

VCE Playlist Materials  
THEATRE STUDIES UNIT 4

"Production  
in Performance"

# WICKED

The untold true story of the Witches of Oz

# WICKED

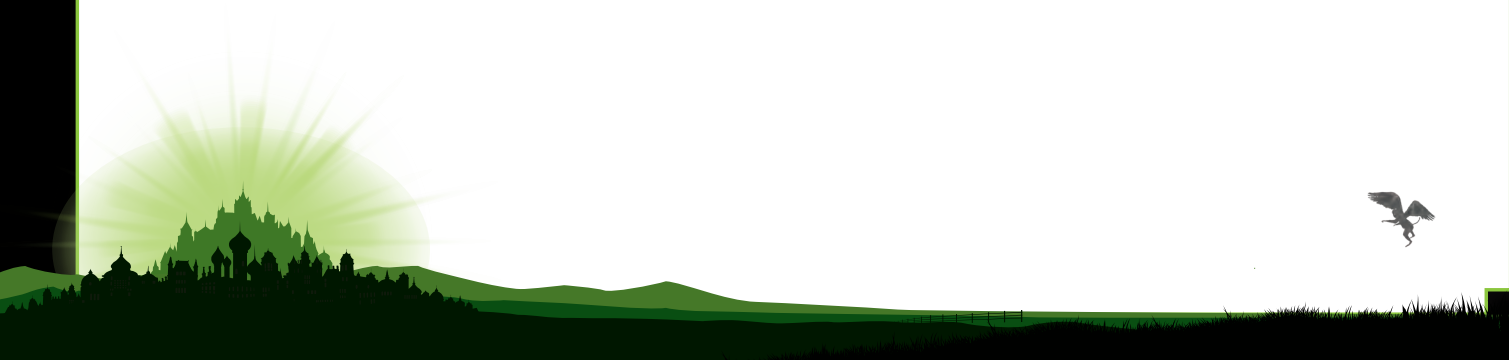
The untold true story of the Witches of Oz



## THEATRE STUDIES UNIT 4 "Production in Performance"

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## THEATRE STUDIES UNIT 4

### “Production in Performance”

THIS SECTION OF THE RESOURCE  
WILL FOCUS ON  
UNIT 4 OUTCOME 3.

It will focus on core areas of the study design, including:

- character’s function, purpose, objectives, motivations, status and traits,
- acting skills,
- focus and verbal and/or non-verbal language,
- acting, directorial and design decisions,
- elements of theatre composition (refer 3.3),
- actor-audience relationships,
- interrelationships between acting, direction, design and theatre styles.

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## ◆ THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ◆



Sheridan Adams, Sydney 2023 Production.  
Photographer: Jeff Busby.

### Elphaba

**Character's Function:** Protagonist; the future Wicked Witch of the West. She serves as the central character whose journey drives the plot.

**Purpose:** To do what is right; as the story unfolds that journey sees her challenge the prejudices of Oz and fight for justice, especially for those who are marginalised.

**Objectives:** Elphaba seeks to uncover the truth behind Oz's oppression of animals, protect her sister Nessarose, and defy societal norms that label her as wicked.

**Motivations:** Her desire for acceptance, love, and the opportunity to make a positive difference in the world motivate her actions.

**Status:** Elphaba starts as an outcast and is later seen as a symbol of resistance and change.

**Traits:** She is highly intelligent, determined, and compassionate.

**Quote:** "Something has changed within me, something is not the same." – "Defying Gravity"



Courtney Monsma, Sydney 2023  
Production. Photographer: Jeff Busby.

### Glinda

**Character's Function:** Protagonist; Glinda the Good. Glinda provides a contrasting perspective to Elphaba and plays a significant role in the story.

**Purpose:** Her purpose is to maintain her popularity and navigate the changing political landscape in Oz.

**Objectives:** She is ambitious and aware of her position as Glinda from Upper Uplands and seeks privilege and power commensurate with her standing. Above all, she seeks to be popular initially but her role matures as the story unfolds.

**Motivations:** She is motivated by the fear of losing her status. She is also motivated by her desire for love and happiness.

**Status:** Glinda starts as the popular and admired girl but later becomes a voice of reason and conscience.

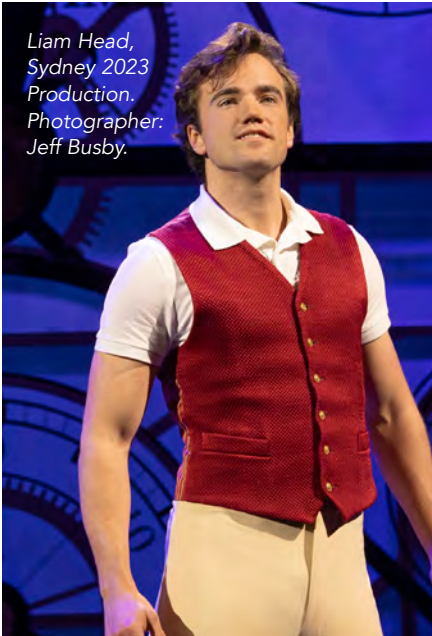
**Traits:** Glinda is ambitious, bubbly, and kind-hearted.

**Quote:** "It's all about popular." – "Popular"

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## ◆ THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ◆



Liam Head,  
Sydney 2023  
Production.  
Photographer:  
Jeff Busby.

### Fiyero

**Character's Function:** Supporting character; the Winkie prince. Fiyero represents change and transformation in the story.

**Purpose:** His purpose is to escape a predetermined life and find his true self.

**Objectives:** Fiyero aims to follow his heart, protect Elphaba, and embrace his newfound identity.

**Motivations:** He is motivated by a desire for freedom and love.

**Status:** Initially carefree and apathetic, he undergoes a significant transformation through finding purpose and love.

**Traits:** Fiyero is reckless, adventurous, and passionate.

**Quote:** “Life’s more painless for the brainless,  
why think too hard when it’s so soothing dancing through life.”  
- “Dancing Through Life”



Simon Burke,  
Melbourne 2024 Production.  
Photographer: Jeff Busby.

### The Wizard

**Character's Function:** Antagonist; the ruler of Oz. The Wizard represents the oppressive authority in Oz.

**Purpose:** His purpose when ruling Oz is to maintain control through deception and manipulation.

**Objectives:** The Wizard sees an opportunity to exploit Elphaba's powers and eliminate opposition to his rule.

**Motivations:** His motivations stem from a lust for power and a desire to keep his true identity hidden.

**Status:** Initially, he is revered as a powerful figure, but he is later exposed as a fraud.

**Traits:** The Wizard is charismatic, cunning, and secretive.

**Quote:** “Where I’m from, we believe all sorts of things  
that aren’t true. We call it – ‘history’.”  
- “Wonderful”

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## ◆ THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ◆



Robyn Nevin,  
Sydney 2023 Production.  
Photographer: Jeff Busby.

### Madame Morrible

**Character's Function:** Antagonist; headmistress of Shiz University. She represents the corrupt education system in Oz.

**Purpose:** Madame Morrible's purpose is to manipulate and groom promising students for her own gain and the Wizard's agenda.

**Objectives:** She seeks to exploit Elphaba's powers and maintain her position of power.

**Motivations:** Madame Morrible is motivated by a lust for power and a hunger for control over others.

**Status:** Initially an authority figure, she is later revealed as a villain.

**Traits:** She is manipulative, cunning, and power-hungry.

**Quote:** "Never apologise for talent! Talent is a gift!  
And that is my special talent, encouraging talent."

– Act 1, Scene 2



Shewit Belay,  
Sydney 2023 Production.  
Photographer:  
Jeff Busby.

### Nessarose

**Character's Function:** Supporting character; Elphaba's disabled sister. She plays a significant role in Elphaba's life and decisions.

**Purpose:** Nessarose's purpose is to fit in and to fulfil her father's wish for her to be the future Governess of Munchkinland.

**Objectives:** To fit in and find love.

**Motivations:** Nessarose is motivated by her longing for acceptance and love in her own life.

**Status:** Initially dependent on others, she later becomes the governor of Munchkinland.

**Traits:** Nessarose is naive, determined, and assertive.

**Quote:** "Tragically beautiful." – Act 1, Scene 2

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## ◆ THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ◆



Adam Murphy,  
Sydney 2023  
Production.  
Photographer:  
Jeff Busby.

### Doctor Dillamond

**Character's Function:** Supporting character; history teacher at Shiz University who plays a significant role in developing Elphaba's sense of right and wrong.

**Purpose:** Doctor Dillamond is the main Animal representative in the musical. He is the first character to hint that something is not quite perfect in Oz.

