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Stage Adaptation of *The Neverending Story* Will Play Skirball Center

By Adam Hetrick
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A stage adaptation of Michael Ende's classic novel "The Neverending Story" will receive its New York premiere March 22 at the Skirball Center starring "Degrassi" actor Adamo Ruggiero.

The Neverending Story was originally a commission of the Imagination Stage and the Seattle Children's Theatre. David S. Craig authored the adaptation and also directs. A 2008 Seattle presentation of the work featured original songs by Ann and Nancy Wilson of the rock band Heart. The songwriters are no longer credited as part of the production.

The tale of a young boy who becomes lost in a magical book and is ultimately required to determine the fate of the characters he encounters was also adapted into a beloved 1984 film.

The stage production, which is geared toward young audiences, is a presentation of Toronto's Roseneath Theatre, where it was seen in February. It will run through March 25 at the Skirball.

Ruggiero ("Degrassi: The Next Generation," *Dog Sees God*) will play Atreyu in a cast that also features Natasha Greenblatt as Bastian, Derek Scott, Dalal Badr, Richard Lee, Kate Besworth, Walter Borden, Billy, Merasty and Charlotte Moore.

The creative team includes Glenn Davidson (set design), Lori Hickling (costume design) and Rick Sacks (sound design and composer).

The Neverending Story is billed as "an epic adventure where vivid reality and fantasy collide. Hiding in the attic of his school, a boy named Bastian begins to read a story aloud. Unbeknownst to him, the magical land of Fantastica, which is in grave danger from The Nothing, comes to life through the power of Bastian's imagination. Other characters include the warrior boy Atreyu and the happy dragon Falkor. Together, they travel through the Swamp of Sadness, the cave of a giant spider and the maze of the Southern Oracle in search of the Childlike Empress. As the adventure unfolds, Bastian discovers that his imagination is the key to changing the fate of both Fantastica and his own world."

For tickets, priced \$20-\$30, visit nyuskirball.org, or phone (212) 352-3101. The Skirball Center is located at 566 LaGuardia Place.

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