

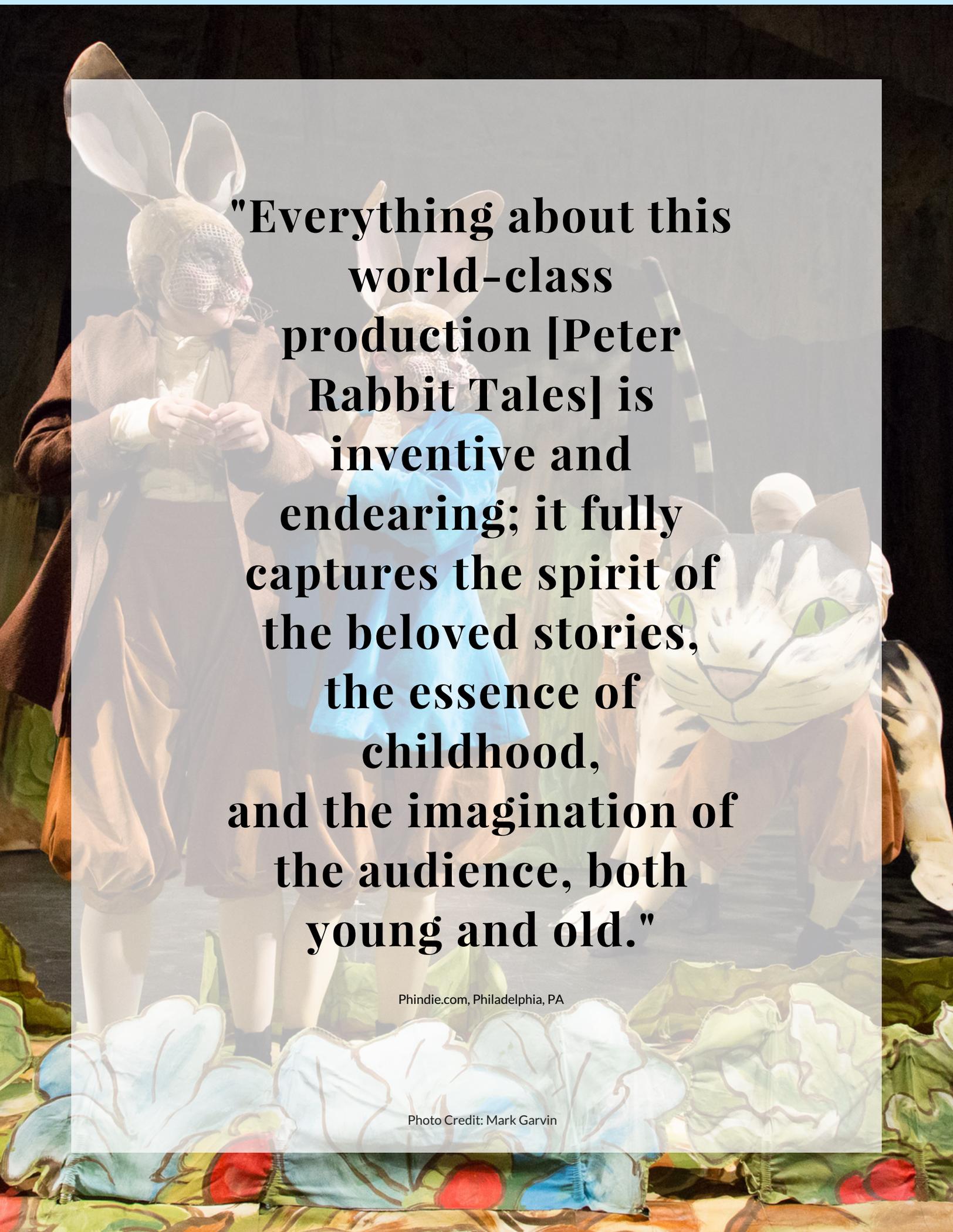
# Enchantment Theatre Company

THEATRE BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT

2017-18  
PRESS KIT

## MY FATHER'S DRAGON





**"Everything about this world-class production [Peter Rabbit Tales] is inventive and endearing; it fully captures the spirit of the beloved stories, the essence of childhood, and the imagination of the audience, both young and old."**

Phindie.com, Philadelphia, PA

Photo Credit: Mark Garvin



# Enchantment At A Glance

## Who we are

Enchantment Theatre Company is a professional non-profit theatre company known for excellence in theatre and arts education across North America.