**Objectives:** To give Animals a voice in Oz.

**Motivations:** Doctor Dillamond is motivated by a sense of justice and a desire to set things right.

**Status:** Initially a respected historian at Shiz University, but later falls victim to the persecution of Animals.

**Traits:** Doctor Dillamond is intellectual, strong-minded and wise.

**Quote:** "Something bad is happening in Oz."  
– "Something Bad"



Kurtis Papadinis,  
Sydney 2023  
Production.  
Photographer:  
Jeff Busby.

### Boq

**Character's Function:** Supporting character; a Munchkin student at Shiz University whose love for Glinda leads him down a tragic path.

**Purpose:** Boq's purpose is to show his dedication to his feelings for Glinda.

**Objectives:** To impress Glinda.

**Motivations:** Boq is motivated by his optimistic devotion to Glinda and his desire for her approval.

**Status:** Initially a student at Shiz; later a servant to Nessarose.

**Traits:** Boq is lovelorn, anxious and eager to please.

**Quote:** "I lost my heart to Glinda the moment I first saw her."  
– "The Wicked Witch of the East"

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## ◆ ACTING SKILLS ◆

### Including Facial Expression, Voice, Gesture, Movement, Stillness and Silence

#### Elphaba

**Facial Expression:** Elphaba's furrowed brows and intense gaze can convey her determination and inner struggles.

**Voice:** Her voice may start with a trembling, soft-spoken tone and gradually become stronger and more resonant as she gains confidence.

**Gesture:** She might clench her fists when angry to emphasise her emotions.

**Movement:** Initially, her movements might be awkward and hesitant, but later they become more graceful and purposeful, especially during her flying sequences.

**Stillness:** Moments of stillness can emphasise her moments of deep introspection, where her face reveals a mix of emotions.

**Silence:** She can use silence before breaking into a powerful song to create anticipation and drama.

#### Glinda

**Facial Expression:** Glinda's wide, cheerful smiles and exaggerated expressions can highlight her bubbly personality.

**Voice:** She may speak with an upbeat, sing-songy quality, emphasising her enthusiastic demeanour.

**Gesture:** Glinda's gestures may include delicate hand movements and graceful poses, befitting her "good witch" image.

**Movement:** She can move with light and airy steps, almost floating, to enhance her ethereal image.

**Stillness:** Moments of stillness can reveal her vulnerability, with her eyes betraying her true emotions.

**Silence:** Strategic use of silence can punctuate comedic moments, with Glinda using facial expressions to convey surprise or confusion.

#### Fiyero

**Facial Expression:** Fiyero's carefree spirit can be expressed through infectious smiles and mischievous grins.

**Voice:** He may speak with a relaxed, laid-back tone, reflecting his easy-going nature.

**Gesture:** Fiyero's gestures can be spontaneous, such as playful shoulder shrugs or enthusiastic hand movements.

**Movement:** He can move with dynamic and energetic body language, particularly during dance sequences, showcasing his physical prowess.

**Stillness:** Moments of stillness can highlight his moments of personal transformation and introspection, with his face showing hints of newfound depth.

**Silence:** Silence can be used to create anticipation before he breaks into a spirited song or to convey moments of surprise or realisation.



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## ◆ ACTING SKILLS ◆

### The Wizard

**Facial Expression:** The Wizard's charming smile can quickly turn into a calculating and sly expression when his true motives are revealed.

**Voice:** He may modulate his voice to sound persuasive and charismatic when manipulating others, and colder when faced with opposition.

**Gesture:** The Wizard's theatrical hand gestures can underscore his ability to put on a show for the people of Oz.

**Movement:** He can move with a deliberate, measured pace, suggesting a sense of control and authority.

**Stillness:** Moments of stillness can emphasise his enigmatic and mysterious demeanour, especially during pivotal confrontations.

**Silence:** Silence can be used to create tension and anticipation before he delivers a powerful monologue.

### Madame Morrible

**Facial Expression:** Madame Morrible's expressions can shift from warm and welcoming to sinister and calculating.

**Voice:** She may modulate her voice to sound soothing when grooming students and authoritative when asserting control.

**Gesture:** Her gestures can be graceful and elegant, reflecting her position at Shiz University.

**Movement:** Madame Morrible can move with a composed and regal demeanour, emphasising her authority.

**Stillness:** Moments of stillness can underscore her manipulative and scheming nature, especially when plotting behind the scenes.

**Silence:** Silence can be used to create tension and intrigue, allowing her expressions to convey her hidden intentions.

### Nessarose

**Facial Expression:** Nessarose's longing and sadness can be conveyed through mournful eyes and a gentle smile.

**Voice:** Her voice may be soft and gentle, reflecting her vulnerability and innocence.

**Gesture:** She may use gestures that indicate her confidence in the wheelchair she has grown up using, such as wheeling around smoothly and quickly and sitting with good, strong posture.

**Movement:** Nessarose's movements can be deliberate and confident showing her desire for independence.

**Stillness:** Moments of stillness can highlight her isolation and internal struggles, with her face expressing a sense of longing.

**Silence:** Silence can be used during poignant moments, where her expressive eyes and facial expressions speak volumes.

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## ◆ ACTING SKILLS ◆

### Doctor Dillamond

**Facial Expression:** Doctor Dillamond's expressions can convey a sense of sadness, confusion, and determination.

**Voice:** He may speak with a mix of wisdom and sadness, reflecting his experiences and his struggle to understand the changing world.

**Gesture:** His gestures can be gentle and empathetic, particularly when interacting with passionate students like Elphaba.

**Movement:** Doctor Dillamond can move with a slight limp, symbolising the persecution of animals in Oz.

**Stillness:** Moments of stillness can emphasise his contemplation and despair as he witnesses the injustices around him.

**Silence:** Silence can be used to highlight the isolation and loneliness he feels in a world that is turning against him.

### Boq

**Facial Expression:** Boq's expressions may range from shy and awkward smiles to heartbroken and devastated looks.

**Voice:** He might speak with a nervous and stuttering tone initially, and later with a tone of regret and sorrow.

**Gesture:** Boq's gestures can include fumbling with objects or nervously playing with his hands.

**Movement:** His movements may start as hesitant and clumsy, but as he becomes more confident, they can become more purposeful.

**Stillness:** Moments of stillness can convey his inner turmoil and contemplation, especially when he faces difficult choices.

**Silence:** Strategic use of silence can emphasise his moments of realisation and decision-making.

### Chistery

**Facial Expression:** Chistery's expressions can be playful and curious, reflecting his monkey-like nature.

**Voice:** He may communicate with vocalisations and sounds rather than words, using non-verbal cues to express himself.

**Gesture:** Chistery's gestures can include mimicking the actions of others, showcasing his ability to mimic human behaviour.

**Movement:** His movements can be agile and acrobatic, emphasising his physicality as a flying monkey.

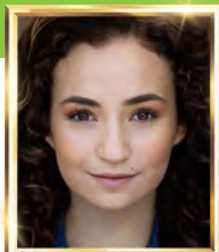
**Stillness:** Moments of stillness can underscore his observant and adaptive nature, particularly when he learns from others.

**Silence:** Silence can be used to create moments of anticipation and surprise when Chistery's actions speak louder than words.

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



### Courtney Monsma as GLINDA

#### **FACIAL EXPRESSION:** How do you use facial expressions to convey Glinda's bubbly and comedic personality?

I imagine my facial expressions as a canvas on which I portray both Glinda's secrets and her mask from what's happening for her on the inside. The kind of excitement I would portray when playing with a puppy is how I show my joy onstage, especially in "Popular". I think using your eyes is a great way to help the audience to connect with you but also, depending on how you time it, allows for great comedic timing.

#### **VOICE:** Can you discuss how your vocal choices contribute to Glinda's upbeat and enthusiastic character?

Glinda is a very bubbly character so using a bright tone and utilising twang is very useful for the role. I find when Glinda is putting on a show she uses her soprano register and that adds another dimension to the character. I think playing with warmth and tone works for when her character goes through the growth throughout the show.

#### **GESTURE AND MOVEMENT:** What specific gestures do you incorporate into your performance to highlight Glinda's elegance and charm? How do you move on stage to create the impression of Glinda's light and airy presence?

For a lot of the show I imagine that she is one with the bubble, that imagery helps me find flow and elegance when needed, specifically the use of my arms with my wand. Of course her iconic "toss, toss" and playing with my hair adds to her character as well as randomly pointing out my feet which adds to her quirk and comedy. I think the beautiful gown helps but I imagine that she is full of sparkles and imagine how royalty would walk. A good reference was Princess Diana, she would be graceful yet very grounded and humble.

#### **STILLNESS AND SILENCE:** Are there moments of stillness or silence that you find most humorous or poignant in portraying Glinda?

