



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 8, 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

Please include in OCT., NOV., DEC., JAN.
calendar listings and announcements

Media Contact: Andrea Loewen
604.731.5483 publicity@pacifictheatre.org

“A dream so beautiful you remember it all your life, always wishing you could get into that dream again.”

THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE Comes Home to Find Magic Still Lingerin' There

IN SHORT: This splendidly theatrical invention preserves all the magic of the twentieth century's best-loved fantasy classic. Four young adventurers passed through a doorway to a land in the grip of an icy queen, where it's always winter and never Christmas –but Aslan is on the move! Captivates the adult imagination as powerfully as a child's with its rich themes and unforgettable images. Starring **Donna Lea Ford** (*Cariboo Mag*) and **Kyle Rideout** (*Farndale... A Christmas Carol*). Directed by Kerry van der Griend (*Chickens*). **Playing November 13-January 2nd at 8pm with 2pm matinees on Saturday. Preview November 12th (\$11 in advance, PWYC at door). Artist talkback November 20th. Neighbourhood night November 17th. Eagle Bay Memorial Benefit November 18th. Dress-Up Night November 20th. For tickets (\$11-34, GST incl.) call 604.731.5518 or pacifictheatre.org.**

Vancouver, BC – November 13-January 2 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pacific Theatre is proud to bring its adaptation of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* home! This **splendidly theatrical invention** preserves all the magic of the twentieth century's best-loved fantasy classic. Four young adventurers passed through a doorway to a land in the grip of an icy queen, where it's always winter and never Christmas – but Aslan is on the move! **Captivates the adult imagination as powerfully as a child's** with its rich themes and unforgettable images. Starring **Donna Lea Ford** (*Cariboo Mag*) as Lucy and **Kyle Rideout** (*Farndale... A Christmas Carol*) as Peter. Directed by **Kerry van der Griend** (*Chickens*).

20 years after the adventure ended, Peter and Lucy have made their way back to the room where it all began only to find that there is still magic lingering there. Helping keep the magic alive are stage manager **Lois Dawson** (*Frozen*), set designer **Omanie Elias** (*The December Man*), prop manager **Jessica Howell** (*The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*), costume designer **Naomi Sider** (*Mourning Dove*), lighting designer **Matt Frankish** (*Holy Mo*), and Jessie-award winning sound design team **Corina Akesson and Jeff Tymoschuk** (*Coriolanus*).

“A brilliant production.” –Anne Girdini, The National Post

“I didn't see the star of Bethlehem shining over Pacific Theatre, but I witnessed a miracle inside. Casts an amazing spell.” –Jo Ledingham, The Vancouver Courier

Specialty Nights:

Tuesday November 17th & 24th: Cheap Tuesdays! All tickets \$10

Wednesday November 18th: Eagle Bay Memorial Benefit Performance.

Friday November 20th: Dress Up Night! 2-for-1 tickets for guests dressed like Narnians.



ABOUT PACIFIC THEATRE

Pacific Theatre is a professional theatre company that aspires to delight, provoke, and stimulate dialogue by producing theatre that rigorously explores the spiritual aspects of human experience. Its programming and productions aim to foster new work alongside established plays, and promote emerging artists, who share our theatre space with seasoned professionals. Through its operations Pacific Theatre strives to operate with artistic, spiritual, relational, and financial integrity.

Since its inception in 1984, Pacific Theatre has mounted seventy professional mainstage productions. The excellence of the company's artistic work has resulted in ongoing operating support from all three levels of government, the Vancouver Foundation, the Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation, and the Angus Reid Foundation, among others. Pacific Theatre has moved into a valued place in the artistic community, garnering seventy-seven Jessie Richardson Award nominations in fourteen seasons of eligibility, and receiving 11 awards, including Outstanding Production for *Grace* in 2007.

