



MEDIA RELEASE

February 9, 2010

AMANDA HARRISON LEAVES WICKED FOR NEW CHALLENGES

It was announced today that Amanda Harrison, who has played the role of Elphaba, the green-skinned Wicked Witch of the West in the musical WICKED since it opened in Melbourne two years ago, is moving on. After an extensive nation-wide search, Amanda was cast in this iconic role in December 2007, alongside Lucy Durack as Glinda the Good Witch, and opened in July 2008 at the Regent Theatre in Melbourne. After a record breaking 13 month season in Melbourne, WICKED opened at Sydney's Capitol Theatre with Harrison and Durack again leading the cast.

After this lengthy, exhilarating and exhausting season of performances, and a recent time of rest and reflection, Harrison has decided to move on. "I've had the most incredible time with WICKED, a wonderful roller coaster ride," Harrison said. "It has been a huge challenge conquering this role, the role of my career so far. It has given me so much, from the friendships I'll carry with me forever and the opportunities outside of WICKED like singing at Carnegie Hall and at Carols in the Myer Music Bowl.

"But the very reasons I've loved playing Elphaba are the reasons I now need to hang up my hat and broomstick. It's such a demanding and all absorbing role. I'm very much looking forward to seeing new Elphabas rising to the challenge, and to new challenges for me, be they film or TV or maybe down the track, more musical theatre, my first love."

WICKED Australia Co-Producer John Frost thanked Harrison for her enormous contribution to making WICKED the huge success it is. "Amanda Harrison brought an edge to Elphaba that is rarely seen; passion, intelligence and inner strength, as well as soaring vocals. WICKED is unique, a phenomenon, quite unlike any other musical. It's one of those rare shows that touches people deeply, mostly through the extraordinary friendship between Elphaba and Glinda. We were blessed to find Amanda and Lucy for these roles, and Amanda has set the bar high for the Elphabas who come after her. I wish her well for the next adventure in her career."

The role of Elphaba will now be shared between Jemma Rix, who has been the Standby Elphaba since the show opened in Melbourne, and Pippa Grandison. Rix, from the NSW Central Coast, played Elphaba in a world first staged adaptation of WICKED in Japan before returning to Australia to join the Australian production. Grandison has played leading roles in musicals like *The Witches of Eastwick*, *We Will Rock You*, *Company* and STC's *Into the Woods* and *A Little Night Music*.

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