

***A Wrinkle in Time***  
**Adapted by Tracy Young from the novel by Madeleine L'Engle**  
**Show Intro 3/4/14**



Director..... Tracy Young  
 Scenic Designer ..... Christopher Acebo  
 Costume Designer..... Alex Jaeger  
 Lighting Designer ..... Robert Wierzel  
 Video Designer..... Shawn Sagady  
 Puppet Designer..... Lynn Jeffries  
 Sound Designer/Composer ..... Paul James Prendergast  
 Fight Director..... U. Jonathan Toppo\*  
 Movement Director ..... Kjerstine Rose Anderson  
 Associate Movement Director..... Sarah Lozoff  
 Stage Manager..... Jill Rendall\*  
 Assistant Stage Manager ..... Mandy Younger\*  
 Dramaturg ..... Lue Morgan Douthit  
 Voice & Text Director..... David Carey  
 Prop Master..... James Clark  
 Construction Supervisor ..... Joe Porto  
 Costume Project Manager ..... Sarah DeLong

**Cast:**

Meg Murry	Alejandra Escalante*
Charles Wallace Murry/Ens.	Sara Bruner*
Calvin O'Keefe/Ens.	Joe Wegner
Mrs. Murry/Ens.	Kate Hurster*
Mr. Murry/Ens.	Dan Donohue*
Dennys Murry/Ens.	Mark Bedard*
Sandy Murry/Ens.	Jeremy Thompson
Fortinbras/Ens.	U. Jonathan Toppo*
Mrs. Whatsit/Ens.	Judith-Marie Bergan*
Mrs. Who/Ens.	Michele Mais*
The Happy Medium/Ens.	Kate Mulligan*
Aunt Beast/Ens.	Daniel T. Parker*
Science Girl/Ens.	Jada Rae Perry



## Lue Douthit, Dramaturg

“It was a dark and stormy night.” Hey look, I first saw that with Snoopy in the *Peanuts* comic. He’s on the top of his doghouse and he’s writing a novel. I never read this book before a little while ago, and I thought it was one of these contests for the worst first line of any

novel there could be. So much for assumptions. I think Tracy wants me to say like one quote and then I get to get off the stage, which is awesome. But I’ll say a couple of things. RIF. Reading is Fundamental. I learned that when I was a kid, and this production is going to celebrate the celebrated-ness of this book. Readers 1-13 or whatever it is, and you’ll see that frame soon. I’m sure they’ll talk about it. There is some statistic I’m going to get it wrong, but I’m going to make it sound like it’s really something important and you ...[muddle] with statistics. To make my point, which is that if you cannot read by third grade, you have a high percentage of several things. One is not finishing high school. Two ending up in prison. There is some statistic like, 80% of the prisoners in the great state of Ohio did not learn how to read by third grade. So the great state of Ohio said, hey, let’s just go and be sure everybody can read by third grade. I don’t know how they’re doing with that program, but my point is, maybe it’s 70% now ... but you hand out *A Wrinkle in Time*, but my point is of course, how potent reading is as a cultural, cognitive, there are all kinds of great studies about fiction and cognition. I just read an article yesterday, does reading fiction make you a moral person? So a lot of that is about justifying fiction of course, but that’s a whole other issue. But I wanted to bring that up to say, we’re highly aware that this is a book that a lot of people love and I dare say there may be more people in this room that love that book more than they have a thing for *Hamlet*, maybe not in this room, but you know what I’m saying. Like we’re about to mess with something. Okay? So I’m going to state the obvious. This is not the book. What we’re doing today. We’re going to create a beautiful, imaginative, in 3-D, this is not in 3-D, well the book is, but it’s going to fall out. Alejandra, there she is, although, perhaps metaphorically or physically or sort of in 3-D, we’re going to create this beautiful, imaginative event (?) in 3-D. So that by way of saying how we’re going to manipulate it in time and space and Christopher and Tracy and Lynn will talk about that in a minute. What’s interesting also to sort of think about is time itself. All theater events, all plays in some ways are time capsules, just as books are time capsules. Something has been inscribed about a particular time, and we’re having really interesting discussions about

the – you see in the costumes a theatrical palette which is the '60's or our version of the '60's, right, which is a little different, but also in huge, really technical up to date video which they wouldn't have had 50 years ago. Right? So we're doing this really interesting anachronism, which I think will make for a very potent event. So just to wrap up the book for a second, then pass it back to Tracy. I have called this play historical science fiction. And here's what the book could mean to any of you. It is, depending on how you look at it, science fiction, a warm tale of family life, a response to the Cold War, a book about a search for a father, a feminist tract, a religious fable, a coming of age novel, a work of Satanism, or a prescient meditation on the future of the United States after the Kennedy assassination. That's how it situates itself in time and our reflection from it. And so from that, Tracy has taken that sort of information, our love of this cultural icon, and here's what they have come up with. Thank you.



