



2003

### The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

Mindy M. Nelsen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

---

#### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Nelsen, Mindy M. (2003) "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 24 : Iss. 1 , Article 18.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol24/iss1/18>

This Play Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

Koste, Virginia Glasgow. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Coach House Press, Inc., 1982. ISBN 0880201061. Contact publisher regarding price. 44 pp.

Reviewer: Mindy M. Nelsen

Reading Level: primary, intermediate

Rating: shortcomings

Genre: Fantasy Plays; Plays; Humorous Plays; Occult Plays

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Wizards--Juvenile drama; Oz (Imaginary place)--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Imagination is a wonderful thing, and friends are to be made, wherever you are.

Production Requirements: Extensive and complicated set needed (7 scene changes) with a large number of specific props.

Acts: 1, with possible intermission

Run Time: 1.5 hours

Characters: 13 principal and 7+ ensemble

Cast: It is suggested that adults play the 7 principle characters, with the exception of Dorothy, and that children play the other roles. There is some double casting involved with the opportunity to do more.

There must be 6 men and 5 women, large casts of the ensemble and the rest of the roles are flexible as to gender.

Time Period: Summer of 1900

This is the basic story of The Wizard of Oz, but as told by the author himself, Frank Baum, who acts as the narrator. The traditional characters and plot are included.

The play is founded upon a good idea: to create the world of the Wizard of Oz, in a clearly theatrical environment, where the author himself addresses the audience and explains the reasons he did certain things in the book and tells about his favorite parts. While the concept is imaginative, the production itself is clearly lacking in delivery. The characters have become almost “slap stick” in this adaptation, halting the action and progression of the play with non-relative jokes and tricks, most predominately with regards to the lion (joking about “lion-hide”) or Oz (pointless commentary about the government). They are predictable and not because we are familiar with the story, but rather because they continue in the same circle of directionless dialogue, without improvement or development. This adaptation also leans largely on MGM’s widely know screen version. Several of the repeated lines are from the lyrics in the film. There are nice moments in which the character of Frank relates his feelings and his excitement with the audience and for a time he becomes a part of the production when he assumes the character of the wizard of oz; but these moments are few and far between. The playwright is specific in her production desires and offers complicated and time consuming suggestions, such as an elaborate set, water being thrown on the stage, a witch melting, bursts of smoke, large musical underscores, legs shrinking under the house, wind, etc. These could be quite costly and most-likely unnecessary.