



# NEW MEXICO YOUNG ACTORS

Present

## ***Oz!***

Music and Lyrics by **Bill Francoeur**

Book by **Tim Kelly**

Based on the book by **L. Frank Baum**

***TEACHER STUDY GUIDE***

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to New Mexico Young Actors' production of **Oz!** We are offering this study guide to help you prepare your classes for our upcoming production and your experience at the theater. Included in this guide are a historical note about the original book, a synopsis of our story, a list of characters, a vocabulary list and lesson ideas, as well as some audience protocol reminders. You may want to share with your classes that, although the story is the same, the music in our production is different from the music in the famous 1939 film, *The Wizard of Oz*. We always enjoy hearing from you and your students and look forward to receiving any pictures, stories, or comments about the production after your field trip. Thank you for your support of New Mexico Young Actors. We look forward to seeing you at the National Hispanic Cultural Center!

## **HISTORICAL NOTE**

The book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was written by Lyman (L.) Frank Baum and published in 1900. Baum was born in New York in 1856. Telling stories to his four sons from his marriage to Maud Gage is what led to the creation of the land of Oz and its fantastic characters. In 1910, Baum moved to Hollywood to try to turn his stories into films. He died in Los Angeles in 1919. The original story of Oz became very popular and spawned several successive Oz novels, as well as movies, TV shows, musicals, and merchandise. Perhaps the most famous adaptation of the book is the 1939 MGM film starring Judy Garland. Another successful spin-off of Baum's story is the still-running 2003 Broadway musical, *Wicked*, based on the book by Gregory Maguire, *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*.

## **OZ! SYNOPSIS**

The story begins with a cyclone and Dorothy's house landing in Munchkinland in the land of Oz. The resident munchkins surround Dorothy and her dog, Toto, and sing of their delight in the defeat of the Wicked Witch of the East, upon whom Dorothy's house has just crashed. Glinda the Good encourages Dorothy to follow the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City, the home of the Wizard of Oz, who may be able to help Dorothy return to Kansas. The Wicked Witch of the West swoops in and demands the silver slippers from the feet of the Wicked Witch of the East. Glinda gives the slippers to Dorothy and tells her to never take them off. The Wicked Witch of the West leaves with a grim warning to Dorothy.

The munchkins exit and Dorothy meets the Scarecrow, who claims to be missing a brain. Dorothy invites him to join her and Toto on the Yellow Brick Road to Emerald City and the Wizard. The trio continue along the road, where they meet the Tin Woodsman, who needs a heart, and the Cowardly Lion, who is a big scaredy cat in need of some courage. The new friends have another run in with the Wicked Witch of the West and her enchanted field of poppies and forest of fighting trees, before they arrive at the gates of the Emerald City. The guardians of the gates allow the group to enter and meet the Wizard, who demands the group find and destroy the Wicked Witch of the West before he will grant any of their requests.

The four friends and their dog begin a journey to the castle of the Wicked Witch, but along the way they are attacked by the Winged Monkeys and taken captive. At the witch's castle, Dorothy and the Lion become enslaved to the Wicked Witch. After the Lion is taken to the dungeon for insubordination, Dorothy has had enough of the witch's malevolence. Dorothy attacks the witch with a pail of water, which causes the witch to melt and die. The gates of the dungeon are opened, the prisoners are released, and the quintet is reunited. They return to the Emerald City and expose the Wizard for being a "very good person, but a very bad wizard." Oz agrees to grant the characters their wishes and, with a little bit of magic, Dorothy returns to her home sweet home of Kansas and the loving arms of her Aunt Em.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**Dorothy**, a charming girl, lost in Oz

**Aunt Em**, Dorothy's aunt

**Toto**, Dorothy's dog

**Boq**, citizen of Munchkin Country

**Loq**, another citizen

**Toq**, another citizen

**Glinda The Good**, the kind Witch of the North

**Wicked Witch**, Dorothy's enemy

**Scarecrow**, brainless, stuffed with straw

**Tin Woodsman**, heartless man of metal

**Cowardly Lion**, a big cat lacking courage

**Poppies**, flowers in the forest whose lullaby puts its listeners to sleep

**Fighting Tree One**, protector of the forest

**Fighting Tree Two**, another protector

**Guardian of the Gates One**, protects Oz

**Guardian of the Gates Two**, another protector

**Oz**, the wonderful wizard

**Winged Monkeys**, enslaved to the Wicked Witch

## LESSON IDEAS

### Preparing Your Class for a Live Theater Experience

1. *How many of you have experienced a live theater performance? What did you see?*
2. *What are some of the differences between going to the theater and watching television or going to a movie?*
  - Theater features live on-stage actors. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.
  - The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation for the performers is shown by close attention, participation, and applause at the proper times. The success of the production often depends on the audience.
  - It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.
  - Actors wear costumes and make-up to help create the impression of the characters they portray.
  - There is much more to most live performances than actors. Special sets, effects, lighting, music, costumes, and of course, the audience add to the total experience.

### Theater Etiquette

*Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.*

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience while trying to get comfortable in your seat. Lights go out before the curtain goes up and seating is very difficult after that time.
- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay in your seat and listen very carefully.
- The National Hispanic Cultural Center does not allow food and beverages (including water, gum and candy) into the theater. These items are permitted in the lobby only.

