



# THE BROADWAY MUSICAL WICKED

## THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE WITCHES OF OZ

### MEDIA RELEASE

**WICKED** is coming to Australia. The hottest musical in the world will open in Melbourne's Regent Theatre in July 2008.

With combined box office sales of \$US 1/2 billion, **WICKED** is already one of the most successful shows in theatre history.

**WICKED** opened on Broadway in October 2003. Since then over two and a half million people have seen **WICKED** in New York and just over another two million have seen the North American touring production. The smash-hit musical with music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz (*Godspell*, *Pippin*, Academy Award-winner for *Pocahontas* and *The Prince of Egypt*) and book by Winnie Holzman (*My So Called Life*, *Once And Again* and *thirtysomething*) is based on the best-selling novel by Gregory Maguire. **WICKED** is produced by Marc Platt, Universal Pictures, The Araca Group, Jon B. Platt and David Stone.

'We're delighted that Melbourne is now set to follow **WICKED** productions in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, the North American tour and London's West End,' Marc Platt and David Stone said in a joint statement from New York. 'Melbourne will join new productions springing up around the world over the next 16 months, and we're absolutely sure that Aussies – and international visitors to Melbourne – will be just as enchanted by **WICKED** as the audiences are in America and England.'

**WICKED** will premiere in Tokyo in June; Stuttgart in November; Melbourne in July 2008; and Amsterdam in 2008.

Winner of 15 major awards including the Grammy Award and three Tony Awards, **WICKED** is the untold story of the witches of Oz. Long before Dorothy drops in, two other girls meet in the land of Oz. One, born with emerald green skin, is smart, fiery and misunderstood. The other is beautiful, ambitious and very popular. **WICKED** tells the story of their remarkable odyssey, how these two unlikely friends grow to become the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda the Good Witch.

John Frost, Co-Producer of the Australian production of **WICKED** says the musical is 'a phenomenon, quite unlike any other musical. It's been the top-selling show on Broadway for over 140 consecutive weeks. It comes with all the blockbuster bells and whistles, certainly. But three things set this show apart.

'Music theatre lovers adore **WICKED**. It's a classic musical entertainment with wit and spectacle and a wonderful score, but it also spans the demographic. People of all ages and backgrounds. It brings in people who've never been to the theatre, and never thought they would go and they come out of the theatre spellbound.

'They all spread the **WICKED** word. **WICKED** grows by word of mouth in a way and to a degree unlike any show I know.





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‘And **WICKED**, unlike almost all shows, maintains and builds on its advance sales.

In New York alone, where it’s broken the house record eighteen times at Broadway’s biggest theatre, the Gershwin, advance sales are currently \$US 40 million.

‘This is a spectacular musical that has won the big awards: the Grammy for Best Musical Show album – the album sold more than a million copies - three Tonys and six Drama Desks including Best Musical. The amazing companion book that goes with the show, *The Grimmerie*, has sold almost 150,000 copies, and every month, it seems, **WICKED** sets a new record. Four months ago, in London, it had the highest weekly gross in West End history, and next month, opening in Tokyo, I’m tipping it will spectacularly re-write the box office advance records.

**WICKED** is unique. A juggernaut. Week by week it just gets bigger and bigger. By the time we open in Melbourne the word will be out: the hottest show in the nation is... **WICKED**’



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[www.wickedthemusical.com.au](http://www.wickedthemusical.com.au)



## CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR WICKED

**“Broadway’s biggest blockbuster.”**

New York Times

**“A cultural phenomenon.”**

Variety

**“A breathtaking success story of a magnitude that North America has not witnessed since the peak years of THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA.”**

Peter Marks, Washington Post

**“Remember the last time an original Broadway musical made you laugh, cry and think - in the right places and for the right reasons? **WICKED** is the most complete, and completely satisfying, new musical I’ve come across in a long time. It is a triumph!”**

Elysa Gardner, USA Today

**“**WICKED** is a phenomenon that keeps growing.”**

Charles McNulty, LA Times

**“Blockbuster entertainment – it is magnificent to see a musical that manages to be both populist and intelligent at the same time.”**

Tim Walker, Sunday Telegraph (London)

**“If every musical had the brain, the heart and the courage of **WICKED**, Broadway really would be a magical place.”**

Richard Zoglin, Time Magazine

**“Hooray! Broadway’s got a big new musical that’s good enough to run for a decade or two! If it doesn’t please you, you’re too tough to please. Go!”**

