

STUDY GUIDE

The Wizard of OZ

By L. Frank Baum; Music & Lyrics by Harold Arlen & E.Y. Harburg

Background Music by Herbert Stothart; Dance and Vocal Arrangements by Peter Howard; Orchestration by Larry Wilcox;

Adapted by John Kane for the Royal Shakespeare Company; Based upon the Classic Motion Picture owned by Turner Entertainment Co. and distributed in all media by Warner Bros.

Sponsored by Woodard Properties

Directed by John Gibson



Promotional photo by Will Kerner featuring (l-r): Siân Richards, Bill LeSueur, and Christiana Mitchell

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Study Guide compiled for Live Arts by Education Director Daniel Kunkel

Plot Summary

Dorothy Gale runs away from her home in Kansas with her dog Toto after their neighbor, Miss Gulch, threatens to have Toto destroyed. She meets the traveling Professor Marvel who reads her life in his crystal ball, revealing that her departure has made Dorothy's Aunt Em sad. Dorothy races home, but is suddenly caught in a cyclone and she and Toto are carried away to the land of Oz. Their arrival sets into motion an adventure down the yellow brick road in her attempt to return home. Along the way she meets a Scarecrow without a brain, a Tinman without a heart, and Lion without any courage. Together they face the Wicked Witch of the West and meet with the great and powerful Wizard of Oz.

Time & Setting

A story of two worlds, The Wizard of Oz begins in the winding plains of Kansas near the turn of the century. After being caught in a tornado, Dorothy finds herself in the miraculous land of Oz, a place with no clear time period that we would understand.

Characters

- Dorothy Gale
- Hunk/Scarecrow
- Hickory/Tinman
- Zeke/Cowardly Lion
- Professor Chester Marvel/The Wizard of Oz
- Aunt Em/Glinda
- Uncle Henry/ Emerald City Guard
- Miss Almira Gulch/The Wicked Witch of the West
- Nikko
- Citizens of Munchinkinland / Trees / Crows / Poppies / Ozians / Winkies

About the Authors

Lyman Frank Baum (Author) was born in New York on May 15, 1836. A businessman and journalist, Baum experienced many financial highs and lows throughout his adult life, but was a consummate storyteller who loved to tell stories to his four sons. In 1897, at the age of 41, Baum published his first book entitled *Mother Goose in Prose*, which became the top-selling children's book in 1899. *The Wizard of Oz* was finally published on May 17, 1900. Baum wrote under more than nine different pen names and wrote 14 novels in *The Wizard of Oz* franchise alone. "The Wizard of Oz" was so popular that the first 10,000 print copies sold out in one month, and received a rave review in *The New York Times*. Baum then turned the book into a successful Broadway musical, primarily for adults. 20 years after his death in 1919, *The Wizard of Oz* was made into one of the most famous and beloved movies of all time.



Yip Harburg (Lyrics) was an American songwriter who wrote the lyrics to over 600 songs and was known for his social conscience. He wrote for Broadway revues in the 1930s, and his song "Brother Can You Spare a Dime," became an anthem of the Depression. Recruited for Hollywood, he worked with Harold Arlen, Jule Styne, Burton Lane, Jerome Kern, and Vernon Duke. Blacklisted by the infamous House Un-American Activities Committee in 1950 for his social views, he was unable to work in movies or radio for 10 years. His Broadway shows included

lyrics for *Bloomer Girl* (1944) about women's rights and *Finian's Rainbow* (1947), which featured the first racially integrated chorus on Broadway.



