

SHAW 18 FESTIVAL

Imagine you are sent on a quest ... a quest to find medicine that will help someone you love. But that medicine does not exist in our world ... would you travel to another world to find the medicine? Would you use magic to travel to another world?

What is this story about?

Our play begins with a boy who is creating a hero out of paper. He explains to his mother that this hero will be challenged with a quest...a quest to find medicine to save his mother. He begins to tell her a story

This is a story about a boy named Digory. Digory lives in London England with his Aunt Letty and Uncle Andrew. Digory and his mother have moved to London because Digory's mother is very ill. Digory is worried for his mother and is very unhappy.

Digory meets Polly - the girl next door. They become instant friends...well, maybe not 'instant' friends, but they do become friends.

The two friends come to learn that Digory is a magician's nephew. WHA?! Yes...a magician's nephew! You see, Digory's Uncle Andrew has been dabbling in magic - magic that opens doors to other worlds.

Uncle Andrew needs humans to test his magic. He wickedly tricks Polly and Digory into using magical rings that transports them to other worlds.

The two children travel to one world that is dying and one that is just being born. The new world is called Narnia. Narnia is a magical world created by Aslan – a powerful lion who sings the world into existence

Even though Narnia is a brand new world, there is already the presence of an evil force. Since Digory is the one responsible for the evil in Narnia, Aslan sends him on a difficult quest. At the end of the quest, Digory is faced with a very tough decision. Will he make the right choice?

Who wrote The Magician's Nephew?

This is C.S. Lewis. He is an author and wrote *The Magician's Nephew* - one of seven books in the Narnia Chronicles. [image of C.S. Lewis]

This is Michael O'Brien. He is a writer who adapted *The Magician's Nephew* story to create the play for the Shaw Festival. [image of Michael O'Brien]

During the Second World War, CS Lewis lived in the English countryside. He opened his home to 3 children who had been evacuated from the city of London to avoid the bombings. These children helped to provide the inspiration for the Narnia books – which have sold over 100 million copies around the world.

FUN FACT: Both C.S. Lewis and Michael O'Brien draw inspiration for some of their writing from Norse stories and mythology.

What was happening in the world during the time of *The Magician's Nephew*?

The beginning of the story is set in England. It is the early part of the 20th Century.

At this time, London is the world's largest city. However not all is tea and cake. Millions of people are poor and live crammed together in slums.

During this time, diseases like smallpox, tuberculosis, and cholera grow to become epidemics, killing thousands of people. Many people did not have access to any form of health care. In *The Magician's Nephew* – Digory's mother is sick. He is worried that she will not get better.

Life is different for children during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Most children of the upper, wealthy class were raised by nannies, and rarely saw their parents. Children were expected to be 'seen and not heard'.

Children of the poor, lower class worked – doing hard and difficult jobs to help support their families. In *The Magician's Nephew*, both Digory and Polly have no rights and no voice in London. That all changes in Narnia.

So, what does this show look like?

The set design for this production of *The Magician's Nephew* was inspired by the connection between kids and their imagination.

This clip from a Walk Off the Earth music video gives you an idea of how paper, cardboard, and boxes are used to create the set and props in our production. [clip of "Little Boxes" by Walk off the Earth]

The set will also include screens that will be used for video projections. Spoiler Alert! The 6 screens in the centre will rotate and move up and down.

Many of the actors in *The Magician's Nephew* play multiple roles. Their costumes are reminiscent of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, with a 2018 twist. The Costume Designer drew inspiration from the modern-day "Tweed Run" – a stylish bike ride through the streets of London, England.

The principal characters wear costumes that are more typical of the Victorian/Edwardian eras.

To create the animals of Narnia, the actors wear masks...made of...you guessed it...paper and cardboard.

Anything special to look for?

Some of the actors in *The Magician's Nephew* play the roles of "Dream Detectives". The Dream Detectives help to tell the story by creating various settings and props with boxes.

Sound Design helps to tell the story and to create different moods. Listen for original music, singing, and soundscapes. How does the sound and music make you feel? Think?

Some of the animals in the world of Narnia are puppets made out of paper and cardboard and manipulated by actors in cool and creative ways.

The final piece to bring a book to life for the stage is YOU. If you come with your imagination, your creativity, and your belief in magic ... you too will be part of Narnia!

See you soon at the Shaw Festival!