Stillness and silence are essential in every part of her. Sometimes, after landing a comedic beat, a silence is necessary whilst still commuting to the next moment. Stillness in Glinda grows throughout her arc and I find there is stillness in her when she is battling her emotions which is used a lot in the end of "Thank Goodness".

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



**Sheridan Adams** as **ELPHABA**

### **FACIAL EXPRESSION:** How do you use facial expressions to convey Elphaba's emotions, especially during key moments of her transformation?

As an actor I don't find it particularly helpful to 'use' facial expressions to tell Elphaba's story. My focus is primarily on internalising the emotions and motivations of Elphaba rather than consciously manipulating my facial expressions. Because of the way the world has treated her, Elphaba is inherently guarded and protective. She doesn't often smile or laugh. So when her softer, more vulnerable side is revealed to both audiences and characters around her - it has a greater impact. I allow Elphaba to have a bright, wide smile, conveying her youthful hope and joy in "The Wizard and I". I also lift my gaze upward, indicating a hopeful outlook for the future. I use expressions that are lively, energetic, and free-spirited in this song which then offers contrast as she transforms into the Wicked Witch in "Defying Gravity" and "No Good Deed".

### **VOICE:** Can you describe how you modulate your voice to reflect Elphaba's emotional journey, from vulnerability to empowerment?

In spoken text Elphaba's vocals are often quite harsh. Sharp, cutting, forward, and with lots of vocal energy and volume. She is often on the attack - she communicates without shame. In moments where she is opening up or being vulnerable, I am naturally a little quieter.

Vocally, Elphaba's emotional journey is also reflected over the course of the show in her songs. "The Wizard and I" is a little more percussive and spoken - full of youth and excitement. "I'm Not That Girl" is softer, more legato yet still slightly spoken. In "Defying Gravity" and "No Good Deed" Elphaba steps into her power. The fullness of her belt and vocal strength showcases her transformation from young girl to woman.

### **GESTURE AND MOVEMENT:** What specific gestures do you incorporate into your performance to emphasize Elphaba's determination and defiance? How do you use body language and movement to highlight the physical changes in Elphaba's character?

Elphaba's movement and physicality is never held back. She has had to fight her entire life to be seen, understood and accepted. This is reflected in explosive physical moments where her uncontrollable magic powers are revealed. In Act 1, she is younger - slightly more buoyant and lively. In Act 2, she is exhausted and on the run but has also embraced her inner strength. I try to convey this in being physically more grounded, how I hold and use the broom and being deliberate in displaying a powerful stance.

### **STILLNESS AND SILENCE:** Are there specific moments of stillness or silence in your performance that you believe are particularly impactful in conveying Elphaba's inner struggles?

Yes! Stillness and silence are often present within the rhythm of the text and scenes. Sometimes they are acting choices and sometimes they are naturally within the dialogue:

1. There are many pauses and moments for reflection/piecing together in "Defying Gravity". Throughout the song Elphaba is grappling with the consequences of standing up for what she believes in and going against the Wizard. She is coming to terms with the fact that nothing will ever be the same.
2. Elphaba's monologue before "Popular" utilises stillness and breath within the dialogue.
3. Right before the 'Elphaba dance' in the Ozdust Ballroom scene there is a large pause where there's a lot going on for Elphaba. She is internally struggling with how Glinda has betrayed her, how she has humiliated her sister, how she herself has been humiliated and how she is going to respond.

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



### Robyn Nevin as MADAME MORRIBLE

#### **FACIAL EXPRESSION:** How do you use facial expressions to convey Madame Morrible's secretly foreboding nature?

Madame Morrible is dangerous because she is ambitious for personal power and she is ruthless enough to achieve power by any means. She wants personal power not to do 'good' but simply to be powerful. But many such people can be charming and charismatic. Unity Mitford, the youngest of the famous English Mitford sisters, and the daughter of an English Lord, befriended Adolf Hitler who she found to be warm, attractive and charming. Many people describe the former US President, Donald Trump, as the same. Evil doesn't always show itself.

At the start I choose to be smiling and warm. In the first scene at Shiz, Morrible's delight and excitement at seeing Elphaba's 'gift' is genuine because she can use that 'gift' to impress the Wizard who needs magic to assist him to maintain his hold on power.

In the scene when Morrible gives Elphaba her invitation to see the Wizard, she shows again delight and excitement because introducing her to the Wizard will advance her own position. I play this scene with warmth and affection. But before leaving that scene I look back at Elphaba with a look that reveals her scheming intentions.

In the last few scenes after Morrible has identified Elphaba as 'this wicked witch' and is openly antagonistic towards Glinda, the original designer changed Morrible's wig to make it very severe, and her makeup is whitened with a tiny mouth and dabs of messy rouge. Inspired by this makeup design I choose to change from smiling to angry and ugly to show her true self - the inner ugliness. I turn my mouth down at the corners or pucker my mouth into a tiny mean mouth. And I squint. Simple ways of demonstrating inner ugliness.

#### **VOICE:** Can you discuss the way your vocal delivery helps convey Madame Morrible's true intentions throughout the show?

Morrible is a manipulative person and I use different vocal tones to indicate her different moods or motivations. At the start I choose warm vocal tones but within that there are variations to show authority when needed or darker tones as warnings. These are the usual range in any role. But when Morrible makes a speech to the Citizens of Oz telling them that Elphaba is the enemy and is responsible for mutilating the monkeys I use a changed vocal tone which is brutal and ugly. To terrify is the aim. This is not naturalistic but dramatically heightened. This 'voice' continues right through to the end.

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



### Robyn Nevin *as* MADAME MORRIBLE

**GESTURE AND MOVEMENT:** What gestures do you incorporate into your performance to show the status and importance of Madame Morrible? How does your movement across the stage demonstrate Madame Morrible's authority as headmistress?

Morrible's costumes and wigs indicate her status. They do much of the work in establishing her position in the world of the play. Her enormous sleeves are useful as any large gesture is exaggerated by them. I use large gestures a lot which demonstrates a confidence of personal stature. Morrible's first entrance is designed to give her instant status- all the students surround her and focus on her. I 'sweep' around a lot but this is helped greatly by the grand costumes.

In the early scenes I have Morrible showing deference to Nessarose by almost curtsying on meeting her - because she is the daughter of the Governor. With Elphaba I take her hand to lead her away from the other students but I do it as if touching something disgusting; this indicates that Morrible sees herself as superior to a green girl. Then I am brusque with Glinda who behaves spoiled and privileged.

In the final scene with the Wizard, Morrible looks hideous, sounds hideous, and is no longer deferential to the Wizard as she has gained close to equal status with him.

**STILLNESS AND SILENCE:** Are there moments of stillness or silence that you believe are most effective in revealing Madame Morrible's scheming character?

The production of WICKED has been tightly directed and there are few moments of silence. During Boq's angry speech in Act 2 both Morrible and Glinda are observing from the tower. While Glinda is distressed by Boq's speech to the angry mob, Morrible approves of his speech. In stillness and silence this is evident. But they are observers only. An audience can read much from stillness and silence, but this production doesn't allow this for the Morrible character.

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



### Simon Burke *as* THE WIZARD

**FACIAL EXPRESSION:** How do you use facial expressions to differentiate between the Wizard's charming facade and his more calculating moments?

I don't specifically plan what my facial expressions are going to be at any point in the show. I always work from the truth, what my character is doing from moment to moment. What he wants, what he needs. If you start from truth the face will look after itself.

**VOICE:** Can you discuss the variations in your vocal delivery that help portray the Wizard's charisma and manipulation?

Similarly I don't make any firm decisions on my vocal delivery in a scene beforehand – I always like to be spontaneous onstage. I'm still experimenting with different voices here and there with the Wizard. What I do find is that in all my scenes my objective is to win Elphaba over to my side and that by being warm and fatherly to her I feel that is the best way to make her at ease with me – so my vocal delivery has elements that could be described as warm, friendly, fun and caring.

**GESTURE:** What gestures do you employ to emphasise the Wizard's authority and control over others?

The Wizard's mechanical head does all the powerful gestures for me – it is the thing that establishes my authority and control – so when I come out from behind the head all my gestures are the opposite of that – i.e. welcoming, open arms, a touch on the shoulder.

**MOVEMENT:** How does your physicality and movement reflect the Wizard's deliberate and measured demeanour?

I wouldn't describe any of my physicality or movement as portraying a deliberate or measured demeanour – if anything my physicality is designed to be a bit stumbling, a bit distracted, a bit kooky – so that my motives of manipulating Elphaba are disguised.

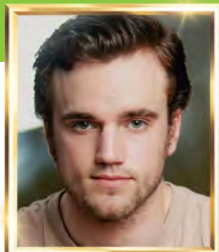
**STILLNESS AND SILENCE:** Are there instances of stillness or silence that you find most effective in revealing the Wizard's true intentions?