### **Tracy Young, Adapter and Director**

I just love her. Yes. So I heard the pall come over the room when you said, “We’re not doing the book.” So let me just add to that. When I was given this great opportunity, this dauntingly amazing opportunity to adapt this much beloved book into a theatrical presentation here at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, I was immediately talking to people out in the world who, I was so struck by almost everyone I came in contact with telling me, how are you going to do that? I don’t think that can be done. I can’t imagine how you would be able to do that. The book is so great, and how could you turn that into a piece of theater? I think someone here, there may have even been a donor who has given money to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival as a bet that it can’t be done. So we’re kind of really revved up to try to win that bet. But my starting point

for this adaptation came from my interaction with people and talking to them about their deep, deep love of this book. And it was just extraordinary for me to be exposed to the incredible connection that people have to this story from having grown up with it, or having read it as an adult, and I love that quote that Lue shared, that context about the multitudes that this book contains. When it was first sent to publishers, when Madeleine L'Engle was first trying to get the book published, there was feedback of, is it a book for children? Is it a book for adults? We don't know how to place this in the lexicon. It's not an easy peg as far as what is this book? And I love that, personally, I find that so thrilling. And the book's been the subject of controversy for the 50 years it's been around. It's been on the list of banned books. It's also been on lists of the hundred most cherished American novels, the things we value most in our culture. So it really has traversed a very wide spectrum of responses, meanings that it has to people, and opinions that people have about it. So that in addition to the book itself and the story of Meg Murry and her family and all that happens in *A Wrinkle in Time*, in this production there is also the story of the people who love this book, or the people who hate this book also. The people who have strong opinions about this book, and what this book means to our culture now, what it meant when it was first brought into being, and all those years since. And in a way, it does mark history in certain ways. American history specifically, and also global and even intergalactic universal consciousness history going forward. So we're trying to get at all of that into this production, and yet we're trying to give it the feel of a rocket ship ride, that I was also very aware and very happy to be tasked with this project because I get excited making pieces of theater that are aimed towards entertaining and moving both older audiences, adult audiences, and also youth audiences and younger people, and finding those ways that people of all ages can come and share a theatrical experience and each find things in it that excite them and speak to them and speak in their way of viewing things. So it is a book that is young at heart, it is a fantasy, it's filled with imagination, it's very delightful, so we want to bring all that playful sense of a childlike imagination to the production. And in tandem with that, not shy away from the very adult aspects that are also carried within the book. And things that have been controversial about the book over the course of time. So we're trying to bring all that in a very tight, exploding package of a 90 minute joy ride. And there are some amazing, incredible cast of actors that are also working very improvisationally, working very creatively, there's a lot of play in this process, a lot of let's get together and imagine how this is. There's also some incredible designers who are bringing the vast worlds to the stage. But it's in a theatrical vernacular as opposed to a cinematic vernacular. And of course in our culture nowadays, there's fantasy after fantasy, huge big budget, CGI huge extravaganzas coming out every week it seems, huge *Superman* and *Star Trek* and on and on and on with these incredible vast scales and huge budgets. We're looking to present, and even I think some time coming up, there's going to be a *Wrinkle in Time* film franchise which will be its own thing which I'm sure will be very exciting. We're trying to find how and what specifically is the theatrical way that this story could be told, using a theatrical vocabulary, which and really leaning into that, meaning that by having less financial resources than a huge multi-billion dollar film studio, although the resources are terrific here at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, don't get me wrong, but by having those in a way constraints of, it's just happening on a stage, we're in the same situation the kids are when