## Our mission

is to inspire children to dream, explore, think and connect through imaginative storytelling onstage and in the classroom.

## Our vision

is to transform young audiences into creative, curious and compassionate adults.

## Why we do it

Since 1979, Enchantment's productions and arts education programs have helped children make sense of our complex world so that they grow up healthier, smarter and kinder. We bring stories to life in a way that inspires children to dream about who they are and may become, to explore the world and how they fit into it, to think about consequences, and to connect to other people and ideas.

## How we do it

Enchantment transforms great literature into great theatre by creating evocative rather than realistic interpretations of stories by using dance and pantomime as the main tool for communication interlaced with stunning masks, puppetry, magic and music. We blend these traditional art forms together with the goal of putting children's imaginations at the center of the storytelling process: a character is played by a puppet; a piece of blue silk becomes a river; shadows and projections portray an epic journey. Children actively participate in the story by "translating" in their minds what they see onstage and become captivated co-creators of the action.

## Our impact

Thirty years of empirical evidence and experience tell us our work promotes literacy, tolerance and empathy. And to add scientific discipline to our observations, Enchantment and Purdue University have teamed up to lead a two-year national research study examining the impact of live performance on a student's literacy skills and differences in tolerance and empathy.

"A masterful fusion of engaging storytelling with the performing and visual arts, which appeals to all of the senses, stimulates intuitive thinking, and captivates adult and children alike."

- Deb Miller, DCMetroTheaterArts



Photo Credit: Sally Huxley

Photo Credit: Mark Garvin

## Our story

Enchantment Theatre Company was founded by Landis Smith, Jennifer Blatchley Smith and Leslie Reidel as a touring company in 1979 with a commitment to giving children a meaningful and often first ever experience of quality theatre, and a philosophy that the best of theatre for children should be judged on the same high standards of writing, directing, acting and design as the best of adult theatre.

Today, Enchantment is a leading professional theatre company for young audiences, dedicated to exploring the boundaries of imagination. We serve over 120,000 children and their families every year both on and offstage in all corners of the United States and Canada. Our works have been seen in theatres around the world and across the country ranging from sophisticated venues like the Lincoln Center and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to rural high schools in North Dakota and Texas. Over 3 million children worldwide have experienced Enchantment since the Company was founded.

## Our programs

Enchantment reaches into communities at home in Philadelphia and throughout North America serving children in many ways.

Locally, we provide free theatre programming for students in some of our most economically-challenged neighborhoods and develop innovative, in-school arts education programming. Nationally, we introduce millions of children to original, and magical world premiere theatre and symphonic productions, keeping the arts a part of children's development and fostering the next generation of theatre-goers.

### INTERNATIONAL TOURS

Each year, ETC take one of its Mainstage works on the road to reach school groups and families in Philadelphia and beyond. These tours generally cover 30-40 states where audiences of 100,000 people see our shows - often giving many children their first theatrical experience. We also tour unique front-of-the-orchestra theatrical events that enliven and enrich symphonic concerts for young people. We perform with major orchestras across the US and Canada including: The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, to name a few.

### LOCAL AND REGIONAL PRODUCTIONS

In 2014, ETC launched its new arts access initiative, Enchantment Everywhere. These smaller, professional productions travel to schools, libraries and neighborhoods, literally anywhere there are children. ETC ensures that children and families across the region have access to quality theatrical productions regardless of their ability to pay. In 2017-18, ETC plans to perform its Mainstage work in regional theatres, making it more convenient to share our timeless stories with our patrons in the county where they live!

### ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In 2000, ETC established its arts education programs where students experience live theatre, explore a variety of theatre forms, study with professional artists and create theatrical pieces of their own for school and family.

