

## Oh, the laughs that you'll laugh at this show. So let's go!

**By Pam DeFiglio**  
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Dr. Seuss' fanciful characters leap off the page and come to twirling, dancing, glittery, feathered life in "Seussical, the Musical." With lively songs, clever staging and an in-your-face cat in the Hat, it keeps even its youngest viewers riveted in barely-blinking wonder.

Most of the story focuses on Horton the Elephant, who hears a cry for help from the Who, people too tiny to be seen, and becomes their protector. Shrugging off accusations from fellow jungle creatures that he's crazy, this giant animal insists "a person's a person, no matter how small." That goes over well with kids.

Brandy McClendon nearly steals the show as Gertrude McFuzz, a klutzy bird who's madly in love with Horton. Every female will relate to Gertrude's frustrations that her one little tail feather is too plain to attract male attention.

Bernie Yvon makes Horton a caring elephant one can depend on. Alexandra Billings lights up the stage as Mayzie, a gorgeous bird who likes partying. When she lays an egg, she gets bored sitting in the nest. Horton takes over to give her a break, but she flies the coop, leaving the pachyderm to warm the egg through winter.

Writers Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flahery have layered even more imagination onto Seuss' imaginative work. Mayzie is just an irresponsible bird in the book; here, she becomes a sexy chanteuse with a penchant for dancing with men in ruffled shirts.

And the writers have drawn out Horton's devotion, Gertrude's endless hope and the Whos' faith their tiny world will survive—all qualities we want our children to see. There's even one magical moment when Horton, reaching out to a Who boy, realizes he's not alone in the universe.

Director Eric Rosen brings it all together, and Diane Ferry Williams adds lighting that heightens the moods and colors. They've stayed true to Seuss style—turn ideas inside out, delight and amaze.

### **"Seussical the Musical"**

Three stars out of four

>Location: Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Navy Pier, 800 E. Grand Ave., Chicago.

>Times: 11 a.m. Wednesdays, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Thursdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Fridays, 11 a.m., 2 and 7 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays

>Running time: 75 minutes, no intermission.

>Parking: Discounted parking at Navy Pier.