they play in their room. They're using what's at hand, and often making the most exciting things happen with the least amount of materials. That approach has always been one that for me as a theater artist is where I like to live the best, the most. I find that the most exciting, because the creative solutions that children find and that we as theater artists are able to find, have an element of surprise often to them, because, oh my God, I can't believe, look, there's a monster made out of bed sheets, or whatever it is. And that's got its own real satisfaction to me, so that's where we're trying to come from. I'm going to wrap this up right now. Oh yeah. So anyway, there's so much to say. However, I will say this. Listen, let me say one more thing. Paul James, we're doing one little part of the show where we might be collaging, doing a little bit of vocal interviewing, field interviews, with the people in and around the Festival, maybe out on the bricks, you'll see him asking questions about the piece, or asking questions about, what's your exposure to the book? What do you like about this book? What do you not like? And he's kind of gathering a bunch of different little snippets of opinions and interviews from people. If you see him and you're interested in being part of that, please approach him, because we're looking for people who are interested in sharing their own personal thoughts and experiences with this book. So maybe you'll see him, or let somebody know, like someone at the Festival, that you want to be part of Paul's list. Great. Let me turn it over to Christopher Acebo.

### **Christopher Acebo, Set Designer**

So the design of the set really follows the needs of the adaptation that Tracy has talked about, and the style of Tracy's take on the translation of the book to the stage. So that aesthetic being in a lot of ways a playground, a place where the actors can create the magic that we're looking for. And so the aesthetic really embraces this multi-eclectic storytelling approach. So the set kind of acts as a container for this direction, for all of the playing that's going to be happening. But the two, but when you have all that to play with, there's too much, so you start to see what's really emerging for you as an artist. The two important ideas that pushed their way up for me as a designer is this idea of both space and home. These two ... so space and the traveling through time, and adventuring to mysterious worlds, and its complete opposite, the idea of home. So these two beautiful ideas live, coexist in the design, in the framework of the set. This idea of home which represents comfort and love, and this idea of space that represents adventure and risk. And so within that environment is where this playground takes place. And really sets us up hopefully to create both magic that is a vista (?) to the audience, and also magic that we use in a theatrical way to make things and ideas and different worlds magically appear. We do have as we've mentioned, and I'm just going to talk a little bit about Shawn Sagady, because he's our brilliant projection designer. If you look at the model there, the house, the framework of the house will be a major field for Shawn to be able to do projection design onto, as well as other surprise places of projection design. And as you've mentioned, Paul is creating a soundscape for the piece and hopefully all of this will give us this lovely base to work off of, and create this remarkable play, of this very strange book. Thank you very much.

Kjerstine, you're creating movement, do you want to talk about that?



**Kjerstine Anderson, Associate Movement Director**

Yes. So. When I was growing up as a kid, whenever my mom was reading a book, there was no getting her attention, no matter what you did, which was kind of convenient in some ways. But, as I grow older reading myself, there's something, we were just talking about this in rehearsal, like being tessered literally into the experience of what is on the page. This play is completely in some other world. Anything could be happening, and who cares, man? Here we are, in *A Wrinkle in Time*. And I've also had this experience with theater, watching theater, being a part of that experience. So there's little for me to show you, because we're going to get on our feet right after this, but my job is to make a 3-D experience, or to realize what Tracy and I talk about over dinners together, and come up with ideas about how to make this fantastical interplanetary swirl be a three dimensional reality. I'm so excited to be working in this capacity, because I as an actor really believe that so much of ... for me what makes theater so amazing, is being transported to other places. And I believe that when I believe that it's happening, the audience believes that it's happening, and there's this obsessive fascination with the material that creates a world that we can all go into together at once. Which is what makes it so different from watching a movie with robot creatures created by computer. So I'm very excited to be working in this capacity, to help inspire a group of amazing actors, almost all of whom I've worked with, or I play bridge with their parents, so, and knowing you guys so well is also what makes this very exciting for me and working with Tracy and just working with Sarah and so I'm

really excited to get going right after this is over. I guess you'll see show and tell of my work in a couple of months. Thank you.

