

# Wicked live theatreassignment assignment

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Wicked Review On October 19th, the Broadway show Wicked returned to Nashville's Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC). This musical was based on the book by Gregory Macguire with the same title. The music and lyrics were written by Stephen Schwartz and the play by Winnie Holzman. Wicked follows the story of the misunderstood Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba, as she endures ridicule and shame. The message that you come away with is that everything is not always as simple as black and white, you have to remember that there are always shades of gray.

The show opens on the famous scene from "The Wizard of Oz" in which Glinda, played in this show by Tiffany Haas, announces that the Wicked Witch is dead. The chorus then begins the opening number "No One Mourns the Wicked" followed by Glinda reminding the crowd that even the wicked have parents and a beginning. The show then transitions to a scene in which we see Elphaba's mother have an affair with a mysterious man and subsequently give birth to child that is green. This begins the difficult life that Elphaba, played by Anne Brummel, endures with an unearned title.

As the play continues we witness the ridicule surrounding Elphaba as she attends school at Shiz University with her sister Nessarose, played by Emily Ferranti where she meets Madame Morrible, played by Jody Gelb, whom Elphaba misappropriately trusts. In addition, Shiz is where Elphaba meets and eventually becomes friends with Glinda. While attending Shiz, Elphaba meets two other people that become a very large part of her life, Doctor Dillamond, played by Martin Moran, and Fiyero, played by David Nathan Perlow.

Doctor Dillamond, a talking goat who teaches history shows Elphaba the importance of standing up for what you believe in, in this case, the belief that animals should be allowed to talk and live as humans. Fiyero plays a significant role because he sees Elphaba as not a monster for her green skin, but as a beautiful woman and he and Elphaba fall in love. After Doctor Dillamond is arrested for his ideas, Elphaba and Glinda travel to the Emerald City to meet with the Wizard, played by Don Amendolia.

After confronting the Wizard and realizing that he is not as Wonderful as they were led to believe, Elphaba flees with her newly acquired Grimmerie, a spell book. She uses this book to make a broom fly to aid in her escape. It is at this point that she receives the infamous title of Wicked after the Wizard announces that she has maliciously deformed his pet monkey, even though she only successfully did what the Wizard asked and enabled Chistery, played by KC Fredericks, the Wizard's pet monkey to fly.

After being chased by the Wizard's guards and capturing Dorothy who is believed to kill Elphaba, we learn that Elphaba and Fiyero planned this trick all along to allow them to escape without notice. The play ends with everyone believing that Elphaba is dead but the audience knows that to be false. The acting and directing in this production were absolutely amazing. The audience was transported to Oz body and soul throughout the entire performance and at the close of the curtain reluctantly returned to reality.

Every character, from Glinda (Tiffany Haas) and Elphaba (Anne Brummel) to the people of Oz (Kerry Blanchard, Michael Drolet, Ryan Patrick Farrell, Samantha Farrow, Natalie Fotopoulos, KC Fredericks, Linda Griffin, Laurel

Harris, Zach Hensler, Lisa Livesay, Marissa Miller, Robert Pendilla, Casey Quinn, Don Richard, Michael McCorry Rose, Daniel Torres, Erin Wilson, Justin Wirick) every movement was part of the story. The director Joe Mantello did a superb job in bringing into fruition this show. The body language from Elphaba (Anne Brummel) instantly drew you in and allowed you to relate and sympathize with her.

When she became enraged by the actions of the Wizard (Don Amendolia) not only did you see the feeling of superiority from him but you could almost feel the rage rolling off of Elphaba's (Anne Brummel) body. This rings true for all of the cast. You felt as if you were welcomed with open arms into the lives of characters and allowed to live through them. Even before the curtain came up on the first act of the play, the props, supervised by Eugene Lee, and music, directed by Adam Souza, set the mood and began to draw the audience into the Wonderful World of Oz.

The stage was framed by a huge Dragon representing the Clock of the Time Dragon. The usual curtain was replaced with a curtain made to resemble a map of Oz with the Emerald City lit in green bringing focus to the stage immediately upon entering the theatre. The apron of the stage was covered in huge gears that were assumed to be from the Clock as well as the background that was revealed upon the raising of the curtain. All the sets and props were well made and looked authentic to the time period the play was set in.

The lighting, supervised by Kenneth Posner, throughout the play brought focus to certain characters when appropriate as well as helping to set the

mood. When the mood was jovial and happy, the stage was flooded with bright light, when the mood was sad or sinister, the stage may have been lit by a single spotlight or flooded with a pale green light. The costumes that were designed by Susan Hilferty helped to develop the characters and brought a wonderful whimsical air to the production.

Glinda's (Tiffany Haas) dresses helped to show her self absorption and feminine charms. Elphaba's (Anne Brummel) wardrobe of neutral color, blacks and greys, showed a desire to blend in and fade into the background. The orchestra, conducted by Adam Souza, were wonderful. They brought a wonderful musicality to the production. The technical aspects of a show, the lighting, set design, costuming, and music are the backbone of a production, without these things a show would not be able to stand on its own.

In this sense, the backbone of Wicked was very strong. If the opening night of Wicked at TPAC is a sign of what is to be expected for its stay in Nashville then this show not only exceeds expectations, it blows them out of the water. The audience on opening night was attentively clinging to the edges of their seats as they were welcomed into the world of Wicked and presented with the other side of the story about the so called "wicked" witch of the west. The atmosphere of enjoyment was literally palpable.