LIFE AND HISTORY OF C.S. LEWIS

- Born November 29, 1898 in Belfast, Ireland and died on November 22, 1963 (the same day as the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.)
- His earliest childhood memories involve “endless books” stacked, piled, and shelved throughout his entire house (including the cloakroom)- leaving little wonder as to the source of his life as a scholar, philosopher, and prolific author.
- At age nine his mother passed away: “with my mother’s death all settled happiness... disappeared from my life. There was to be much fun, many pleasures, many stabs of joy; but no more of the old security. It was sea and islands now; the great continent had sunk like Atlantis.” –CS Lewis *Surprised by Joy*
- At the age of 16, Lewis was tutored by W.T. Kirkpatrick (also known as Kirk or The Great Knock), a man who taught Lewis to read, analyze, think, write, and speak clearly and logically. Constantly challenging Lewis’ assumptions and opinions, he taught the budding writer his trademark clarity in writing, careful word choice, and considered arguments.
- Throughout his life, Lewis established and maintained close friendships with a group called “The Inklings.” They would meet in Lewis’ rooms on Thursday nights from 193-1950, and then began meeting at The Eagle and Child Pub (still open) until Lewis’ death in 1963. Participants included J.R.R. Tolkien, Warren Leis, Dr. R.E. Harvard, and Charles Williams. They would read drafts of their current stories to each other (including *The Lord of the Rings*) and offer each other criticisms.
- On September 8, 1947 *Time* magazine featured C.S. Lewis on the cover with the heading “OXFORD’S C.S. LEWIS: His Heresy: Christianity.” The world was amazed to see an Oxford don writing philosophical defenses of miracles.
- During WWII Lewis broadcast a series on the BBC, later to become the book *Mere Christianity*, that made his voice to be widely recognized second only to Winston Churchill.
- Lewis’ short marriage to Joy Davidman was portrayed in the BBC and Hollywood films *Shadowlands* (also adapted for the stage.) The marriage was short, due to Davidman’s cancer, but a remarkable remission gave them two years of great happiness before she passed in 1960.
- Lewis has written 52 books, has eight published books of his letters, and has four anthologies published of his writings, ideas, and quotes.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The story of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is set against the backdrop of World War II and the London Blitz. The year is 1940 and the Pevensie children are sent to live with their uncle in the English Countryside (exact location is not specified) to escape the Blitz.

World War II began September 1, 1939 when Germany invaded Poland—two days later Britain and France declared war. Other relevant dates are September 13, 1931 when Japan invaded Manchuria, and July 7, 1937 when the Second Sino-Japanese War began.

Major operations between Britain and Germany began in April 1940, the year of our story, when Germany and the Soviet Union entered a trade pact and began providing each other with materials of war. In May 1940 Winston Churchill was elected Prime Minister of Britain and shortly thereafter Germany began the sustained bombing of Britain known as The Blitz.

The Blitz officially began September 7, 1940, but from July the Battle of Britain was engaged. London was bombed for 57 days straight in The Blitz, and the attack lasted overall until May 10, 1941.

During this time there were not enough central shelters for the entire population of the nation. Families were instructed to build private “Anderson Shelters” in their yards, or to use the London Underground. Many families engaged in “trekking”: sleeping far from their homes and traveling several hours to and from work in the city, although official sources denied this happening.

Of course, many families sent their children away to protect them from the physical and psychological harm of the bombings, which is exactly what leads our four young adventurers to the doorway to Narnia.



ADAPTATIONS OF THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE

- Television:
 - A 10-part serial produced by ABC Weekend Television in 1967
 - An animated TV-movie directed by *Peanuts* director Bill Melendez in 1979 (winner of the first Emmy Award for Outstanding Animated Program)
 - A BBC production including actors, animatronic puppets, and animation in 1988.
- Audio
 - The best-known audio edition consists of the book read aloud by Michael York.
 - The BBC has released three audio CDs in the form of “radio plays” with actors and sound effects.
 - Several more audio versions have been produced by the BBC, Radio Theatre, and Focus on the Family.
- Film
 - In 2005 the Disney film starring Tilda Swinton, James McAvoy, and Jim Broadbent among others was released. It won an Oscar for Best Achievement in Makeup, and was nominated for sound mixing and visual effects.
- Theatre
 - Multiple theatrical adaptations have been produced all over the world, including large commercial productions by Malcolm C. Cooke Productions in Australia and Trumpets Theatre in the Philippines.



A scene from Bill Mendez' animated television version.

NARNIA/ENGLAND CHRONOLOGY

Compiled by Ron Reed

It's the start of Christmas holidays, and Lucy and Peter are heading back to their family home in London. She's been at boarding school, Peter at university, and they plan to meet up in the Spare Room at Uncle Digory's place to spend a little time together before catching the London train. As they remember their astonishing Narnia adventures, something magical starts to take place, and they are swept up in those events as if they were happening for the first time.