There are a few moments when the Wizard is watching what's going on and not participating or speaking – e.g. when Madame Morrible gives Elphaba the Grimmerie (the ancient enchantments book) or when Glinda finds out that Elphaba and Fiyero are together. Again I have to experience the truth of what those things will mean to my character, and live truthfully and spontaneously through the silence as I don't have lines to say.

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



**Liam Head** as **FIYERO**

I think it's important to first acknowledge that I am more of an inside-out actor than outside-in. Inside-out meaning, what I feel and think inside informs my body how to move and operate. Outside-in, manipulating the body to make oneself feel something internally (which is what these questions illicit), is a technique that I also use, but perhaps not all the time. Whenever I am stuck or searching for a different offer I will rely on this technique to find something new.

**FACIAL EXPRESSION:** How do you use facial expressions to convey Fiyero's carefree and adventurous nature at the beginning of the story, as well as his transformation into a more passionate and committed character?

Fiyero's face is often quite revealing. He doesn't hold many cards close to his chest. He comes from wealth and privilege, so doesn't have to worry about the effect of offending anyone with how he communicates. Therefore, the simple act of using his facial expressions as freely as possible communicates to the audience just how carefree he is. It also communicates how passionate he is - especially towards the end of the show.

**VOICE:** Can you describe how your vocal choices help portray Fiyero's emotional journey, from his initial apathy to his later passion for Elphaba?

Confidence doesn't mean cocky or rude. Fiyero has several lines that on first glance seem to be quite offensive. Fiyero means no offence at any point in the entire show, he simply just doesn't realise how hurtful his words can be. The line, "Maybe the driver saw green and thought it meant go" is a good example of this. He isn't making fun of Elphaba's skin colour at all, in fact it's quite the opposite. He celebrates the colour of her skin, acknowledges its quiriness and moves on. Therefore, saying everything sincerely and as a matter-of-fact shows the audience that he isn't mean or calloused, just privileged and a bit dumb. I also add in vocal licks in the singing to show how easy everything is for him, but am wary not to add in too many as Fiyero never shows off. He doesn't care enough about public perception to show off. He just lives his life. Later in the show, during "As Long As You're Mine", I simultaneously strain my voice to show the tension that both characters are under, but on certain notes open up with a clear, free straight tone to communicate how for the first time, Fiyero is fully in love and fully himself.

**GESTURE:** What specific gestures do you incorporate into your performance to highlight Fiyero's physicality and athleticism, especially during his moments of rebellion and transformation?

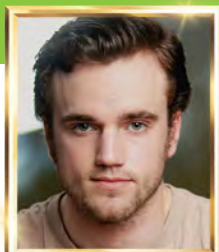
Once again, I try not to plan exactly how I move onstage and let the scene govern what I do and don't feel. If you try to prescribe movement it turns into a dance rather than a living breathing scene. However, I have found that my Fiyero does put his hands on hips. I believe that conveys the comfort and power that Fiyero embodies.



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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



### Liam Head *as* FIYERO

**MOVEMENT:** How do you use body language and movement to emphasise Fiyero's character development and his transition from a Winkie prince to a rebel?

Fiyero's movement in the first act is quite fluid and nonchalant. This reflects how relaxed he is, unbothered by the day to day. As the stakes increase however, and he uncovers more of the sinister political underbelly of Oz, he becomes far more rigid. I believe this to be because he has found, perhaps for the first time, a greater purpose in life and is focussed on the success of his covert operation. I also believe that with the news of corruption, he becomes jaded for the first time, and starts to become more tactical and reserved with what he shares with the outside world, and even his nearest and dearest.

**STILLNESS AND SILENCE:** Are there moments of stillness or silence in your performance that you believe are particularly impactful in revealing Fiyero's internal struggles and his connection with Elphaba?

A lot of Fiyero's track is filled with stillness and silence. He is, by definition, a supporting lead. His only function in the show is to provide greater stakes for the two witches. Naturally then, he spends quite a bit of his time watching and listening - in silence. More specifically, in act two, when Fiyero says, "I'm going with her", collectively all three of the actors use silence to let the audience AND the characters understand what Fiyero has just said. I believe this moment of stillness and silence to be quite effective.

# WICKED

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



**Adam Murphy** as **DOCTOR DILLAMOND**

**FACIAL EXPRESSION:** How do you use facial expressions to convey Doctor Dillamond's initial determination and later confusion at different points in the show? Does the partial obstruction of your face impact the way you approach your portrayal of the character?

Facial expressions are an important tool for an actor when conveying a character's emotions or reactions. However, the design for Doctor Dillamond, although amazing and crucial to the character's look, limits my facial expressions as the side of my face, forehead and nose are covered. I discovered losing the ability to use my eyebrows and forehead led to my eyes and mouth becoming very important, especially when portraying his sense of dignity, joy, sadness, disappointment or surprise.

**VOICE:** How does your vocal delivery help portray Doctor Dillamond's experiences with discrimination and persecution?

Discovering Doctor Dillamond's voice was very important because I felt I wanted to portray him as an intelligent, warm, strong and empathetic character. Using different tones in my voice help give him depth. It wasn't enough to just give him an authoritative, professorial tone. There are moments when he has to have a sense of control and strength and there are other moments when he is light and comedic. There are also times when he is desperate or revealing in hushed tones the true politics of Oz. I also feel the stronger and more fleshed out he is in the beginning provides a greater contrast to when you discover him in Act 2 when he has lost his strength. This makes his story all the more interesting, potent and tragic.

**GESTURE:** What gestures do you incorporate to show his more gentle side when interacting with students like Elphaba?

Although Doctor Dillamond is an authority figure, he doesn't talk down to the students. He treats them with respect and encourages debate and conversation about issues to enable them to learn. He does let his gentler side come through when talking to Elphaba and his manner becomes less domineering. Softening his physicality with a less upright posture or sitting alongside her when they share her lunch seems to help show another side to him.

**MOVEMENT:** How does your physicality and movement reflect Doctor Dillamond's status in Oz?

Doctor Dillamond is a proud being with integrity. Our director would always describe him to me as 'a force'. He stands upright with a gravitas and every movement has some sort of meaning to enforce the point he is making. In Act 2 he has lost that essence and has been stripped of his dignity. A shadow of his former self. He is physically and literally as low to the ground as you can get.

**STILLNESS AND SILENCE:** Are there moments of stillness or silence that you feel highlight Doctor Dillamond's despair and isolation?

There are a few moments where stillness can be of great use to highlight the feelings of Doctor Dillamond. Stillness can be used to show strength. It can also be used as a contrast to a higher energy in a scene. For example when Doctor Dillamond discovers the writing on the blackboard 'Animals should be seen and not heard' he is deeply hurt. It takes a moment for him to gather his thoughts before calmly but strongly asking the class who was responsible. Seconds before we see him in full flight passionately and energetically teaching a lesson, then as he turns the blackboard and discovers the graffiti he is stopped in his tracks. I believe this moment of stillness is a strong indicator of how these words have affected him.

# WICKED

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



**Shewit Belay** as **NESSAROSE**

**FACIAL EXPRESSION:** How do you use facial expressions to convey Nessarose's vulnerability and determination, especially given her disability?

What a great question! Truthfully - the way I use my facial expressions to portray Nessa is constantly evolving, but I find that the one thing that remains consistent is actually how I use my eyebrows! For most of Act 1, my Nessa's eyebrows are partially raised to give her more of an engaged and eager appearance. My chin is also usually slightly tilted upwards and I tend to have a half smile. Because of the nature of the stage and the distance between the audience and performers, it's also important for me to engage my upper body and be intentional about my posture and movements as that is what someone watching from the back of the theatre will see. I like sitting up and having my shoulders back. Not only does this show Nessa's determination, it also helps me engage my diaphragm so that I can breathe properly to sing, especially as I am in a seated position. Because Nessa's vulnerability is already very clear in the show (for example, through the way the show is written, the staging, and the way other characters constantly refer to her physical disability), I prefer to focus my energy on portraying her strength and groundedness. This has allowed my journey with Nessa to be more about empowerment than vulnerability.

**VOICE:** Can you describe your vocal choices in portraying Nessarose's soft-spoken and gentle demeanour?

This has actually been a bit of a challenge for me because my voice isn't naturally soft or gentle! Like my facial expressions, my vocal choices with Nessa are also evolving as I explore new ways to sing the same material. This process wouldn't be possible without our musical director, who occasionally gives me feedback on things I can adjust vocally so that my portrayal is consistent with the needs of my character at different points in the story. For example, in Act 1 - I have a sweeter, lighter tone in my voice which is in keeping with the fact that Nessa is young, naive and essentially - the spoiled baby sister. But I have to be careful not to overdo it and make it a caricature - and that can be a very fine balance. Naturally, my vocal choices for Nessa change throughout the show as her character changes.