Terry Teachout, Wall Street Journal

**“DIVAS AND ROMANCE AND THRILLS: OH MY! Toto, we’re not in Oz anymore. And it’s a good thing, too. **WICKED**, a giddy postmodern riff on ‘The Wizard of Oz’, whips up a cyclone of witty jokes and eye-popping visuals. It’s a stellar production.”**

David Cote, Time Out New York

**“A surefire hit! This sensational prequel to ‘The Wizard of Oz’ is the kind of grand musical Broadway has been missing for years. A terrific evening!”**

Jeffrey Lyons, NBC-TV



## BIOGRAPHIES - CREATIVE

**STEPHEN SCHWARTZ (Music and Lyrics)** has contributed music and/or lyrics to *Godspell*, *Pippin*, *The Magic Show*, *The Baker's Wife*, *Working* (which he also adapted and directed), *Personals*, *Rags* and *Children of Eden*. For films, he collaborated with Alan Menken on the scores for the Disney animated features *Pocahontas* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and wrote the songs for the DreamWorks animated feature *The Prince of Egypt*. He has released two CDs of new songs entitled *Reluctant Pilgrim* and *Uncharted Territory* available at [www.stephenschwartz.com](http://www.stephenschwartz.com). Mr. Schwartz is also the artistic director of the ASCAP Musical Theatre Workshops and a member of the Dramatists Guild Council. Awards include three Academy Awards, four Grammy Awards, four Drama Desk Awards and a tiny handful of tennis trophies.

**WINNIE HOLZMAN (Book)** received a Tony nomination and a Drama Desk Award for **WICKED**. For television: created *My So-Called Life* (Emmy nom.). Also wrote for *thirtysomething* (WGA Award nom.) and executive produced (again with Marshall Herskovitz and Edward Zwick) *Once and Again* starring Sela Ward. For theatre: *Birds of Paradise* (with composer David Evans). For features: *'Til There Was You*. A graduate of Princeton University and the NYU Musical Theatre Program, Ms. Holzman lives in L.A. with her husband, actor Paul Dooley. Thanks, Arthur. This is for Savannah.

**GREGORY MAGUIRE (Author of Original Novel)** had written a dozen novels for children before launching his first adult novel, **WICKED**. A devotee of children's fantasy, Maguire's subsequent novels for adults are variations-on-a-theme: *Confessions of an Ugly Stepsister* considers Cinderella as a seventeenth-century maid from Harlem; *Lost* evokes the ghost of Charles Dickens's Scrooge; and *Mirror Mirror* concerns a High Renaissance Snow White trapped in a household governed by the scheming Borgias. Maguire's latest novel is *Son of a Witch*, a sequel to **WICKED**. He lives outside Boston with his husband, the painter Andy Newman, and their three children.

**JOE MANTELLO (Director)** Directing credits include *Three Days of Rain*, *The Odd Couple*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Laugh Whore*, *Assassins* (Tony Award), *Take Me Out* (Tony Award), *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Design for Living*, Terrence McNally and Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* for the San Francisco Opera, *The Vagina Monologues*, *bash*, *Another American: Asking and Telling*, *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, *Proposals*, *The Mineola Twins*, *Corpus Christi*, *Mizlansky/Zilinsky or Schmucks*, *Blue Window*, *God's Heart*, *The Santaland Diaries*, *Lillian*, *Snakebit*, *Three Hotels*, *Imagining Brad and Fat Men in Skirts*. Film: *Love! Valour! Compassion!* As an actor: *Angels in America* (Tony nom.) and *The Baltimore Waltz*. Mr. Mantello is the recipient of the Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk, Lucille Lortel, Helen Hayes, Clarence Derwent, Obie and Joe A. Callaway awards. A member of Naked Angels and an associate artist at the Roundabout.

**WAYNE CILENTO (Musical Staging)** Broadway: *Sweet Charity* (Tony nomination) *Aida*, *The Who's Tommy* (Tony, Drama Desk, Astaire awards), *How to Succeed...* (Tony nom.), *Dream: The Johnny Mercer Musical* (director and choreographer; Tony nom., Best Choreography), *Jerry's Girls*, *Baby* (Tony nom.). *West End: The Who's Tommy* (Olivier nom.). Other credits: Off-Broadway's *A Hot Minute* and *Angry Housewives*, the national tour of *Spirit, ...Forum* at La Jolla (San Diego Drama Critics and Drama-Logue awards). Credits as a performer include *A Chorus Line* (Mike, original cast), *The Act*, *Seesaw*, *Perfectly Frank*, *Irene*, *Big Deal*, *Rachel Lily Rosenblum* and Bob Fosse's *Dancin'* (Tony nom.). Mr. Cilento has done musical staging for Liza Minnelli, Barry Manilow, Chita Rivera, Billy Joel, Donna Summer and Pete Townshend.