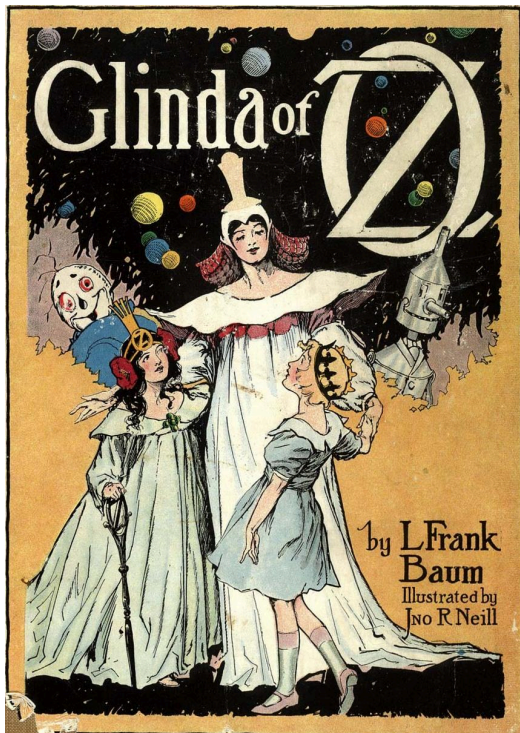
Harold Arlen (Music): After writing music for Tin Pan Alley, Harold Arlen moved on to Hollywood and Broadway. Arlen composed dozens of standards in the American songbook, including "Stormy Weather," "Get Happy," "It's Only a Paper Moon," "I've Got the World on a String," and "Blues in the Night." Arlen wrote the two songs that *The Wizard of Oz* star Judy Garland was associated with, "Over the Rainbow" and "The Man that Got Away." In 1940, he and Yip Harburg shared the Oscar for Best Song for "Over the Rainbow" from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Performance History

The MGM film *The Wizard of Oz*, based on L. Frank Baum's 1900 novel, premiered at Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood on August 15, 1939. This stage adaptation, presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company, premiered at the Barbican Centre in London on December 17, 1987. The production starred Imelda Staunton as Dorothy.

The World of Oz

L. Frank Baum wrote 14 books set in the world of Oz, beginning with *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* in 1900, and his final book *Glinda of Oz* was published posthumously in 1920. These books focus on a myriad of characters, though often revisit Dorothy, the Wizard, the Scarecrow, Tinman and Lion.



The world of Oz is expanded to include different nations like Ev, which lies across a desert from Oz, the underground Silver Islands which the Scarecrow becomes the emperor of, the Quadling Country, and dozens of other unique locations.

Baum considered himself “the Royal Historian of Oz” and created the idea that characters in the books had relayed their stories to him via telegram. All together, the publishing house Reilly & Lee published 40 Oz books including the original 14 by Baum.

These books together are known as “The Famous Forty.” All in all, seven writers are recognized as creating the canonical stories of Oz.

The Adaptations of Oz

THE WIZARD OF OZ

The first stage version of *The Wizard of Oz* was written and produced by Baum in 1902. This version had music from composer Paul Tietjens and ran for 293 performances in 1903. This was also the first adaptation to shorten the title to *The Wizard of Oz*, and was the first use of her surname, Gale, as she had no last name in the original novel.

This version differs dramatically from the source material and the eventual movie. Toto is replaced by a cow named Imogen, the Cowardly Lion is a far smaller role, the silver slippers of the book are replaced with a Ruby Ring. The plot itself is wildly different, with the Wicked Witch of the West not present in this version. The show instead focuses on a character named Pastoria, the former king of Oz who was replaced by the Wizard, who is blown in on the same tornado as Dorothy.



Pastoria regains the throne and sentences Dorothy, the Scarecrow and the Tinman to death. They are saved by the Witch of the North at the last minute however.

THE WOGGLE-BUG

Following this, in 1905, Baum would work with Frederic Chapin to create *The Woggle-Bug*, his second musical adaptation of Oz. This story focuses on Princess Ozma, a notable figure from the books who is the rightful ruler of Oz. It also features Jack Pumpkinhead, another frequent figure in both the book and subsequent film adaptations of Oz.

THE TIK-TOK MAN OF OZ

Baum's final mounted production was in 1913 with *The Tik-Tok Man of Oz*, featuring a robot named Tik-Tok and Betsy Bobbin, who arrived in Oz via ship-wreck. While much of the music of this show survives, only early drafts and fragments of the script survive. A revival was staged in 2014 by Eric Shanower. This production was successful, but never ran in New York.

RAINBOWS DAUGHTER, OZMA, and THE GIRL FROM OZ

Three other versions of Oz musicals are known to be written by Baum and never produced. These are *The Rainbow's Daughter, or the Magnet of Love*, *Ozma of Oz*, and *The Girl From Oz*.

THE WIZ

One of the two most famous stage adaptations of *The Wizard of Oz*, is *The Wiz*, written by William F. Brown with music by Charlie Small. *The Wiz* was notable for its all-Black cast and the original Broadway run won seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical. It was adapted into a movie in 1978 starring Diana Ross as Dorothy and Michael Jackson as the Scarecrow.