**GESTURE:** What gestures do you incorporate to emphasise Nessarose's reliance on her wheelchair and her desire for independence?

It's important to remember that Nessa has been using a wheelchair for most of her life - so it's likely that she's used to it and is able to navigate her surroundings with it very well. Of course there are moments in the show where she is wheeled around by other people, but for the most part - Nessa is in charge of her mobility and the wheelchair aids in this. All of this to say - she already has quite a bit of independence. Nessa's limitations tend to be placed on her by the people around her (her father, Elphaba, Glinda, Boq), so for this reason, I don't necessarily go out of my way to emphasise her reliance on her wheelchair because it is already evident. I like to focus on the things she can do with it - glide swiftly across the stage, dance, a neat 360 turn, etc. - which, truthfully speaking, probably requires more spatial awareness and proprioception than walking!

# WICKED

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



### Shewit Belay *as* NESSAROSE

**MOVEMENT:** How do you move on stage to reflect Nessarose's careful and cautious mobility?

Nessa has grown up in a very sheltered environment. When we meet her in the show, she takes opportunities to break free from that so that she can have new experiences and meet new people - the typical things you do when you first move out of home. For this reason, I'd say the motivation behind her movement is less about being careful and cautious; and perhaps more about ambition, defining her individuality and distancing herself from her sister, Elphaba. As mentioned above, I use my facial expressions, posture, voice and brisk wheelchair speed to convey all of this as needed when it serves the story.

**STILLNESS AND SILENCE:** Are there moments of stillness or silence that you believe are most impactful in conveying Nessarose's inner struggles and love for her sister?

Absolutely! One of my favourite moments of stillness is the brief interaction between Nessa and Elphaba before "The Wizard And I". It's fleeting and has no dialogue, but it gives Nessa a rare opportunity to encourage her sister as they exchange looks. The evolution of Nessa's character in Act 2 is also a great example of stillness and silence. I can't say too much without giving away the show, but it's a way for Nessa to convey her strength and resolve.

# WICKED

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## ◆ HEAR FROM THE ACTORS ◆



**Kurtis Papadinis** as **BOQ**

### **FACIAL EXPRESSION:** How do you use facial expressions to convey Boq's enthusiasm and desire to please in the first act?

Boq wears his emotions pretty clearly on his face. My eyes and eyebrows play a big role in conveying his enthusiasm throughout Act 1, painting Boq as both figuratively and literally 'wide eyed'. Talking to Glinda I will either have a big grin, as Boq really can't hide how in love with her he is, or I'll tighten my lips and narrow my eyes to paint my determination as Boq so desperately wants her to take him seriously.

### **VOICE:** Can you describe how your vocal choices help chart Boq's transformation throughout the show?

At the beginning of the show I pitch my voice a little higher than it naturally sits in an attempt to portray his naivety and willingness to please. As the show goes on I start to flatten my voice a little as Boq begins to realize he's stuck with Nessa and loses enthusiasm. And finally, at the start of Act 2 my voice sits flat as Boq has lost all of his vigour, being trapped in the mansion with Nessa.

### **GESTURE:** What gestures do you incorporate in your performance to differentiate between Boq's feelings for Glinda and Nessarose?

Boq desperately wants Glinda to take him seriously as a romantic partner, and he sees himself as being in competition with Fiyero. To convey this I push my chest forward and try to use strong hand gestures when speaking to Glinda. Alternatively, when speaking to Nessa, Boq isn't really sure how to let her know that he isn't interested in her and I convey this by being a little more fidgety, playing with my jacket or not really being sure where to place my hands while we communicate.

### **MOVEMENT:** How does your movement and body language change over the course of the show to emphasise Boq's emotional journey?

Over the course of the show Boq slowly changes from being determined to be with Glinda, to being resigned that he will be stuck with Nessa. To emphasise this journey I begin the show with quite strong movement and body language. Boq is very sure of himself and I make sure to portray no apprehension with my body while speaking to Glinda. I keep my eyes locked on hers while we speak, keep my head up and back straight. Once in servitude to Nessa, my body language and movement become quite stiff and almost robotic, as Boq feels he has almost forgotten how to be himself. Finally, once Elphaba shows up, Boq almost feels like a cornered animal. My movement becomes fast, jittery and nervous, my eyes dart around the room and I keep a lower position, ready to pounce or run at any moment.

### **STILLNESS AND SILENCE:** Are there moments of stillness or silence that you find most impactful in revealing Boq's internal turmoil?

Boq is a character who rarely gets a chance to speak and when he does, he takes it. This makes his moments of stillness or silence even more impactful. These tend to come when Boq is working things out in his head, or needs to say something but is apprehensive. In Ozdust Boq feels he has to confess to Nessa that he doesn't really like her, and right before that I incorporate a moment of silence to really highlight that Boq is realizing that he has done something pretty terrible by leading Nessa on.



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## ◆ FOCUS AND VERBAL AND/OR NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE ◆

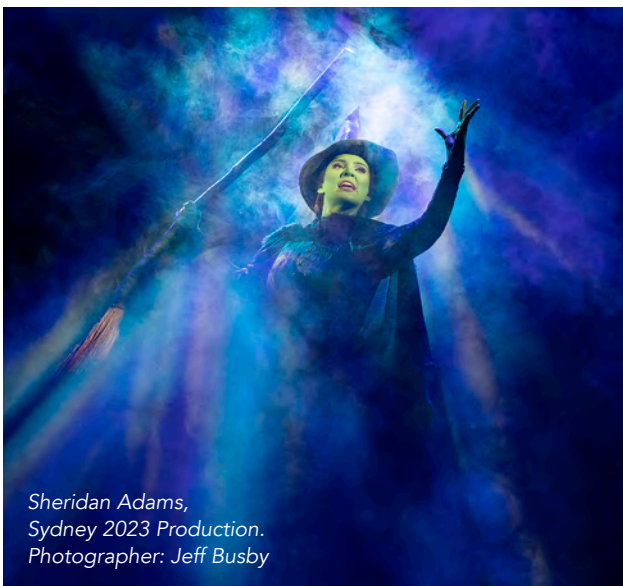
### Focus on Elphaba's Green Skin:

In the first Shiz University scene, the ensemble's physical reactions to Elphaba create a laser-like focus on her green skin, immediately establishing her as different and outcast.



### Glinda's Exuberant Verbal Language:

During Glinda's popular makeover scene, her rapid and enthusiastic verbal language, coupled with exaggerated gestures and facial expressions, conveys her excitement and desire to impress.



### Elphaba's Intense Monologue:

In Elphaba's monologue in "Defying Gravity," her powerful and emotional delivery of lines like "Something has changed within me" uses verbal language to express her transformation, while her determined gestures and piercing focus intensify the moment.

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## ◆ FOCUS AND VERBAL AND/OR NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE ◆

### Non-Verbal Chemistry Between Elphaba and Fiyero:

In the scene under the bridge, the first romantic encounter between Fiyero and Elphaba, their unspoken chemistry is conveyed through their longing glances, shared smiles, and subtle physical interactions, highlighting their deep connection.



### Chistery's Mimicry:

Chistery, the flying monkey, uses non-verbal language by mimicking the actions of others, such as imitating Glinda's graceful movements during her introduction, emphasising his observant nature.



### Wizard's Deceptive Charm:

The Wizard employs a charming tone and non-verbal language, such as his welcoming gestures, to initially win over characters like Elphaba, Glinda, and the citizens of Oz, masking his true intentions.