## BIOGRAPHIES - CREATIVE

**EUGENE LEE (Scenic Designer)** has been resident designer at Trinity Rep since 1967. He has a BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago, a BFA from Carnegie Mellon University, an MFA from Yale Drama School and honorary Ph.Ds from DePaul University and Rhode Island College. Mr. Lee has won three Tony Awards for Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*, Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* and *Wicked*. He was nominated for a Tony for his work on *Ragtime*. He is the production designer for NBC's *Saturday Night Live*. Other New York theatre includes *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Normal Heart*, *Agnes of God* and *Uncle Vanya*. Film credits include *Easy Money*, Francis Ford Coppola's *Hammett*, John Huston's *Mr. North* and Louis Malle's *Vanya on 42nd Street*. Recent projects include Stephen Sondheim's *Bounce*. An adjunct professor at Brown University, he lives in Providence with his wife Brooke and son Teddy.

**SUSAN HILFERTY (Costume Designer)** has designed more than 200 productions for theatres across America and internationally. She has worked with such directors as Athol Fugard, Robert Falls, Robert Woodruff, JoAnne Akalaitis, the late Garland Wright, Mark Lamos, Frank Galati, Des McAnuff, Sharon Ott, David Petrarca, Richard Nelson, Chris Ashley, David Warren, Marion McClinton, Laurie Anderson, Tony Kushner, Carole Rothman, Mark Linn-Baker, Garry Hynes, David Jones and Emily Mann. Recent work includes *Assassins*, *Into the Woods*, James Lapine's *Fran's Bed*, *Jitney*, *Dirty Blonde*, *Helen*, *Franny's Way* and *Sorrows and Rejoicings*. She designs for opera, film, TV and dance and is chair of the Department of Design for Stage and Film at NYU Tisch. Her many awards include a Hewes Award for *Into the Woods*, and 2004 Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards for *Wicked*.

**KENNETH POSNER (Lighting Designer)** has designed 30 Broadway plays and musicals including: *Hairspray*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Tony Nominations), *Legally Blonde*, *Shipwreck*, *The Odd Couple*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *Little Women*, *The Frogs*, *Imaginary Friends*, *Swing!*; *Charlie Brown*; *The Goat*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Side Man*, *The Lion in Winter*, *Little Me*, *A View From the Bridge*, *The Last Night Of Ballyhoo*, *The Little Foxes*, and *The Rose Tattoo*. Opera credits include designs for the New York City Opera and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Recipient of the OBIE for sustained excellence in lighting design. He resides in Verona, New Jersey with his wife Michelle and their three children.

**TONY MEOLA (Sound Designer)** Broadway: *Laugh Whore*; *Man of La Mancha*; *Sweet Smell of Success*; *Copenhagen*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Footloose*; *The Lion King* (Drama Desk Award); *The Sound of Music*; *Juan Darien*; *A Christmas Carol* (MSG), *Steel Pier*; *Forum*; *The King and I*; *Moon Over Buffalo*; *Smokey Joe's Cafe*; *Guys and Dolls*; *Five Guys Named Moe*; *She Loves Me*; *The Red Shoes*; *Anything Goes*. London: *Kiss Me, Kate*; *The Lion King*; *Smokey Joe's Cafe* and *Anything Goes*. National and international: *The Lion King*; *Les Misérables*; *Mozart*; *Der Gloeckner von Notre Dame*. Off-Broadway includes *Shout*, *Here Lies Jenny* and *The Normal Heart*. Tony is a graduate of Ithaca College's Department of Theatre Arts.



## BIOGRAPHIES - PRODUCERS

**MARC PLATT (Producer)** Theatre: **WICKED** (Broadway, Chicago, North American tour, London, Los Angeles), *Three Days of Rain* (Broadway) and Matthew Bourne's ballet *Edward Scissorhands*. Films: *Legally Blonde*, *Legally Blonde 2*, *Honey*, *Josie and the Pussycats* and *The Perfect Man*. Television: HBO's *Empire Falls*, *Once Upon a Mattress* (ABC), *The Path to 9/11* (ABC). Mr. Platt has served as president for three movie studios (Orion, TriStar and Universal) where he developed and guided the production of such films as *Silence of the Lambs*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Philadelphia*, *As Good As It Gets*, *My Best Friend's Wedding* and *Jerry Maguire*.

