

A Wrinkle in Time At Lifeline Shares Charm, Warmth, and Love Aplenty

BY KAREN TOPHAM SEPTEMBER 14, 2026 CHICAGO REVIEWS



Pictured left to right: Sam Hook, Rohan Link-Francisco, Manali Sunkara, Victoria Cruz, Amanda Link, Jordan Gleaves, Cami Stuckert. Photo credit: Josh Bernaski.

Review by Savannah Brooks

Settling into Lifeline Theatre in anticipation of their production of *A Wrinkle in Time* feels akin to joining your eccentric friend in their small but well-decorated living room for an evening of stories, laughter, and love. The seating is maybe a little tight, but it's cozy. Everyone around you is buzzing with excitement; they are seeing a friend, they love the book, or they are just plain excited to see live theatre. The exposed brick is beautiful, and complements well the arching, colorful set by Lindsay Mummert which fools you with its simplicity.

The set, as well as *A Wrinkle in Time's* story, grows more complicated as time goes on. Director Heather Currie expertly explores every single inch of Mummert's set, creating a new configuration every time you might incorrectly assume that the small space could not possibly be used in any other way. The play's story, adapted by James Sie from the beloved 1962 novel by Madeleine L'Engle, starts simply enough. Young Meg Murray (a charming and lovable Manali Sunkara) is struggling in school after her father disappears from her life. Meg's well-meaning but easily distracted mother (a caring and pliable Victoria Cruz, who also takes on several other roles) and her oddly intelligent little brother, Charles Wallace (a riotous Rohan Link Francisco) share in her plight. When Meg and Charles Wallace meet popular boy Calvin (Sam Hook, who is effortless in his casual physicality and delivery), they start to realize they are on a quest to save their father (Brian Tochtermann, who also demonstrates surprising expertise in puppetry as the family's dog, Fortinbras). Encouraged by their mysterious neighbors Mrs. Whatsit (Amanda Link), Mrs. Who (Cami Stuckert), and Which (Jordan Gleaves), the three kids embark on a journey across the universe to save Mr. Murray and their world itself.

The play and this particular cast is almost overwhelmingly endearing. The very young Francisco is particularly enrapturing — his matter-of-fact delivery and unusually adept physical comedic chops for his age means that both he and anyone with whom he shares the stage is forced to take a beat after most of his lines on account of the audience's loud laughter. Don't let this fool you — he can turn on the dramatics when he has to as well without issue. In one moment where Charles Wallace is facing the peril of mind control, Francisco writhes and grasps at his skin like something out of a horror movie. He sits at the center of a very lovable young trio. Sunkara's Meg and Hook's Calvin have palpable chemistry, and Sunkara's awkward shifts whenever Calvin is mentioned are intensely sweet and relatable. The supporting cast is not left behind, filling in a variety of human and alien roles with gusto and a very entertaining (but not overindulgent) campiness that helps the audience buy into the strange new world they find themselves in. While the play has a few pacing issues (the exposition seems to fly by, while various moments on various planets drag), Mummert has assembled a cast and created a world that is wonderful to live with and in for just over two hours.

The world of the play, while often abstract and otherworldly (literally), is refreshingly simple in its design, while still malleable enough to convincingly serve as a number of different planets without significant changes. Jazmin Aurora Medina puts to good use many everyday fabrics in creating alien costumes, and Sarah Riffle's lights fill the set with color — at times, the actors are shadowed when speaking, but the lighting design is certainly at its best when the play has left the Earth behind. This simplicity reinforces the very simple message at the center of the play: *A Wrinkle in Time* asks its characters, and you as the audience, to love, and to do what you can for the world around you. The production is no spectacle, but it doesn't really need to be; all it needs is humanity, which it finds in abundance in its actors and creative team and hopes to find in its audience. In return for your humanity, it will surround you with love and hope — something that we all need a little reminder of.

A Wrinkle in Time is now playing at Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N Glenwood Ave, Chicago, IL 60626, until October 18, 2026. Performance times vary; check the website at Lifeline Theatre. Find more information about current plays on our [Current Shows page](#) and at [theatreinchicago.com](#).

