particular, have these series of aerialist stunts from a swing. A glistening Corlew jokes with Braland that she might have had enough of him sweating on her. Despite my concern for her safety in the slippery environment, I'm impressed she responds by climbing up him... again and again. As he, knees dangling over the swing, holds her by hand or by foot, she continues to press her luck in multiple positions. The athleticism is marveling.



The stand-out of the show is the feisty Crockett. As the King, she continually chats with the audience while performing amazement. Her hat trick is mesmerizing. She exhibits perfect hand-to-head, foot-to-head, back-to-head, etc. coordination as these three hats roll on and off her body. Later, she does a series of somersaults above ground. Her movements are unbelievable as she comes out of the crazy human spinning to crack a joke.



Besides her professional team, Danzig uses a dozen or so members of Actors Gymnasium's Teen Ensemble and Young Artists. The young squad perform their own crackerjack acts. In one sequence, they climb, twirl, and soar on several ropes from the ceiling. Later, they showcase juggling skills in pairs, in groups and as an ensemble. My favorite segment was the jump roping. They jumped rope within jump roping. They did circle jump roping. And they even utilized Simone Danzig as a human jump rope. This youthful crew brought game to the circus. They added a lot hoopla to this QUEST.

Any of these circus numbers could be stand-alone entertainment. Danzig, however, chooses to neatly thread the myriad of circus acts together with a journey to find life's answers. QUEST provides a thrilling adventure to uncovering truth. This family-friendly outing is fun and astonishing. To quote the little girl to my left, "Oh my gosh!" She repeated this phrase often.

Running Time: Seventy-five minutes with no intermission

At Noyes Cultural Arts Center, 927 Noyes Street

Loosely based on Leo Tolstoy's short story "The Three Questions"

Adapted and directed by Leslie Buxbaum Danzig

Fridays at 7:30

Saturdays at 4:30pm and 7:30pm

Sundays at 3pm

Thru March 19th

Tickets at [ActorsGymnasium.org](http://ActorsGymnasium.org) or 847.328.2795.

Photos by Cole Simon

For more information and reviews on Chicago theatre, visit [Theater in Chicago](#).