WICKED

Based on the novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, *Wicked* opened in San Francisco in 2003 and has continued as one of the most financially successful Broadway shows of all time, trailing only behind *The Lion King* as the highest grossing Broadway show of all time. The story tells the story of *The Wizard of Oz* from the perspective of Elphaba, eventually known as the Wicked Witch of the West, and Galinda, eventually Glinda the Good.

The Oz Film Manufacturing Company

Founded in 1914 by L. Frank Baum, the Oz Film Manufacturing Company was a film studio designed to create family-oriented films. Their three most notable films *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, *The Magic Cloak of Oz*, and *His Majesty, the Scarecrow of Oz* were part of only four films they produced.

The studio would close in 1915, but its facility would be used by the company that became Paramount Pictures. The films they produced are some of the few surviving attempts at Oz adaptations, and all films were written by Baum himself.

About the Directors

John Gibson worked at Live Arts for eighteen years, from 1992 to 2010, most of that time as Executive and Artistic Director. Among his favorites of the several dozen shows he directed at Live Arts are VENUS, THE DAZZLE, SWEENEY TODD, and CABARET. Under his leadership, the theater introduced programs for young people and for new works, consistently showcased under-represented playwrights, began the still-thriving Fringe Team, and launched Pay-What-You-Can performances. He's lived in Atlanta since 2011, with his husband John Bluhm, and where he works as an organizer and leader, sharing and shaping the tools that build resilient communities. He's glad to be back, and grateful for the warm welcome.

Ray Nedzel (Co-Director) is a 21-year loyal volunteer with Live Arts. He has directed six main stage shows and starred in seven. He is the Artistic Director of Whole Theatre which has produced over 90 new theatrical works and the creator and co-producer of 24/7 – seven new plays in 24 hours. Ray is the Director of the Live Arts' Fringe team which provides a crew of technicians and stage managers who travel and work each summer at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in support of two Worldstrides programs. In 2023 Ray sailed across the southern Atlantic Ocean from Uruguay to South Africa. He lives in Charlottesville with several feral, neighborhood cats.

Lance Brenner (Music Director) is proud to be a friend of many friends of Dorothy and is especially honored to be working with John Gibson on the challenge of pulling apart and reassembling brick by yellow brick such a familiar classic with a talented cast and crew. Lance has previously performed in the Live Arts production of HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH and his bands have been featured acts in Live Arts gala fundraisers. Additionally, he has served as musical director for UVA's production of *Hair* at Heritage Theater. In his spare time, Lance is a songwriter and performer who has assembled his own band of misfits in his absurdist rock/theatrical punk group "The Falsies". Lance lives in Charlottesville with his wife, children, and two orange tabbies. He continues to produce records for local, regional, and international clients in his studio.

Christine C. Wyatt (Choreographer) is a choreographer, dancer/performer, and facilitator of movement experiences. Originally from Baltimore, MD, she began dance training at age nine.

After 15 years of performance and training in music, theater, and dance, Christine earned her B.F.A. in Dance & Choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University. For the past 10 years, she's been teaching, choreographing, and performing in Richmond, VA, centering community, equity, and liberation in her work with multi-generational communities and youth. Collaborations with artists, directors, and students have shaped her approach to using art for storytelling and empowerment. Christine has choreographed for Richmond Ballet's Minds and Motion, Virginia Repertory Children's Theatre, and Firehouse Theatre. Her most recent credits include *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* (2024, VCU), *Disney's The Descendants* (2024, VCU), and *A Midsummer Night's SLAM* (2024) at Dogwood Dell.

About the Dramaturg

Sara Holdren is a director, teacher, and writer from Virginia. A child of Live Arts, she has acted, designed, taught, built, directed, and served on staff here. She is the theater critic for *New York Magazine/Vulture.com*, the recipient of the 2016-2017 George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism, and the co-founder of the theater project Tiltyard. Sara lives in Jersey City with her partner Beau and their feline children.

Talkback Information

The audience talkback with members of the cast and crew of THE WIZARD OF OZ is scheduled for 10pm on Thursday, December 12, 2024, in the GibsonTheater (123 E. Water Street, 2nd floor), facilitated by Education Director Daniel Kunkel. You do not need to purchase a ticket to the December 12 show to attend the talkback. This program is provided free of charge to the Charlottesville community.

Please email Daniel daniel@livearts.org with questions about the event.