Our staging of C.S. Lewis's novel takes place sometime between the events of *The Voyage Of The Dawn Treader* and *The Last Battle* - and, perhaps, sometime altogether different, in Narnian time.

So when exactly is that, in the chronology of the Narnia tales?

In one of the novels we learn that, sometime between *Prince Caspian* and *The Voyage Of The Dawn Treader*, Digory Kirke lost his country place, and by the time of *The Last Battle* we find out that it has been destroyed (perhaps by fire?). So this Christmas reunion of Peter and Lucy's happens one Christmas, between 1942 and 1948.

Here's Ron Reed's version of the "England Chronology" of the *Chronicles of Narnia*, developed when our unique staging of the story was first devised back in 1998.

CHRONOLOGY

1888 Digory Kirke born

1889 Polly born

1927 Peter born

1928 Susan born

1930 Edmund born

1931 Lucy born

1933 Eustace and Jill born

1940 Summer: Peter (13), Susan (12), Edmund (10) & Lucy (9) at Digory's (52) to escape London bombing: **THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE novel**

1941 End of summer holiday, Peter (14), Susan (13) & Edmund (11) return to school by train, Lucy (10) off to boarding school for the first time - **PRINCE CASPIAN novel**

Uncle Digory (53) loses the country place

1942 Summer holiday: Peter (15) at Digory's new place ("in whose house these four

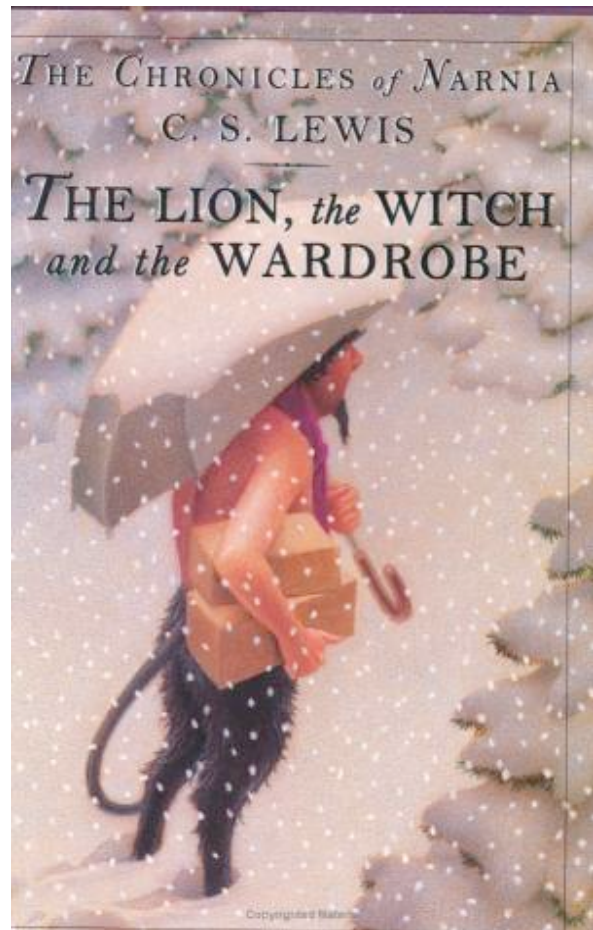
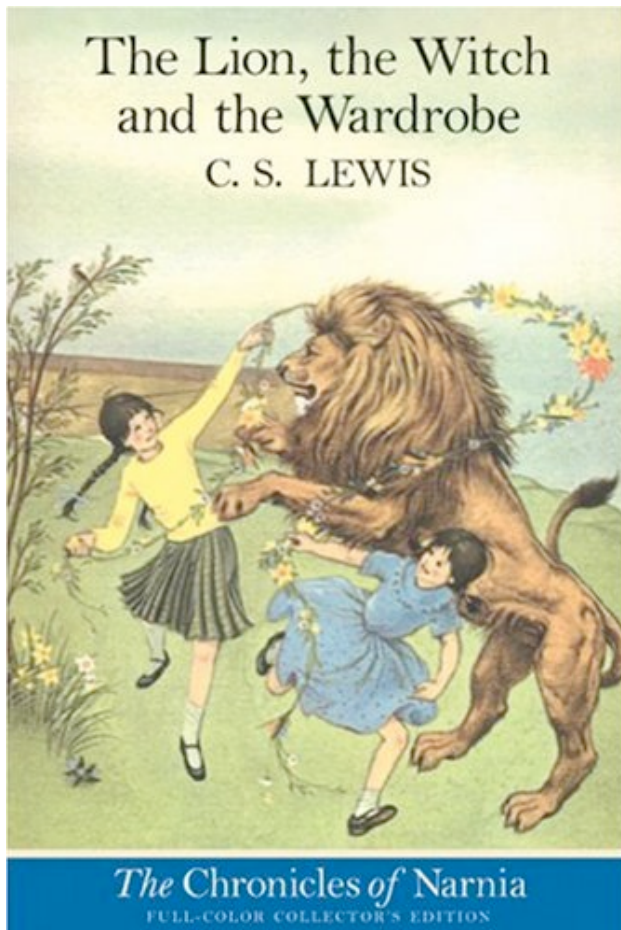
children had had wonderful adventures long ago in the war years... but he had somehow become poor since the old days and was living in a small cottage with only one bed-room to spare", Susan (14) in America, Edmund (12) & Lucy (11) visit Scrubbs - DAWN TREADER novel

