



New OZ Production of The Wizard of OZ for a New Century

Rehearsals have begun in Adelaide for **Windmill's** new large-scale multi-media production of one of the cornerstones of children's literature and film, ***The Wizard of Oz***.

The season premieres at the **Dunstan Playhouse** on **Saturday 27 June** and plays through until **11 July** ahead of an October season at the Sydney Theatre co-presented by the Sydney Theatre Company.

Directed by Windmill's Artistic Director **Rosemary Myers** this will be the first new professional production of *The Wizard of Oz* in Australia in many years and marks the seventieth anniversary (1939) of the release of the iconic MGM film starring *Judy Garland*.

Ursula Yovich leads the cast in the role of *Dorothy*. Ursula, who recently performed *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* at *G'Day USA* at Carnegie Hall in New York, also starred in Baz Luhrmann's film *Australia* as *Daisy*.

Ursula is joined by **Luke Clayson** as *Scarecrow*; **Hamish Fletcher** as *Toto*; **Patrick Graham** as *Tin Man*; **Jude Henshall** as the *Glinda the Good Witch*; **Ezra Juanta** as the *Lion*; **Alirio Zavarce** as *The Wizard* and **Geoff Revell** as the *Wicked Witch of the West*.

Jonathon Oxlade has designed the spectacular new set and animated Land of Oz. Music is by **Jethro Woodward** who, together with the other performers, sings and plays live throughout the show. Lighting is by **Geoff Cobham** and video design is by **Chris More**.

Windmill's production (based on the adaptation by John Kane for the Royal Shakespeare Company) is both a tribute to the magic and originality of the original adventure whilst presenting a contemporary re-telling packing in all of the elements that modern 8+ audiences enjoy - adventure, daring do, fun, magic, darkness and scary bits.

Director Rose Myers said, 'Windmill's new production looks doesn't try to emulate the

film but rather maps the original story into the modern world in step with the issues that face young people today - the obsession with money, beauty and esteem. It's a daring, flamboyant and exhilarating theatrical journey for the whole family and we have invigorated it with some surprising twists.'

Written by *L Frank Baum*, who first looked over the rainbow in 1900, *The Wizard of Oz* is regarded as a timeless classic for more than a century of readers, film and theatre goers. Books sales in the twentieth century alone exceeded 10 million in several editions. The 1939 film is considered to be the most popular film of all time.

For further media information:

Neil Ward Publicity 08 8361 3577, 0438 095 580 or neil@neilwardpublicity.com.au



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