**UNIVERSAL PICTURES (Producer)** is a world leader in the production, marketing and distribution of motion pictures, including such franchises as *The Mummy*, *American Pie*, *The Fast and the Furious*, *Meet the Parents* and the Oscar® winners *Shakespeare in Love*, *Gladiator*, *Erin Brockovich*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *Ray* and *King Kong*. Universal's upcoming films include *The Kingdom*, starring Jamie Foxx, Jennifer Garner and Chris Cooper; *Evan Almighty*, starring Steve Carrell and Morgan Freeman; the comedy *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry*, starring Adam Sandler and Kevin James; *The Bourne Ultimatum*, in which Matt Damon reprises the role of Jason Bourne; and Academy Award-winning director Ridley Scott's drama *American Gangster*, starring Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe.

**THE ARACA GROUP (Producer)** Matthew Rego, Michael Rego and Hank Unger are principals of The Araca Group, LLC, a theatrical and film production company formed in 1997. Araca produced *Urinetown The Musical*; *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*; *Match*; Marsha Norman's 'night, *Mother*; and Eve Ensler's *The Good Body* on Broadway; *Debbie Does Dallas*, *The Vagina Monologues*, *The Laramie Project* and David Auburn's *Skyscraper* Off-Broadway; and the film *30 Days*. Upcoming projects: the musical film versions of *Urinetown* and *Debbie Does Dallas*.

**JON B. PLATT (Producer)** Tony Awards: *Copenhagen*, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (Pulitzer Prize for Drama), *Perestroika*. Tony Award nominations: *Damn Yankees*; *Peter Pan*; *Hello, Dolly!*; *The Diary of Anne Frank*; *Lonesome West*; *Man of La Mancha*; **WICKED**. National: *The Sound of Music*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *A Chorus Line*, *The Graduate*, *Blue Man Group: Tubes*. Off-Broadway: *Forbidden Broadway: SVU Special Victims Unit*.

**DAVID STONE (Producer)** is currently represented on Broadway by **WICKED** and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. He has produced *Three Days of Rain*, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Vagina Monologues*, *Fully Committed*, *Lifegame*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Full Gallop*, *The Santaland Diaries* and *Family Secrets*. David serves on the Board of Governors of the League of American Theatres and Producers as well as the Board of Directors of the League of Off-Broadway Theatres and Producers. He has lectured on theatre at the Juilliard School, NYU, Yale, Columbia and his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania.



## BIOGRAPHIES - AUSTRALIAN CO-PRODUCER

### **JOHN FROST (The Gordon/Frost Organisation)**

John Frost began in the business at the age of 16 as dresser for J.C. Williamson on their production of *Mame*. He has worked his way up the showbiz ladder and in 1983 he joined forces with the late Ashley Gordon to form the Gordon/Frost Organisation. Together they negotiated the lease for Sydney's Footbridge Theatre, where they successfully produced a range of shows including, *Jerry's Girls*, *Night Mother*, *The Venetian Twins*, and *Women Behind Bars!*. The company then moved into large scale musicals such as *Big River*, *The King and I*, *South Pacific*, *Hello Dolly!*, *The Secret Garden*, *Smokey Joes Café*, *Cabaret* and *Crazy for You*.

He co-produced Sir Peter Hall's acclaimed productions of Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* starring Googie Withers and John McCallum and *Lady Windermere's Fan* starring Vanessa Redgrave and Joely Richardson at the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London.

In 1998 John Frost joined forces with Sports and Entertainment Limited (SEL) to produce *Grease – The Arena Spectacular!* The production broke all box office records for an arena event in Australia. His production of *The King and I* on Broadway won the coveted Tony Award for 'Best Revival of a Musical' as well as the Drama Desk and New York Outer Critics Circle Award. *The King and I* toured the UK after playing two years at the London Palladium. With SEL, John Frost also produced the Tony Award-winning play *Art* starring Tom Conti; *The Main Event*; *The Sound of Music* starring Lisa McCune; *Annie* with Anthony Warlow, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Wizard of Oz*; *Footloose*; the much awaited *The Producers - The New Mel Brooks Musical* and *Grease*, starring John Farnham.

In 2006 John Frost produced the national tours of the National Theatre of Great Britain's celebrated production of *An Inspector Calls*, the Broadway musical theatre icon Mandy Patinkin and Hollywood and cabaret legend Debbie Reynolds.

John Frost is one of the producers of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* currently playing in Sydney and *The Phantom Of The Opera* opening July 2007 in Melbourne. He is represented on Broadway with the musical *Hairspray* for which he won his second Tony Award.

John has also been the recipient of two Mo Awards and a Sydney Critics' Circle Award and a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999 from GLUGS.

In the 1999 Australia Day Honours, John was awarded an OAM for his contribution to the Arts.