

WICKED casts spell at State Fair Music Hall: Broadway spectacular plays to near sell-out audiences through

Written by BY TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor
Tuesday, 16 April 2013 10:25

It's hard not to fall under the spell of "Wicked," the Broadway phenom currently running at State Fair Music Hall. When it came through Dallas several years ago, I tried to avoid becoming one of the converted, but failed – miserably. By the end of the first act, when Elphaba soars in the jaw-dropping number "Defying Gravity," I was hooked.



Here's the back story, according to the Dallas Summer Musicals' press release:

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, and how these two unlikely friends grow to become the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda the Good.

That's really all you need to know about the musical based on the best-selling 1995 novel by Gregory Maguire. Just sit down and let the story wash over you.



In this production, Elphaba is Dee Roscioli. She played the role on Broadway and holds the distinction being green "in more performances than any other actress," according to Playbill.

Her Elphaba didn't seem to take form until the end of the first act, but once she decided to turn it on, no one was immune to her charms.

Glinda is Jenn Gambatese, who's been on Broadway in "Tarzan" and "Hairspray." Her brightly ditzy Glinda entertained and provided a foil for Elphaba's serious, conflicted character.

An unrecognizable Kim Zimmer (Reva Shayne on "Guiding Light,") was pitch perfect as Madame Morrible, while Broadway veteran Tom McGowan took on the role of the Wizard. Ah, the wonder of costuming and makeup.

It was Timothy Britten Parker as Dr. Dillamond, however, who caught my eye this time around. The goat-turned-history professor-turned goat was proud, empathetic and heart-breaking. It was his banishment that lit a fire under Elphaba and really moved the plot forward.

If you go, watch for the tall guy in the chorus. The moment he struts on stage, he commands attention. Think a young Tommy Tune, all legs and smooth-as-silk movements. They didn't mention names at curtain call and according my press contact, the production manager is in the hospital, so I don't know the dancer's name, but you can't miss him. He's a head taller than anyone up there.

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□□ □ *Single tickets, priced from \$40, are on sale at The Box Office, 5959 Royal Lane, #542 Preston Royal Shopping Center in Dallas, and also at all Ticketmaster locations, online at www.ticketmaster.com/wicked, or by calling 1-800-745-3000. For groups of 15 or more, call 214-426-4768.*

□□ □ *Upcoming productions include "Priscilla: Queen of the Desert," May 14-26; "Sister Act," June 4-16, "Flashdance," June 25-July 7 and "The Lion King," Oct. 2-20.*