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# Theater Review:

## *Shadowlands*

By [Shawn Parikh](#)

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### Shadowlands

- **Where:** [Contemporary Theatre of Dallas](#), 5601 Sears Street, Dallas
- **Cost:** \$22 - \$27
- **Age limit:** All ages

### [Full event details](#)

I am just going to lay this out there: From start to finish, the flow and the acting of this play were practically seamless. *Shadowlands* is an amazingly gripping love story that proved director Marianne Galloway's statement from my [recent interview](#) with her that, "It is one of the greatest love stories of all time."

The show, presented by Contemporary Theatre of Dallas, follows the true story of C.S. Lewis who is famous for his *Chronicles of Narnia* series and profound Christian teachings. But his life and beliefs take a turn when he meets the American, Jewish, and divorced poet Joy Gresham. The play follows their growing relationship and how Lewis's belief system alters once Gresham becomes ill. This play was made into a movie in 1993 starring Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger. But that is beside the point. There is a huge difference in experiencing a powerful film and powerful theater. The life of a religious philosopher may sound drab and preachy, but the play infused great comedy with these weighty topics. You wouldn't think there would be so much comedy in a love story about a religious scholar, but that is truly what kept made the drama even more powerful.

Galloway and the team of designers were able to make sure there was not a dull moment on stage. The transitions from scene-to-scene flowed smoothly, with a blackout used once at a very integral moment of the show. The lighting (Russell Dyer) allowed the actors to transition into the next scene by just stepping into a different part of the stage. Great

motif of stepping in and out of the shadows (I figured that out for myself). The set (Randel Wright) was incredible because scenes were able to change so quickly with a traveling set or by using subtle backlighting. Sound (Emily Young) and costumes (Christina Dickson) added the perfect touch to create the atmosphere. One post-interval moment when Lewis proposes is so breath-taking and profound because Galloway and the designers got their chance to put their full creativity into it. You'll know what I am talking about when you see it.

## Photo Gallery

Shadowlands

Photos by George Wada

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James Crawford as Lewis was charming, endearing, real, and

compelling. From the beginning of the play when Lewis has a huge monologue about pain and suffering, he captivates the audience. The speech sets the tone for how good of an articulator Lewis is, and Crawford does not fail at keeping this eloquent personality throughout the play. Diane Worman as Gresham provides much of the comedy and automatically becomes a likable character. She has spunk and sincerity that make the courting of the two lovers credible, but also makes her deterioration even more heart-breaking. T.A. Taylor as Lewis's brother had a great debonair and comedic presence but also was masterfully able to not distract when needed. Child actor, Taubert Nadalini as Gresham's son, and Scott Milligan as Lewis's colleague, had great moments to stand out.

This show will definitely leave a lasting impression since it is rare to see a drama that flows so well. even though it is set in the 1950s, Galloway was able to make this piece relatable and accessible to a contemporary audience. You can buy tickets [online](#) or by calling 214-828-0094.