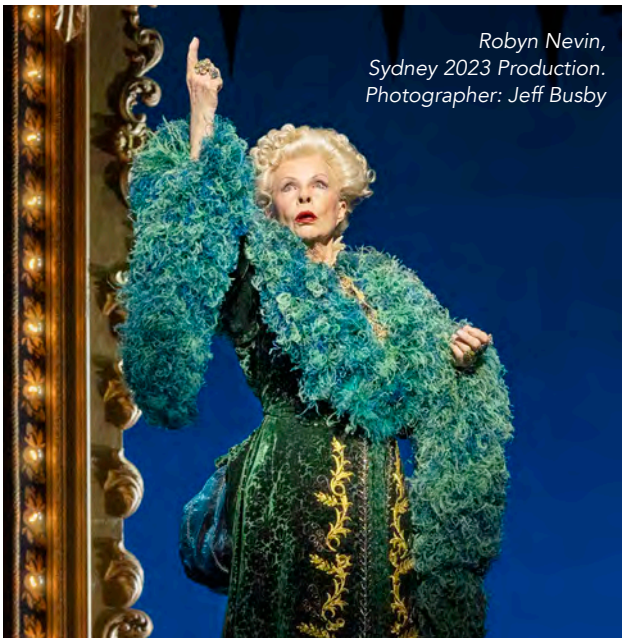
# WICKED

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## ◆ FOCUS AND VERBAL AND/OR NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE ◆

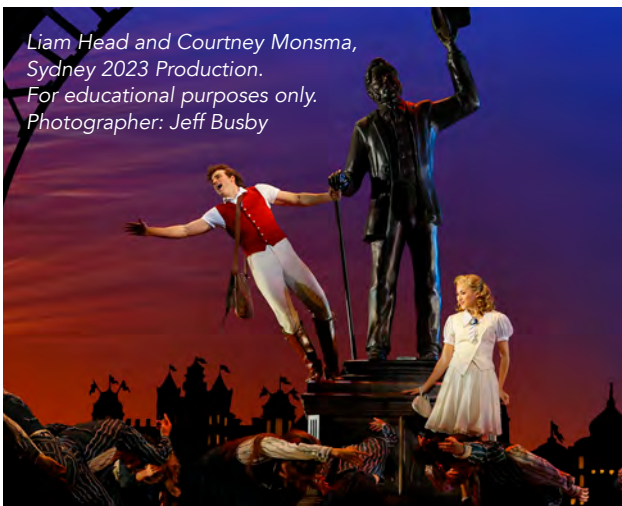
### Madame Morrible's Manipulative Non-Verbal Cues:

Madame Morrible's calculated and scheming intentions are often conveyed through her subtle non-verbal cues, such as smirks and knowing glances, which communicates her manipulative nature to the audience.



### Elphaba and Glinda's Contrast:

In the "For Good" duet, the stark contrast in Elphaba and Glinda's body language, with Elphaba's grounded and sincere movements and Glinda's elegant and airy gestures, reflects their growth and changing relationship.



### Fiyero's Transformation:

Fiyero's character development is showcased through his evolving non-verbal language, from carefree and relaxed movements in his initial scenes to more purposeful and determined actions as he joins Elphaba's cause.



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## ◆ FOCUS AND VERBAL AND/OR NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE ◆

### The Citizens' Fearful Stares:

During the witch hunt scene, the Ozians' fearful stares and hushed murmurs create a tense atmosphere, using non-verbal language to show the impact of propaganda and mob mentality.



The Cast of WICKED, Sydney 2023 Production.  
Photographer: Jeff Busby

### Elphaba's Defiance:

In "Defying Gravity," Elphaba's defiant act of rising above the stage, defying gravity, is a powerful non-verbal expression of her rebellion against societal norms.



The Cast of WICKED, Sydney 2023 Production.  
Photographer: Jeff Busby

### Boq's Awkward Gestures:

Boq's awkward and fumbling gestures, especially when trying to express his feelings to Glinda, highlight his innocence and inexperience in matters of the heart.



Kurtis Papadinis, Sydney 2023 Production.  
Photographer: Jeff Busby

# WICKED

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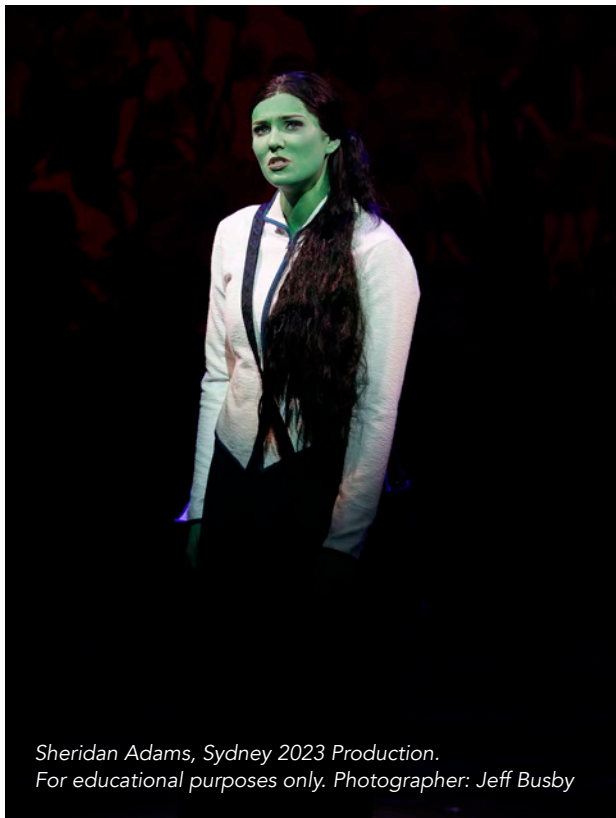
## ◆ FOCUS AND VERBAL AND/OR NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE ◆

### The Clock of the Time Dragon:

The mechanical movement of the Time Dragon Clock on stage serves as a non-verbal representation of the passage of time and the impending danger, creating tension in the story.



The Cast of WICKED,  
Sydney 2023 Production.  
For educational purposes only.  
Photographer: Jeff Busby



Sheridan Adams, Sydney 2023 Production.  
For educational purposes only. Photographer: Jeff Busby

### Elphaba's Hesitation:

In the "I'm Not That Girl" reprise, Elphaba's hesitant and trembling gestures, coupled with her wistful facial expressions, convey her unspoken longing for Fiyero.

# WICKED

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## ◆ FOCUS AND VERBAL AND/OR NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE ◆

### Dancing in "Dancing Through Life":

In the lively "Dancing Through Life" number, characters' exuberant dance movements and joyful expressions reflect the carefree atmosphere of the Shiz University party.



### The Ensemble's Reactions:

The ensemble's synchronized reactions, whether it's gasps of surprise or enthusiastic applause, add depth and authenticity to various scenes, enhancing the overall storytelling.



# WICKED

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## ◆ ACTOR AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP ◆

### **Fourth Wall Preservation:**

WICKED adheres to the traditional separation between actors and the audience, maintaining the fourth wall. The characters do not acknowledge the presence of the audience, preserving the conventional actor-audience relationship.

### **Empathy and Identification:**

The show's complex characters and relatable themes encourage the audience to empathise with the characters. Elphaba's journey from outcast to challenger and Glinda's transformation from a popular girl to a leader with conscience, resonate with viewers, fostering a strong emotional connection.

### **Musical Numbers:**

The musical format allows characters to express their inner thoughts and emotions through song, providing insights into their motivations and dilemmas. The powerful music and lyrics invite the audience to connect with the characters on a deeper level.

### **Moral Dilemmas and Social Commentary:**

WICKED explores themes of prejudice, discrimination, and the consequences of conformity. By presenting moral dilemmas and social commentary, the show encourages the audience to reflect on these issues and their own beliefs, fostering a sense of engagement and thoughtfulness.

### **Shared Laughter and Tears:**

Moments of humour and heartache are woven into the narrative, creating a shared emotional experience between the actors and the audience. Whether it's laughing at Glinda's comedic antics or empathising with Elphaba's struggles, these moments create a sense of unity.

### **Spectacle and Visual Effects:**

The production's use of stunning visuals and theatrical effects, such as Elphaba's dramatic flight during "Defying Gravity," captivates the audience's attention and elicits awe. This visual engagement enhances the overall experience.

### **Audience Reaction:**

The audience's reactions, including applause, laughter, and gasps, become part of the performance's energy. Actors often feed off the audience's response, creating a reciprocal relationship where the audience's enthusiasm fuels the actors' performances.

### **Surprises and Twists:**

The show occasionally subverts expectations, revealing hidden truths or surprising character developments. These twists and revelations keep the audience engaged and invested in the unfolding narrative.

# WICKED

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## ◆ INTERRELATIONSHIPS ◆

### BETWEEN ACTING, DIRECTION, DESIGN AND THEATRE STYLES

#### Acting and Characterisation:

The actors in WICKED play a crucial role in bringing the characters to life. Their performances are characterised by depth and nuance. For example, Elphaba's portrayal requires a balance between vulnerability and strength, and Glinda's character demands a mix of humour and genuine emotion. The actors' ability to convey these complexities enhances the audience's engagement with the story.

#### Direction and Storytelling:

The direction of WICKED is instrumental in conveying the narrative's intricacies. The director's choices in blocking, pacing, and staging help guide the audience through the story's emotional highs and lows. Moments like Elphaba's ascent during "Defying Gravity" are meticulously directed to create a sense of awe and empowerment.

#### Set and Costume Design:

The set and costume designers play a pivotal role in establishing the visual world of Oz. The grandeur of the Emerald City or the foreboding of the Wizard's head are all achieved through design choices. Elphaba's iconic costume, complete with her pointed hat, green skin, and flowing cape, is instantly recognisable and contributes to her character's identity.

