

# PRIOR LEARNING – PREPARING TO SEE **WICKED**

A list of useful resources is provided at the conclusion of this booklet. A useful starting point is to clarify pupil knowledge of *The Wizard of Oz* story (either the book or the film) so that students can draw parallels and fully engage with the moral context of the **WICKED** story as it explores the differences between right and wrong, good and evil (wicked). Accompanying notes provide information about the background to the creation of the musical and the themes and messages contained within the story.

Many of the suggested activities would be best left until after students have seen the performance. There are some activities designed to introduce students to the characters, themes and plot and others designed for students who have some understanding of the show.

## **BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF *THE WIZARD OF OZ*:**

Whisked away from Kansas by a swirling tornado, Dorothy's house crushes the Wicked Witch of the East when it lands in the dazzling world of Oz. Glinda the Good Witch gives Dorothy the dead witch's jewelled slippers and sends her off along the yellow brick road which leads to The Wizard's Kingdom. Along the way she is joined by a scarecrow with no brain, a tin man without a heart and a lion that lacks courage; each of them believing that The Wizard can give them what they want most in life.

When they reach the Emerald City, The Wizard explains that they must kill the Wicked Witch of the West before he will grant their wishes. They overcome many dangerous challenges and dispose of the witch (although quite by accident), and return only to find that The Wizard has no real powers. Disappointed, they set off again, this time to find the Good Witch who helps Dorothy return home, thanks to something she had all along – the jewelled slippers.

## **BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF **WICKED**:**

**WICKED** begins with the death of the Wicked Witch of the West. Through flashback, we learn from Glinda\* that the two witches, Glinda and the Wicked Witch of the West, whose real name is Elphaba, are old university friends who disliked each other intensely when they first met. Glinda, we learn, is beautiful, spoiled and popular while Elphaba is unconventionally and inconveniently green-skinned.

Elphaba is never afraid to stand up for what she believes to be right and consistently demonstrates a strong sense of values. On a visit to Oz, she and Glinda discover that The Wizard is not as pure and mighty as his "public" chooses to believe. Despite this revelation, Glinda is tempted by The Wizard's invitation to join his administration. Elphaba refuses to co-operate and vows to fight The Wizard's injustice.

Concerned that Elphaba might use her natural talent for sorcery against him, The Wizard uses propaganda to turn the people of Oz against her, denouncing her as the "Wicked Witch of the West". A hunt begins and Elphaba is forced into hiding. Glinda is left battling with her conscience, realising that Elphaba has had the strength to stand by what is right.

\* Galinda becomes Glinda in the first act of **WICKED** this is due to Doctor Dillamond's inability to pronounce Galinda. You will see references to both throughout these materials.