A photograph of three people, two men and one woman, smiling and looking towards the camera. They are dressed in professional attire, including blazers and ties. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey box containing the title text.

# Artistic Directors Biographies

## **Landis Smith: Artistic Director, Production**

studied theater with Jewel Walker at Carnegie-Mellon Univ. and Webster Univ. Conservatory. His love of theater, music and the art of illusion led to the founding of Enchantment in 1979. Landis has created, produced and performed in productions in the US, Canada and Asia, and he has helped build Enchantment's body of symphony work, productions that are performed with live orchestras and introduce young people to the magic of music. Landis has collaborated on all of our national touring productions and Enchantment Everywhere productions. Landis has been an adjunct professor of theater at Muhlenberg College since 2012. For detailed biography please visit: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/about/artistic-directors-collaborators/>

## **Jennifer Blatchley Smith: Artistic Director, Literary and Education**

studied writing and theater at Bennington College. As a founding member of Enchantment, she has co-created and performed in over 20 original productions presented in the US, Canada and Asia. Jennifer manages our educational initiatives, which include In-School Residencies in Philadelphia elementary schools, and our local touring program called Enchantment Everywhere. Jennifer has been an adjunct professor of theater at Muhlenberg College since 2012. For detailed biography please visit: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/about/artistic-directors-collaborators/>

## **Leslie Reidel: Artistic Director, Resident Director**

is dedicated to preserving classical theatre and developing young audiences. BA - Muhlenberg College, MFA - Temple Univ. Founding member of the Professional Theatre Training Program at Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Univ. of Delaware. Served 12 years as the resident director of the Great American Children's Theatre. He is a frequent guest lecturer on "Acting Shakespeare" and a member of The International Shakespeare Conference in Stratford-upon-Avon. For detailed biography please visit: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/about/artistic-directors-collaborators/>

# What Press, Parents, and Teachers Are Saying About Enchantment

Photo Credit: Sally Huxley

Sometimes “etc” simply means “and so forth,” but when ETC is used as shorthand for the Enchantment Theatre Company, it translates to “Everything That’s Captivating.”- The Free Lance Star, Manassas VA

The entire play is narrated by a beautiful voice so that it makes everyone in the audience feel as if a Peter Rabbit book has dropped to the floor, popped open, and came to life in front of us. - HipsterHenry.com, Philadelphia

I’ve never felt so cared for before...As an adult, I enjoyed the show as much as the children. The characters wear beautiful masks and simple costumes that appear just as they do in the books. The actors start and finish the show by donning and doffing their masks in front of the children to demystify the characters, which I thought was lovely and age-appropriate for the 3-9 year old audience. The set was simple and yet like a life-size watercolor painting. The actors do not speak as the show is narrated by a prerecorded voice, so the show feels like you are reading the book and watching the animals live the story. - MommyCall.com, Philadelphia, PA

Enchantment Theatre Company—one of the nation’s most revered organizations for cross-generational theater.- Philadelphia Weekly

When Enchantment Theatre Company is in town it’s never fairytale theatre as usual. - Los Angeles Times

Sheer Enchantment: how else can one describe the delights conjured up by Enchantment Theatre Company?  
- Post Standard, Syracuse

When Pinocchio metamorphosed into a real boy, emerging from the magical sweep of the Blue Fairy’s cape, her movements made me weep....“I’m still hungry,” says Pinocchio. Indeed the problem of the empty maw of greed that cannot see the hunger of one’s own father, let alone the hunger of the human community, is one that Enchantment Theatre weaves finely into the tale. - Chestnut Hill Local

Brave little Gerda’s cry for help against The Snow Queen’s demon guards is eloquently answered with heavenly intervention in the form of a gauzy, graceful puppet. It’s a moment of narrative and visual beauty, one of many that illustrate how aptly this company from Philadelphia is named. - Los Angeles Times

It’s not just the superb design work and eye-popping special effects that make Enchantment Theatre’s shows unique. Beautifully choreographed, the company’s movement-based productions effectively mix mime and dance into a stylized ballet of color and sound that entrances both the kids and their adult companions.  
- Philadelphia Weekly