#### Theatre Styles and Genre Fusion:

WICKED is a fusion of various theatre styles, seamlessly blending elements of musical theatre, comedy, drama, and magical realism. This genre fusion allows the musical to navigate between moments of humour, romance, social commentary, and spectacle. For instance, the contrast between the light-heartedness of Glinda's early scenes and the political drama that unfolds later showcases the versatility of theatre styles.

#### Choreography and Movement:

Choreography and movement are integral to the storytelling in WICKED. Dance numbers like "Dancing Through Life" and "One Short Day" convey character relationships and the passage of time. Choreographic choices, such as Elphaba's powerful movements during "Defying Gravity," add an extra layer of meaning to the narrative.

#### Lighting and Sound:

Lighting and sound design contribute to the emotional impact of the musical. The use of dramatic lighting during key moments, such as Elphaba's transformation, enhances the visual spectacle. Sound effects, such as the booming voice of the Wizard when confronted by his huge mechanical head, create tension and fear.

#### Political Drama and Social Commentary:

The direction, acting, and design in WICKED work cohesively to deliver its political and social commentary. The portrayal of oppression, discrimination, and the abuse of power is conveyed through character interactions, set design, and thematic choices. This interplay between elements underscores the musical's message.



# WICKED

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## ◆ INTERRELATIONSHIPS ◆

### BETWEEN ACTING, DIRECTION, DESIGN AND THEATRE STYLES

#### Elphaba's Transformation:

Elphaba's character arc is a central focus of the musical, and her transformation is a testament to the synergy of acting, direction, and design. Initially, Elphaba is portrayed as an introverted and misunderstood outcast. The actor's performance, under the director's guidance, embodies her social awkwardness through subtle gestures, such as her hesitant posture and nervous facial expressions. As the story progresses, Elphaba's transformation into the iconic Wicked Witch is visually stunning. The elaborate costume design, complete with her signature green skin and pointed hat, is a testament to her evolution. Direction ensures that the actor's portrayal aligns with this transformation, with moments of confidence and defiance becoming increasingly pronounced. This collaborative effort allows the audience to witness Elphaba's profound journey from insecurity to empowerment.

#### Glinda's Character Arc:

Glinda's character arc is marked by her evolution from a superficial and popular girl to a leader with conscience. Acting, direction, and design come together to depict this transformation convincingly. The actor's performance undergoes a shift in vocal tone, from bubbly and frivolous to sincere and reflective, under the director's guidance. Facial expressions and body language evolve to reflect Glinda's inner conflicts. Costume design plays a pivotal role in her character development, with her extravagant gowns gradually giving way to more understated attire. Direction ensures that the actor navigates the fine line between comedy and sincerity, highlighting Glinda's endearing qualities as she matures. This collaborative approach brings depth and authenticity to Glinda's character arc.

#### Fiyero's Evolution:

Fiyero's character transformation from a carefree and reckless prince to someone who embraces love and responsibility is a testament to the collaborative efforts of acting, direction, and design. The actor's choices, directed by the director, reflect this change through shifts in body language and expression. Initially carefree and nonchalant, Fiyero's portrayal evolves to encompass a sense of responsibility and passion. Costume design supports this transition, with his attire transitioning from aristocratic elegance to a more rugged look. Direction guides the actor in conveying Fiyero's emotional growth, emphasising moments of vulnerability and determination. This collaborative approach ensures that Fiyero's character development resonates authentically with the audience, adding depth to his role in the story.

#### The Wizard's Charisma and Deception:

The Wizard's character relies on charisma and deception, and these aspects are skilfully portrayed through acting, direction, and design. The actor's performance exudes charm and authority, as directed by the director, drawing the audience into his charismatic facade. Costume design plays a significant role, with the Wizard's grand attire and accessories enhancing his presence. Direction emphasises key moments of deception, such as his unveiling, using blocking and staging to maximise their impact. The collaboration between acting, direction, and design ensures that the Wizard's character remains enigmatic and multifaceted, engaging the audience in his complex persona.

# WICKED

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## ◆ INTERRELATIONSHIPS ◆

### BETWEEN ACTING, DIRECTION, DESIGN AND THEATRE STYLES

#### Madame Morrible's Manipulation:

Madame Morrible's character arc is intricately woven by her mastery of manipulation, ambition, and the darker aspects of power, brought vividly to life by the interplay of acting, direction, and design within WICKED. As the headmistress of Shiz University, Madame Morrible initially presents herself as a nurturing, if somewhat stern, educator. However, the depth of her cunning and her true intentions gradually surface. The actor's portrayal of Madame Morrible is key to this revelation, using a calculated blend of charm and menace that shifts subtly throughout the narrative. Her gestures and tone of voice evolve from seemingly benevolent guidance to overt manipulation, reflecting her complex relationship with power and control.

Direction plays a crucial role in peeling back the layers of Madame Morrible's character, using staging and dialogue delivery to highlight her manipulative tactics and her influence over the other characters, particularly Elphaba and Glinda. The transformation in her demeanour and tactics is further accentuated by costume design, which evolves to mirror her growing influence and darker intentions. From her more reserved academic attire to more opulent and commanding ensembles, her wardrobe reflects her ascent to power within the Ozian hierarchy.

The synergy between acting, direction, and design encapsulates Madame Morrible's ambition and her pivotal role in the unfolding drama of WICKED. This collaborative effort ensures that her character arc is not only a testament to individual ambition but also serves as a commentary on the mechanisms of power and influence, making Madame Morrible a compelling and multifaceted antagonist whose presence looms large over the narrative.

#### Nessarose's Transformation:

Nessarose's character transformation is a poignant narrative thread, brought to life through the harmonious collaboration of acting, direction, and design. The actor's portrayal navigates the shift from naivety and innocence to assertiveness. Facial expressions and body language convey the emotional nuances of her journey, from love and devotion to corrupt power. Costume design plays a significant role, with her wheelchair being a central design element that symbolises her character's evolution. When we check back in with her, as the new Governess of Munchkinland, note how her costume, chair and attitude have significantly changed. Direction guides the actor in portraying Nessarose's emotional growth, ensuring that her character arc resonates deeply with the audience. This synergy allows the audience to identify the major transformation that has occurred.

#### Dillamond's Struggles with Persecution:

Doctor Dillamond's character arc is a narrative of resistance, wisdom, and the impact of discrimination, brought to life through the combined efforts of acting, direction, and design. As a Goat and a professor at Shiz University, Dillamond represents the increasingly marginalised position of Animals in Oz. The actor's performance, imbued with warmth and gravitas, conveys Dillamond's dedication to his students and his deepening concern for the future of Animals. His use of nuanced vocal tones and expressive body language communicates his wisdom and the weight of the societal changes he witnesses. Costume design, featuring elements that underscore his identity as both an Animal and an academic, reinforces the character's uniqueness and the challenges he faces. Direction highlights Doctor Dillamond's pivotal role in awakening Elphaba's awareness and activism, framing their interactions in a way that underscores the mentorship and influence he has on her path. This collaborative approach ensures that Dillamond's character arc resonates with audiences, serving as a powerful commentary on the themes of prejudice and the fight for justice.

# WICKED

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## ◆ INTERRELATIONSHIPS ◆

### BETWEEN ACTING, DIRECTION, DESIGN AND THEATRE STYLES

#### Boq's Transformation: A Journey of Love, Obligation, and Transformation

Boq's character arc in WICKED is a deeply emotional narrative that explores themes of love, obligation, and unintended transformation, all brought to life through the collaborative magic of acting, direction, and design. Initially, Boq is introduced as a kind-hearted Munchkin who harbours affection for Glinda but finds himself drawn into Nessarose's world due to her infatuation with him. The actor's portrayal of Boq adeptly captures his initial kindness and willingness to please, alongside a growing sense of entrapment as Nessarose's desires impose on his freedom.

The complexity of Boq's feelings is conveyed through subtle shifts in body language and facial expressions, from his early optimism to a more conflicted demeanour as he grapples with his feelings and obligations towards Nessarose and ultimately the twist in the story as Nessarose becomes more and more determined that he shall not leave her side.





# WICKED

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## ◆ EXAMPLE QUESTIONS ◆

This resource has been designed to help you understand the various elements of WICKED in performance. This includes character motivation, status, traits, decisions by creatives, elements of theatre composition, production roles and much more.

Use these questions as a guide to help prepare for any written coursework assessments.

There are three example answers at the bottom.