- There is no intermission during the performance, which is 75 minutes in length. Be sure to use the restroom before the performance begins.
- Although you may wish to say something to the actors, you need to hold your thoughts, as you will disturb their concentration.
- Sing or participate *if* and *only if* you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.
- Listen to how the music sets the mood and affects your own feelings.
- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause. Do this when you like a song or dance or joke.
- Be sure to turn off *all* electronic devices and cell phones. Do not text during the performance. This is very inconsiderate to the performers and distracting to your fellow audience members.

### **Classroom Discussion and Activities (Pre- or Post-Performance)**

#### **Reading/Writing**

- Have an L. Frank Baum month in your class. Read aloud from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and more of Baum's books.
- Write a description of one of the characters and share it with a partner. After sharing, students can question each other about the ideas presented. This can be done with a drawing for lower levels.
- Have a creative writing session. Ask students to create their own fantastic story. Allow their imaginations to take over. This is how *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was created!
- Have students write a question about a specific scene or character in the musical. They can ask the questions as a whole class activity or work in small groups.
- Explore the relationship of protagonists and antagonists in classroom stories and draw a comparison to relationships in the musical, such as Dorothy and the Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, and Lion; Dorothy and Glinda; Dorothy and the Wicked Witch of the West; Glinda and the Wicked Witch of the West, and others.

#### **Vocabulary**

The following are some words you will hear spoken or sung in *Oz!*

|            |                |               |
|------------|----------------|---------------|
| Assumption | Debasing       | Sprightly     |
| Cauldron   | Dread          | Succulent     |
| Conjure    | Entitled       | Surrender     |
| Courage    | Humiliating    | Underestimate |
| Crone      | Panache        | Wretched      |
| Cyclone    | Responsibility |               |

#### **Science**

- *Oz!* presents a wonderful opportunity to study meteorology. Focus on weather patterns that create cyclones, tornados, and other natural events.
- Explore the lion. Ask the students to research lions and other large carnivorous cats. Identify their range, habitat, diet, social patterns, and endangerment status.

- Discuss the characteristics of a forest. What kind of forests are found in New Mexico? What are the different types of flora and fauna in contrasting forest environments? What makes forest life interesting, scary, fun, delightful?
- The Scarecrow needs a brain and the Tin Woodsman needs a heart. Devise a unit on anatomy and discuss the important functions of the brain and heart. Have the students research these and other vital organs of the body and prepare a class presentation on their findings.

### **Art**

- Create a class mural of the musical. Include the scenes from the story such as Munchkinland, the Emerald City, the forest with the yellow brick road, the witch's castle.
- Draw a picture of a favorite scene or character.
- Re-create Emerald City using clay forms in a box.
- Draw an advertisement or program cover for the musical.
- Design stage scenery for *Oz!* or another story that you would like to see on stage.

### **Music & Dance**

- Ask the students to identify musical instruments that they heard in the musical. Discuss other instruments that could have been added for greater effect.
- Can you identify any recurring musical themes or motifs in the music?
- How did the music express the action or emotion of the story (tempo, volume, range of notes, etc.)
- Did you hear any incidental music (purely instrumental music that functioned as background music for a scene change)?
- There are a variety of musical styles presented in *Oz!*, such as bluegrass, 1940's swing, blues, and the ballad. Compare and contrast these musical styles with your students.

### **Math**

- Create a budget for a theatrical production. List all of the expenses involved (set design and materials, professional musicians, lighting design, props, costumes, theater rental, scripts, royalties, etc.). Discuss ways that a theater company might raise money to cover all of the expenses.
- Using a spreadsheet, create a rehearsal schedule for a theatrical production. Discuss how much time it might take for the cast to learn all the staging and dancing. How many hours a day/week/month does it take to put on a production?
- Have fun with the idea of the yellow brick road. How long do you think the road is in miles? Convert that to kilometers. What are the dimensions of each brick? How many bricks of that dimension would it take to cover the distance that the class created?

### **History/Social Studies**

- Use Dorothy's connection to Kansas to create a unit on United States' geography. Locate Kansas on a map. Identify the capital and other characteristics of the state. Assign different states for students to research.
- Create a scene in your classroom. Assign students to play the characters from *Oz!*, including munchkins and citizens of Emerald City. Have the students interact with each other.
- *Oz!* teaches concepts such as overcoming obstacles, having courage in difficult circumstances, setting goals and developing strategies to reach those goals. Discuss these concepts with your students. Ask the class to identify goals in their lives, both short-term and long-term. How can those goals be accomplished? What are some challenges that students may face in trying to achieve their personal goals.

- *Oz!* also presents an opportunity to discuss bullying. How was Dorothy bullied by the Wicked Witch? How did Dorothy face her bully? What was the end result?

## **SOURCES**

### **Internet**

The Wizard of Oz: <http://thewizardofoz.info>

L. Frank Baum: <https://www.biography.com/people/frank-baum-9202328>

Kansas: [www.kansas.gov](http://www.kansas.gov)

Lions: <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/lion/#ww-wild-cats-lion.jpg>