



The biggest theatre hit of the decade will open in Sydney's Capitol Theatre in September

A breathtaking musical that manages to be comic, dramatic, moving and exhilarating, **WICKED** will open in Sydney's Capitol Theatre in September, following its triumphant Australian premiere at Melbourne's Regent Theatre on 12 July 2008. More than 600,000 theatregoers – more than a quarter of **WICKED's** audience is from interstate or overseas – will have seen the musical when it takes its final curtain call in August.

Now this extraordinary musical is coming to Sydney. **WICKED** will open at the Capitol Theatre in September.

'**WICKED** is unique,' says the Australian production's co-Producer, John Frost. 'It's a phenomenon, quite unlike any other musical.'

One of Australia's leading theatrical producers whose Broadway productions have won two Tony Awards®, John Frost is accustomed to hits, but, he admits, **WICKED** is something he has never experienced.

'**WICKED** comes with all the blockbuster bells and whistles, certainly,' he says. 'But aside from its spectacle, wonderful lyrics and score, its wit and warmth, **WICKED** also touches other, unexpected, and intriguing emotions.'

'This show brings in people who've never seen a musical; people who never thought they would go inside a theatre. They all spread the **WICKED** word. This is a show that grows by word of mouth in a way and to a degree unlike any I know.'

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Amanda Harrison is *Elphaba*, the 'Wicked' Witch Born with emerald-green skin, she is an outcast. Fiery, sensitive, passionate, Elphaba has potent inner beauty, rallies for the underdog and has great talent for sorcery.

'No one in music theatre in this country can give a role edge and attitude like

Amanda,' John Frost says. 'She was the spitfire wild child Oz, sexy and vulnerable in *We Will Rock You* - she took out the Helpmann for Best Supporting Actor in the role - and in the original London cast, in the West End, she played the Teen Queen, Madonna.

'The year after her Helpmann, she was nominated for two Green Room awards, for Ellie in *Leader of the Pack* and Ado Annie in *Oklahoma!*'

She has played a number of roles for British television; on *Parkinson*, *Children in Need* and in guest roles in *Oscar Charlie*, *Grange Hill* and *Casualty*. And, like Lucy Durack, she performed internationally on the BBC2's *Broadway Babies* musical theatre competition in Cardiff, in which they were both finalists, Amanda in the inaugural competition in 2000.



Lucy Durack is *Glinda*, the 'Good' Witch; pretty, perky, vain and very popular. But Glinda is also vulnerable and kind hearted and ultimately she sees the truth about Elphaba.

Lucy Durack 'is our fastest rising music theatre star,' John Frost says. 'Television viewers know Lucy as the lead, Cassie Bennett, in

Channel 7's *Headland*, but to theatre audiences she's racked up a remarkable series of principal roles.

'Lucy was singled out for the highest praise in the national production of *RESPECT The musical journey of women*, and she played a series of principal roles for The Production Company, co-starring with David Campbell in *Carousel* and Ian Stenlake in *Oklahoma!*. In all of those shows she won high praise.

'But for me it was her performance as Peggy Sawyer in *42nd Street* that said "A Star is Born". Ironically, *42nd Street* is best remembered for the immortal quote: "You're going out a youngster, but you've got to come back a star!" Lucy Durack is going out there a youngster, but there is no doubt *WICKED* has made her a huge star.'



Bert Newton is *the Wizard*. He tricks Elphaba, into giving his monkey servant wings so as to act as his spy. He hopes to use Elphaba's sorcery, but their momentous meeting sets them on a fateful path.

Since television began in Australia, Bert Newton, with his twin talents as a natural comedian and compere, has been a favourite with the viewing public, visiting

public, visiting celebrities and critics alike.



Maggie Kirkpatrick is *Madame Morrible*, the head mistress of Shiz University, she takes Elphaba under her wing, training her in sorcery. But as Elphaba changes so too does Madame Morrible.

Maggie created the international TV cult figure, the Freak in Prisoner and in Australian theatre she is among the elite group of performers who enjoy near legendary status. She has worked with all major Australian theatre companies.



Rob Mills is *Fiyero*, the playboy Prince, seemingly shallow and self absorbed. Glinda pursues him, but Fiyero is much more intrigued by Elphaba. He joins her in her struggle.