- Analyse how the use of emphasis in the production highlights the transformation of a key character. Refer to specific elements of design (such as lighting or costume) and a pivotal scene that showcases this transformation.
- Evaluate the application of rhythm through the actor's use of timing and tempo in a dramatic moment. Discuss how this contributes to the emotional depth of the scene and the overall pacing of the production.
- Discuss the role of motion in enhancing the narrative conflict within a specific scene. Consider how actors' movements and positioning contribute to the tension and resolution in the scene.
- Examine how the element of contrast is used in the set and costume design to underscore WICKED's central themes. Refer to how these design choices visually represent opposing forces or ideas within the narrative.
- Describe how cohesion is achieved through the integration of sound design with the actors' performances. Focus on a scene where this unity amplifies the intended atmosphere or mood.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of variation in the portrayal of a complex character. Consider how changes in voice, gesture, and movement reflect the character's internal journey throughout the performance.
- Investigate how the design decisions (specifically in lighting and set) and direction contribute to establishing the musical's setting. Discuss how these elements work together to transport the audience to the time and place of the narrative.
- Analyse the establishment and maintenance of the actor-audience relationship through the use of direct address or breaking the fourth wall. Discuss a moment where this technique significantly impacts the audience's engagement with the story.
- Explore how the interrelationships between acting, direction, and costume design bring to life a character's status change. Refer to a specific moment where these elements coalesce to visually and emotionally signal change to the audience.
- Discuss the use of spatial flow in staging a key scene, considering how the arrangement of actors and design elements guide the audience's focus and enhance the storytelling. Reflect on how this spatial arrangement contributes to the overall effectiveness of the scene.

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The untold true story of the Witches of Oz

## ◆ EXAMPLE QUESTIONS ◆

- Analyse the function and purpose of a central character in WICKED. Discuss how the actor's use of voice and movement contributes to revealing the character's objectives and motivations throughout the play.
- Evaluate the interpretation of the script by the production team, focusing on how directorial and design decisions enhance the portrayal of the production's key themes. Reference specific scenes where these interpretations are most evident.
- Describe how an actor uses a combination of facial expression, gesture, and stillness to realise a character's complex traits. Include examples of how these acting skills are employed to convey the character's internal conflict or growth.
- Discuss the directorial decisions that influenced the staging of a pivotal scene. How do these decisions support the actors in conveying the intended meaning of the script to the audience?
- Examine the design decisions, including set, costume, and lighting, made to interpret a significant moment in the script. How do these elements collaborate to enhance the audience's understanding of the character's status or change in status?
- Reflect on a character's development throughout the production. How do the actor's choices in voice modulation, movement, and use of silence contribute to this arc, and what role does direction play in this portrayal?
- Evaluate a scene where the integration of acting, direction, and design culminates in a powerful portrayal of the play's climax. Analyse how these elements collectively convey the peak of the character's journey.
- Analyse how the design elements (set, costume, and lighting) are specifically tailored to reflect the traits and status of a key character. Discuss how these design choices visually communicate the character's evolution or thematic significance within the production.

# WICKED

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## ◆ EXAMPLE ANSWERS ◆

**Evaluate the function and purpose of a central character in the production. Discuss how the actor's use of voice and movement contributes to revealing the character's objectives and motivations throughout the play.**

In WICKED, the portrayal of Elphaba by Sheridan Adams is a study in depth and nuance, masterfully using voice and movement to chart the character's evolution. From her first appearance, the actor imbues Elphaba with a distinct vocal warmth and a hopeful brightness in songs like "The Wizard and I". Her movements are open and unguarded, embodying Elphaba's initial innocence and optimism about her future and her potential to affect change within Oz.

As the narrative progresses and Elphaba's challenges mount, the actor subtly shifts her performance. During "Defying Gravity", one of the pivotal moments in the show, the transformation in Elphaba's character is mirrored in the actor's intensified vocal power and physicality. The actor delivers this anthem with a newfound strength and resilience, her voice soaring as she declares her independence and resistance against societal constraints. The physical manifestation of this resolve is seen in her commanding presence on stage, and her movements are deliberate and expansive, taking full command of the space around her. This scene is a turning point, not just for Elphaba's character, but also showcases the actor's range, transitioning from vulnerability to a formidable force.

The actor's use of facial expressions and body language throughout the musical adds layers to Elphaba's character, conveying complex emotions without the need for words. In quieter, more introspective moments, such as in "I'm Not That Girl", the actor's subtle gestures and nuanced expressions reveal Elphaba's inner turmoil and longing, providing a contrast to her more powerful moments. The control over her physicality in these moments speaks to the actor's deep understanding of the character, allowing the audience to empathise with Elphaba's plight deeply.

Through a detailed performance that encompasses a wide range of vocal tones, from tender to defiant, and a physical portrayal that evolves from hopeful to empowered, the actor not only brings Elphaba's character to life but also highlights her journey of self-discovery and defiance. This intricate performance underscores the central role of Elphaba in challenging the audience's perceptions and engaging them in her struggle against injustice and prejudice.



*Sheridan Adams,  
Sydney 2023 Production.  
Photographer: Jeff Busby*

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## ◆ EXAMPLE ANSWERS ◆

**Evaluate a scene where the integration of acting, direction, and design culminates in a powerful portrayal of the play's climax. Analyse how these elements collectively convey the peak of the character's journey.**

The climax of WICKED is brilliantly realised in the scene of “Defying Gravity”. This moment is a culmination of Elphaba's transformation, underscored by the integration of acting, direction, and design. The actor's powerful vocal performance, combined with defiant and liberating movements, encapsulates Elphaba's resolve to embrace her true self. Direction-wise, the scene is staged to maximise emotional impact, with Elphaba rising above the stage, symbolising her transcendence over societal constraints. The design elements, particularly the lighting and visual effects, create an ethereal atmosphere that elevates the scene's emotional depth. The green lighting accentuates Elphaba's connection to her magical powers and her acceptance of her identity. This convergence of elements powerfully portrays the peak of Elphaba's journey, her defiance against oppression, and her commitment to fighting for what she believes is right, leaving a lasting impact on the audience.

**Evaluate the application of rhythm through the actor's use of timing and tempo in a dramatic moment. Discuss how this contributes to the emotional depth of the scene and the overall pacing of the production.**

In the scene “No Good Deed”, the application of rhythm through Sheridan Adams' use of timing and tempo is pivotal in conveying Elphaba's despair and determination. The tempo of the song and Elphaba's movements start intensely and maintain a rapid pace, mirroring her frantic efforts to save those she cares about. The timing of her gestures, coupled with the crescendos in the music, intensifies the scene's emotional depth, illustrating her transition from hope to heartbreak. This rhythm not only highlights Elphaba's inner turmoil but also accelerates the pacing of the production towards its climactic resolution. The deliberate variations in tempo—especially during moments of reflection within the song—allow the audience to fully grasp the gravity of Elphaba's situation, her isolation, and her unwavering resolve to continue her fight against injustice. This masterful use of rhythm enriches the narrative, ensuring that the audience is emotionally invested in Elphaba's journey and the overarching themes of the play.



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## ◆ CREDITS ◆

This education guide includes quotations and excerpts from the musical WICKED (2003), book by Winnie Holzman and music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz.

## ◆ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ◆

**WRITER: Nick Waxman** is an award-winning teacher, director, and writer, currently leading the Theatre, Drama, and Dance department at Haileybury College. He contributes to Australian Teacher Magazine and has had a wide range of his written work published, including articles, plays, and poetry. As a PhD candidate at RMIT, Nick's research focuses on theatrical enquiry, learning environments, and student voice & agency. He serves as Treasurer for Drama Victoria and is on the board of Fusion Theatre, and is Curriculum and Resources manager for several state government projects, including the Blended Arts Project, Next Stage Project, and Positive Start Project. He has worked with VCAA in various capacities as an assessor of both the written and performance exams. He has also run workshops for drama students and teachers across Australia, Beijing, New Zealand and the USA. Nick hosts the Aside Podcast and produces the interactive video series 'Drama Victoria Presents...' He is passionate about musicals and recently wrote and staged the delightful musical 'Bearded' in 2023 and is currently working with First Nations artists on an 'open script' anthology for schools and stage.

**EDITOR: Eli Erez** is the Head of Performing Arts and Senior Productions at King David School and has over 25 years' experience as a Drama educator. He is a recipient of the Drama Victoria Life Member award for his contributions to Drama Education. He has worked in various roles for the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and has facilitated workshops for various organisations including the Melbourne Theatre Company and Malthouse Theatre. He has developed education resources for the Melbourne International Arts Festival, the Victorian Arts Centre and various independent productions, including 'Noises Off', 'Jersey Boys' and 'Come from Away'. Eli has also worked professionally as a director, writer, set designer, performer and puppeteer.

All WICKED education materials related to the VCE Theatre Studies curriculum were overseen, researched and edited by **Zara Denham** and **Jane Ross** of **The Culture Farm**.

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