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## Wicked

Playing at Place des Arts: August 1-26



By: Dan Laxer  
Jul 26, 2012 - 15:05  
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The Wicked Witch of The West is your typical storybook witch: hunched over, mean, green, and ugly. As was Miss Gulch, played by the rather unfortunate-looking Margaret Hamilton in the 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz*. Idina Menzel, however, the Broadway star who played Elphaba on stage is beautiful. Even in

green pancake makeup.

Elphaba is the name given to L. Frank Baum's witch in the novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, by Gregory Maguire, and in the musical *Wicked: The Untold Story of The Witches of Oz*. The novel and the play tell the story of two college roommates, Galinda and Elphaba, who grow up to become The Good Witch of the North and the Wicked Witch of the West, respectively (Galinda eventually changes her name to Glinda, or course. The wonderful Kristin Chenoweth originated the role on Broadway.)



Galinda and Elphaba are friends, but don't always see eye-to-eye. Elphaba is misunderstood, because she's different. There's a bit of a love triangle, flying monkeys, a corrupt government, and some great tunes. No need to go over the rainbow, though, or to get caught in a tornado to see it. The touring version of *Wicked* is coming to Place des Arts next month.

It's worth it to pop *The Wizard of Oz* into the ol' DVD player, to get the back story, and to bone up your references. But *Wicked* is great entertainment for the whole family. The recommended age for kids is 8 and up, but kids under 4 will not be allowed (my mother

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still remembers how scared she was by the flying monkeys when she first saw *The Wizard of Oz*. She was 5).

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With a bunch of Tony Awards, a Grammy, and then some, *Wicked* has been declared "the best musical of the decade." Follow the yellow brick road to Montreal's Place des Arts August 1 through 26. And then, once the show's done, you can grab a cab, take the Metro, or, simply click your heels together 3 times, repeating "there's no place like home." Unless, of course, you want to stay in Montreal for a bit. Then just say there's no place like the hotel... or wherever it is you're staying.

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