### **Lynn Jeffries, Puppet Designer**

I brought some stuff for show and tell. I'm now going to lower the level of discourse. My job in show intros. Which is why I have to go last. Can't go lower than me. So the puppets, there are a lot of puppets in this show, and every planet has its own style of puppetry, and I'm going to give you a little sampling here. A lot of them are found object puppetry, which is particularly tricky because it's found objects that are period, so anything pre-1962. So for example, the giant Centaur thing is going to be created with a number of Mrs. Buncombe's sheets, and an umbrella, and some brilliant acting. Aunt Beast, Dan Parker is going to wear a giant fur coat, and then he's going to have a whole bunch of these vacuum cleaner canister hoses that he can manipulate in a tentacle-y fashion. [modeling tentacles] I've been going around campus doing this and people are going, OH, get them away from me! Which I think is a sign of great success. And then, Jada Perry is going to be the maestro of the small found objects. She's going to have a lab table set up. She's doing a series of science experiments on tessering, and she's doing it with dolls and household appliances, so there are moments where one tesser is putting the doll in the blender and turning it on, and seeing what happens, and then freezing the doll and squishing the doll, and all of that is going to be carried on with a live video feed so that these little tiny things, you will actually see her doing onstage. You will also see these big, beautiful, high def images of close-ups of it happening. And another thing she's going to be doing with her assistant Mark Bedard, is a beautiful little travel journey on the planet Uriel that will be kind of based on toy theater which was that old traditional Victorian toy miniature proscenium stage and then there were little paper characters that you could move around in it. So this is going to be a toy theater that done for the camera, using books, entirely using books, things like planets, other worlds of our solar system, and one of my personal favorites from my childhood, dinosaurs and other prehistoric reptiles, and the golden book of science, and many others, so stay tuned. And they will be doing things like, opening the book, and having the landscape and then having a cloud come over, and while the cloud is coming over we switch books to a different landscape, and it's going to very high tech. So that's the found objects. Then there's also the moment where Charles Wallace gets possessed by the evil brain IT and for that he is going to turn into a puppet that Mark Bedard will be using, which is going to be an experimental mash-up – this is not him, this is the rehearsal puppet – experimental mash-up between a bunraku style puppet, or Ameraku (30:45:2?) as we call it, and a ventriloquist dummy, so we will actually have little moving eyes, little moving mouth, creepy. Creepy and difficult, everyone's favorite combination. And then lastly we have the happy medium instead of having a crystal ball, Kate Mulligan is going to be using one of the finest pieces of technology from the 1950's, the overhead projector. If anyone back there can very quickly lower these lights here, that would help this particular demonstration. You are so good. They didn't even know I was doing that in advance. Okay. So this is the prop shop's overhead projector, which is

working. She's going to show us outer space, here we are in outer space. [Demonstration] And we're traveling through outer space, look at the pretty stars, look at the colors, because it's lighting gel, and then look it's the earth, ooh, it's the earth, but oh, what's happening to the earth? There's something really scary going on to the earth. There's a cloud going over it, and that just doesn't look good at all. So I'm going to make that go away. Awkward place, the on-off switch. And then cut to, that was not very much fun, so let's look at Meg's mom instead. That'll cheer everyone up, right? Get in there Meg's mom ... so ... oh, look, it's Meg's mom. And she's writing a letter to her husband who she hasn't seen in a long time. She's thinking about it, she's writing some more ... thinking about it some more ... and then she realizes that she's been doing this every day for a year and a half and has never heard back from him, and she gets very sad. So that was fun. There you go. This thing about tessering, I don't know if those of you who know the book know the Tesseract. Tesseract is a cubed cube, it's a squared square, it's a geometric shape, but also in this book it functions as a method by which time and space travel happens, or the compression of time and space, so you can actually leap, you can wrinkle as Mrs. Whatsit says, you can wrinkle through time, and the act of tessering through time is a big inquiry in this book, it's a big phenomenon that happens, and so as Lynn was saying, we've got Jada's character who's called Science Girl, she's a young girl who loves science, and one of the great things about *A Wrinkle in Time* is that it was one of the first pieces of science fiction genre with a female protagonist at the center, a girl who loves math and loves science, and so that's another really great thing about this book that we wanted to celebrate, by having one of the characters who's a younger reader who loves science, and is trying to work out the mechanics of tessering because she's doing a science fair presentation in her school, so that's what all that science, tessering, tesseract stuff is all about.

### **Lue Douthit, Dramaturg**

I'd just like to leave us with one quote from Samuel Ting, Nobel Prize winning astrophysicist. And he said, "If you know what you are looking for, and if you have found it, you have not learned anything. The important thing is to find what you're not expecting, that's how science advances." That's how the rehearsal process works. And that's how we should receive theater. So see you soon.