Even kids who were most restless before the show seemed enraptured as the story unfolded and were awed by moments like the sorceress’ sudden growth on stage and a statue of Pan abruptly coming to life. - Main Line Times

The Sorcerer’s Apprentice, performed by the Enchantment Theatre, brought tremendous enjoyment, enrichment, and wonder to the participants! My favorite comment from a student was ‘Where can I find that book so I can read that story again?!’ I strongly recommend such productions for city children since it exposes them to the worlds beyond their perception of reality! - Principal, Holy Innocents School



# Peter Rabbit<sup>TM</sup> Tales

Photo Credit: Mark Garvin

## Presenter Reviews

The Enchantment Theatre Company's production of "Peter Rabbit Tales" has captured the essence of Beatrix Potter's work through their careful study of both the text of the original tales and research into our Beatrix Potter illustration archive. Through a well-crafted script, dynamic choreography and simple but effective staging, the show makes for an absorbing and enjoyable experience for all. We are delighted to endorse this excellent production. - Ronnie Fairweather, Creative Director, Penguin Books UK

Let me begin by saying "Peter" was the third production from Enchantment Theatre that we have had in the theater since I have been here. From a presenter's point of view, I admire the way your company blends music, dance and theater into each high quality presentation. For "Peter" I thought the sets, costumes, and masks were exquisite. I have had very positive feedback from the schools and both audiences were captured by the production... I find the Enchantment Theatre Company consistently produces some of the highest quality theater for children that I have ever seen. - John Healy, Executive Theater Manager, Weinberg Center for the Arts

On the evening performance, there were quite a few young children in the theater. I can't remember the last time there were that many children 6 and under that didn't make a sound for an entire hour! ... That says a lot about the production! - Julie Garnesey, Executive Director, Clayton Opera House

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to speak with my neighbors who attended [Peter] with their two young daughters... The first comment was this was the best children's performance they had seen so far out of about 10 shows.... Further he explained that the beginning of the show when the actors come out and are introduced before donning their final costume pieces was brilliant. It really connected with the children and created an atmosphere that didn't frighten the children. So kudos on an excellent production. - David Baylor, Director of Operations, Hylton Performing Arts Center

I used to tour so I know the balancing act between something that can be assembled quickly and can travel but also fills a stage. Many children's tours have very little scenery and I think that does their shows a disservice - your full-stage set got a review of 'magical' by the locals. I got a lot of positive feedback on the lobby displays as well, that was well-liked and added more depth to the evening and I think will help me in building a reputation for future shows that I want to bring in.... One anecdote I can share was one young mother called me the following day saying that it was the first show that her son had ever seen and could she get a poster to frame for his room? That's the kind of impact I want to have with bringing in children's shows! - Cat Nelson, Facility Manager, Washington Community Center Theater

We enjoyed "Peter" very much.... The production was very well done. I especially like that the narration coming from the sound systems, it was very loud and clearly spoken - it reminded me when my mother used to read stories to me. The music was wonderful and so were the sets... Feedback from many of our members echoed these sentiments, including one mother who told me last weekend that since seeing the show, her son, who was previously only interested in playing Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, now wants to play Peter Rabbit all the time! - Theresa Remick, Managing Director, St. Mary's University of Minnesota

# The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon



## Presenter Reviews

In a word, ["Harold"] was tremendous! We loved it, our patrons loved it and we very much look forward to a long relationship.

Mary Beth Aungier, General Manager  
The Paramount Theater, Charlottesville, VA

I don't really remember the last time we presented a children's event where the kids were quite this captivated.

Rodney Rock, Director  
Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts,  
University of Connecticut

It is not often that I hear peels of laughter and shouting from the audience in response to actors on our main stage. I could tell that both teachers and children alike were enthralled by the performance...Harold brought out the imagination in everyone, including me.

Michael Bodolosky, Executive Director  
Pasquerilla Performing Arts Center, Johnstown, PA

I so appreciate how Enchantment Theatre did not underestimate how much children comprehend; the humor, the magic, and the relationships. The production value, the performances, all aspects were wonderful.