1942 Fall term, Eustace (12) back at school 2 weeks with Jill (12) - SILVER CHAIR novel

Some Christmas between 1942 and 1948: While traveling home for Christmas holidays, Peter & Lucy stop off to tour Digory's old place, now administered by the National Trust - our stage adaptation of THE LION, THE WITCH AND WARDROBE

by 1949 Uncle Digory's old place destroyed (by fire?)

1949 Jill (16) & Eustace (16) "the only ones still at school." Susan (21) no longer a friend of Narnia: "Fancy your still thinking about all those funny games we used to play when we were children." Digory (61) and Polly (60) gather together all except Susan for a supper: Rillian appears. Peter (22) & Edmund (19) travel to London, dig up the magic rings. Digory, Polly, Lucy (18), Jill & Eustace board train to meet up with Peter & Edmund. - LAST BATTLE novel



MAP OF NARNIA



The events in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* feature The Wardrobe, The Lamp Post, Mr. Tumnus, The Beavers' Dam, The Witch's Castle, and The Stone Table.

CHARACTERS

Our adaptation of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* features the following characters (as told by Peter and Lucy):

Peter Pevensie: the eldest of the Pevensie siblings, ends up crowned High King of Narnia, known as King Peter the Magnificent. Here he relives the story with Lucy.

Lucy Pevensie: the youngest Pevensie sibling- the first to discover the land of Narnia. Here she relives the story with Peter. She is known in Narnia as Queen Lucy the Valiant.

Susan Pevensie: the second eldest Pevensie sibling. She does not believe in Narnia until she gets there too and is eventually crowned Queen of Narnia and becomes Queen Susan the Gentle.

Edmund Pevensie: the third Pevensie child. He meets the White Witch in Narnia and falls under her delicious (or delightful?) spell. He betrays his siblings but repents later. After he is crowned king he is known as King Edmund the Just.

Jadis, the White Witch: from the city of Charn, in a dying world. Declares herself queen of Narnia and uses magic to maintain her rule and keep Narnia in the horrific state of “always winter but never Christmas.”

Aslan: a lion and the true ruler of Narnia. Sacrifices himself to save Edmund and is resurrected in time to aid the battle of the citizens of Narnia against the White Witch.

Mr. Tumnus: a faun and the first person Lucy meets in Narnia. In the employ of the White Witch, he should have turned Lucy in, but befriends her and sets her free instead. Is accidentally turned in by Edmund.

Professor Digory Kirke: the Pevensie children’s Uncle who takes them in when they flee London. He believes Lucy and there are hints that he knows more of Narnia than he lets on.

Mrs. Macready: the housekeeper of Professor Kirke when Pevensies come to stay.

Mr. Beaver: a friend of Tumnus who assists the children in finding Tumnus and dethroning the White Witch.

Mrs. Beaver: Mr. Beaver’s wife, a very hospitable woman who assists the children in their adventures as well.

Maugrim: Called Fenris Ulf in the American version, he is the chief of the White Witch’s secret police.

Father Christmas: arrives when the White Witch’s power is fading, giving the children gifts that will help them defeat her at last.