

THEATER REVIEW

A *Wrinkle in Time* remains a beautiful journey

The dense text is challenging, but the performances and production elements shine in Lifeline's new adaptation.

by **Rob Silverman Ascher**
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A *Wrinkle in Time* at Lifeline Theatre
Credit: Josh Bernaski

Lifeline Theatre's adaptation of Madeleine L'Engle's 1962 seminal sci-fi/fantasy hybrid novel, *A Wrinkle in Time*, is a dazzling take on its source material. The story of young Meg Murray, the loner daughter of two scientists who sets out to rescue her mysteriously missing father, this adaptation by James Sie (directed by Heather Currie) still has the same issues that every adaptation of L'Engle's text has had. Translating *Wrinkle*'s dense lore is quite a challenge which typically overshadows the artful approach to staging that the creative team has.

A Wrinkle in Time

Through 10/18: Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM, Sun 4 PM; audio description and touch tour Sun 10/11 (tour 3 PM); Lifeline Theatre, 6912 N. Glenwood, 773-761-4477, lifelinetheatre.com, \$50 (seniors \$40, students/military \$30)

All things considered, there's a lot to enjoy here. The audience is greeted by Lindsay Mummert's compelling set design, a portal of sorts composed of two semicircles with a textured background. Manali Sunkara is exceptional as our hero, carrying the plot's many twists and turns with ease and perfectly embodying a terminally embarrassed tween. As her younger brother Charles Wallace—a sort of super-prodigy already at four years old whose prowess verges on the supernatural—Rohan Link Francisco is hilarious and assured, his super-precocious nature never cloying.

The ensemble features some excellent utility acting, particularly Amanda Link as both Mrs. Whatsit and a mysterious figure who inhabits Camazotz, a sort of proto-*Pluribus* planet where Meg and Charles Wallace's father has been trapped. Saskia Bakker's puppets are an incredible asset to the production; attention must be paid to Bakker's rendering of Fortinbras, the family's Labrador retriever. Jazmin Aurora Medina's costumes for Mrs. Who, Which, and Whatsit bear the perfect amount of chaos and ingenuity, particularly in a sequence where Whatsit takes an alternate form.

A Wrinkle in Time is a wonderful showcase for Chicago talent, but the question of how to handle this tricky text is persistent. I'm not saying that the production or the adaptation are in vain, because, as is the case in L'Engle's text, the journey is the destination, and Lifeline's *Wrinkle* is one beautiful journey. 📺