Vicky Pittman, Education and Special Projects Manager  
The Colonial Theatre, Keene, NH

The energy in the audience during the show was palpable; I can't remember when I've seen little kids so completely engaged in a performance.

Lian Farrer, Vice President for Education  
State Theatre, New Brunswick, NJ

Enchantment Theatre Company's The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon is pure MAGIC! The brilliant use of projections and seamless transitions from 'markings' of the crayon to the elaborate (and very copious) props transforms what could easily have been a theatrical nightmare a truly remarkable theatrical experience.

The Brooklyn Center audience was astounded, as evidenced by the cheers during the final curtain call. Enchantment delivered yet another home run for our family and school audiences!

Frank L. Sonntag, Managing Director  
Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts



# Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales

## Presenter Reviews

What a visually spectacular and magical performance of Aladdin! It was AMAZING!! Enchantment Theater has always used 'illusion' and 'magic' in their productions, but the integration and execution of these elements in Aladdin was nothing like I've ever seen. The stories within the story unfolded so stunningly and were constantly filled with surprises. Although our school day audiences were mostly K-5, the complexity and sophistication of the unique production elements of this literature adaptation would certainly be appreciated by middle and high school students. The study guide was top notch (as are all ECT's Study Guides) for preparing students to understand the subject matter, and theatrical elements, as well as how and why Enchantment adapted these tales in the way they did. My only disappointment was that so many schools missed out! The evening performance was a success with a good solid audience of 400+, and the adults seemed just as captivated as the children.

Cathy von Storch, Education Coordinator - The Paramount Theater, Charlottesville VA

I really can't say enough about the quality of programs that I have seen at the Paramount over the last six years with my own children. I also love the productions that I have seen from the Enchantment. My children still talk about when they saw 'Sylvester and the Magic Pebble'. My children ask, when we get your [education] brochure, not "what is playing?" but "who is doing the play?" - Elementary School Teacher/Parent, Charlottesville VA

WOW! What a visually stunning experience! A mesmerizing swirl of emotions - imaginatively told through music, dance, magic and puppetry! What a great introduction to the Physical Theater! Can't wait for the next Enchantment 'Experience'! - Elaine Hoekstra, Lansing MI

...This was our favorite performance of all time. The imagination involved, the unique stories and the completely different form of theater were all intriguing to the entire family. It was a beautiful introduction to things such as music in theater, masks and stories from far away, and invaluable in inspiring creativity in my students..... The Study Guide was great. We have continued to have discussion in our house about the performance, the activity guide and the methods they used, even now, a week or so after the performance. It gave us a hint of what to expect but didn't spoil any of the surprises. - Homeschool family, New York, NY

My family just attend your performance of "Aladdin and Other Enchanting Tales" at Nazareth Art Center in Rochester, New York. The performance was a magical experience for the adults as well as our ten year old daughter.... Children in our society have so few opportunities to be drawn into such fantastical experiences. Most shows have sarcasm or inappropriate humor embedded in the story. Your piece was not only beautiful, but fanciful, reverent, emotional and full of tension and excitement.... Thank you so much for the work you are doing in the world. - Christy F., Rochester, NY

ENCHANTMENT THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

# MY FATHER'S DRAGON

## *Useful Links*



- Company video highlighting artistic directors: Landis Smith, Jennifer Blatchley Smith and Leslie Reidel: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/about/company-video/>
- Artistic Statement: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/about/artistic-directors-statement/>
- Peter Rabbit Tales Promo: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/north-american-tours/discover/>
- From Page to Stage Videos - How we adapt our stories: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/north-american-tours/discover/for-teachers/>
- Discover Pages (study guides, activities and videos) for Children, Parents and Teachers: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/north-american-tours/discover/>
- Press Room for Peter Rabbit Tales: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/north-american-tours/press-room/>
- Presenters page: <http://enchantmenttheatre.org/presenters/>
- Follow us on Instagram: <http://instagram.com/enchantmenttheatre>

