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A Battle Between Good and Evil

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Colin Douglas (<https://www.chicagotheatrereview.com/author/theatredule/>) September 15, 2026
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A Wrinkle in Time

Lifeline Theatre is a truly special place. On its modest, intimate stage, the Rogers Park company, now enjoying its 44th season of breathtaking productions, specializes in presenting exciting dramatic and beautifully written and acted adaptations of noteworthy literature for all ages. The company calls their productions “Big Stories, Up Close,” and A WRINKLE IN TIME is one of the biggest and most marvelous productions that once put Chicago’s Lifeline Theatre on the map.



Adapted by Jeff Award-winning playwright James Sie, this new production of the play is based upon the much-loved 1963 Newbery Award-winner. His play was first produced in 1990; but it was such a popular story that there were revivals in 1998, 2017 and now again in 2026. This science fiction/fantasy for young adults, written by brilliant author Madeleine L’Engle, is about a daring, life-and-death battle between good and evil. The book is considered a classic for young adults, and it has inspired an opera, a graphic novel, an audio book, two films, as well as several other musical and dramatic theatrical adaptations.

In Lifeline’s sparkling new production, directed with imagination and vivacity by ensemble member Heather Currie, the play opens like L’Engle’s story: “It was a dark and stormy night,” when 13-year-old Meg Murray is awakened by a tempest of wind, thunder and lightning crashing around her home. She’s not only worried that their century-old farmhouse might not weather the storm, Meg is continually tormented by the mysterious disappearance of her father, Dr. Alex Murray, a renowned physicist. Not even the government knows his whereabouts, but he vanished after researching the continuum of time and space, in a means of interplanetary travel via something called “the tesseract.” Frustrated by her scientist mother’s seeming lack of concern about her husband’s safety, and a school filled with insensitive teachers and student bullies, Meg suddenly finds herself joining forces with her new school friend, Calvin, and her sweet, gifted younger brother named Charles Wallace. Together they hope to rescue Dr. Murray from the menacing Black Thing.

In this production, a talented cast of eight actors, six of them portraying multiple roles, recreate L’Engle’s stirring story of the battle between good and evil and light versus the darkness. Meg Murray is played with spunk and trepidation by Lifeline newcomer, Manali Sunkara (THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST, Modern Archaic Theatre Company). In her quest to save her father she’s aided by her wise-beyond-his-years little brother, Charles Wallace, played by a brilliant, magnificent young actor named Rohan Link Francisco. In his Lifeline debut, this talented little guy is sharp, funny and totally capable of holding the audience in the palm of his hand throughout this two-hour play. Calvin O’Keefe, Meg’s new teenage buddy, is enthusiastically played by Sam Hook (A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD, Young People’s Theatre). Meg’s parents are nicely portrayed by Victoria Cruz (PRIMARY TRUST, Goodman) and Brian Tochtermann (THE TIME WARP TRIO, Lifeline), along with playing several other roles.

There are many alien characters who either help or challenge the children in their quest. Mrs. Whatsit, the youngest of three supernatural ladies, whose lives have spanned centuries and galaxies, is played with humor and intelligence by the exuberant and gifted playwright, director and actor, Amanda Link (WAR OF THE WORLDS, Lifeline). The bespectacled Mrs. Who, a character who communicates through quotations by scholars like Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, and others, is played with intellectual swagger and a touch of arrogance by Cami Stuckert (COWBOY JOE, iO Theater). Providing the necessary clues for the children to rescue both Dr. Murray and Charles Wallace is Mrs. Which. They’re played with ardor and authority by the brilliant Jordan Gleaves (SEVEN GUITARS, City Lit). The gleeful and jovial Happy Medium is portrayed with comic finesse by Victoria Cruz. She helps the kids see The Black Thing through her crystal ball and ultimately understand the dark force they’re going to be up against during their intergalactic rescue mission. Amanda Link magically turns into the menacing Person With Red Eyes, through whom It, the malevolent monster, communicates.

Some of the minor characters and plot points of Madeleine L’Engle’s young adult science fiction/fantasy have wisely been either eliminated or combined. However, James Sie’s ambitious and exciting adaptation provides enough of the book to fully dramatize this tale of good versus evil. Lifeline Theatre’s new offering is another example of why their productions not only entertain audiences of all ages, but continue to inspire reading and the enjoyment of books. Enhanced by a fluid, futuristic setting by scenic designer Lindsay Mummert. The story is illuminated with imaginative lighting by designer Sarah Riffle, and potentially peppered by Joe Griffin’s music and sound design. Jazmin Aurora Medina has designed costumes that transform the small cast into many imaginative characters. Her wardrobe for Aunt Beast is especially terrific.



Younger theatergoers, as well as their grownup guests, will be on the edge of their seats as this exhilarating saga unfolds before their eyes. A dark and stormy night has never seemed so scary, and yet promises such an exciting and fulfilling adventure of love, hope and the eternal battle between good and evil.

Highly Recommended

Reviewed by Colin Douglas

Presented September 11-October 18 by Lifeline Theatre,

6912 N. Glenwood Ave., Chicago.

Tickets are available at the box office, by calling 773-761-4477 or by going to www.lifelinetheatre.com (<http://www.lifelinetheatre.com>).

Additional information about this and other area productions can be found by visiting www.theatreinchicago.com (<http://www.theatreinchicago.com>).