On tour with *GREASE - The Arena Spectacular* (as the pop idol Johnny Casino) Rob first heard the music of **WICKED** and determined he'd one day

be in the musical. A finalist in Australian Idol, Rob's first single went Gold.



Penny McNamee is *Nessarose*. Crippled and in a wheelchair, she is Elphaba's lonely, younger sister, fooled into believing that Boq loves her and embittered when she learns the truth.

Penny's musical theatre career began with a role in *The Witches of Eastwick* that won her a MO Award nomination, and the following year, 2003, she was cast as a supporting lead in *Salem's Lot*.



Rodney Dobson is *Doctor Dillamond*. A professor at Shiz University Dr Dillamond is also the sole animal on the faculty - a goat. His downfall - taken away in custody - triggers the battle between Elphaba and the Wizard.

For almost 20 years Rodney Dobson has been performing in music theatre, and won a Green Room nomination for his portrayal of Tobias in Gale Edwards' *Sweeney Todd*. **WICKED** is Rodney's ninth Australian premiere production.

How to get tickets to **WICKED**

Ticketmaster - 1300 723 038

Qantas Holidays - 131415
Land and Air packages

Showbiz - 1300 WICKED
Premium Tickets,
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Glinda and Elphaba In the Emerald City.



Photos by Jeff Busby

Elphaba and Madame Morrible



The Wizard



Fiyero





FACTS FILE

The Production and its success

WICKED had its Australian premiere at Melbourne's Regent Theatre on 12 July 2008. Having recently celebrated the 5th Anniversary of its Broadway opening, **WICKED's** four North American and four international companies have cumulatively grossed over \$1.35 billion and have been seen by 17 million people worldwide.

WICKED, one of the most successful shows in theatre history, is the winner of 20 major awards including a Grammy® Award and three Tony® Awards.

The Costumes and Wigs

Susan Hilferty designed the Tony Award winning costumes for the show, most of them gorgeous and unlike any you've ever seen – and all of them conjuring up the fantastic world of Oz. Some need two dressers to lift.

The costumes are complemented by 70 wigs with actors making up to eight changes from beginning to end. Custom built, the wigs cost from \$1500 to \$2,500.

The Sets and Props

WICKED has 54 scenes and locations, and each has its distinct light and mood.

WICKED, says Technical Director Brian Downie, is 'More complicated, more sophisticated, with more lights, sound, scenery and sets than the biggest musicals. Many of the props are incredibly complicated. The sound rig is immense. There are speakers all round the auditorium. It's all state of the art.

'Eugene Lee's sets are very clever. They engulf. It's all about involvement. The whole set comes 15 metres out from the stage around and against the walls so that it draws the audience into the action.

Look out for:

The Flying Monkeys. Highly skilled dancers controlled by operators with dual joy sticks so that they get vertical and horizontal movement with hands.

The Time Dragon. Its eyes blaze, steam hisses from its nostrils and its wings, six metres wide, flap ominously.'

Glinda's bubble machine. 'Everyone should drive one,' Downie says. 'Burnished aluminium. It shines. It delivers bubbles all round her, it glides in, it glides out, it goes 10 metres up, and it comes down.'

The Wizard's Head. A giant and imposing puppet prop with all the bells and whistles.

*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.*

The creative team and the Producers of **WICKED** worldwide

WICKED, 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 Produced by Marc Platt, Universal Pictures, The Araca Group, Jon B Platt and David Stone.

In Australia, John Frost, Co-Producer of the Australian production of **WICKED**, is joined by the U.S. creative team, Lisa Leguillo (Associate Director); Stephen Oremus (Musical Supervisor); Mark Myars (Dance Supervisor); and Corinne McFadden-Herrera (Dance Assistant).



“Broadway’s biggest blockbuster.”
– New York Times

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

“WICKED is a phenomenon that keeps growing.”
– Los Angeles Times

“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!”
– Wall Street Journal

“Remember the last time an original Broadway musical made you laugh, cry and think? WICKED is the most complete, and completely satisfying new musical in a long time.”
– USA Today

“Perfectly Entertaining and Perfectly Thrilling.”
– San Francisco Chronicle

WICKED acknowledges the following sponsors for the Sydney season:

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