

BROADWAY

what's coming to
OMAHA

Give My **Regards**
to **Broadway**

The Orpheum hosts these popular musicals in 2011:



Graphic by Molly Rakoczy



Shelby **Stefanski**
Becky **Fuqua**

Her ticket is ripped, and the double doors open in front of her. As she walks into the theater, a whole new world is set before her. She walks to her seat and uncomfortably climbs over the family of five taking up the whole row. The anticipation starts to wear on her after looking at her watch for the fifth time. The first tones of the overture begin, the curtain opens and the new world set in front of her starts to suck her in.

As the scene transitions from the city streets to the home of the Wizard in the musical "Wicked,"

junior Hailey Wolf, a Broadway connoisseur of sorts, is thoroughly impressed.

"Wicked' is really grand. It has beautiful music and a beautiful storyline; the effects and everything are really dazzling," Wolf said.

Broadway musicals have long been sweeping the nation, with a few hitting the Omaha area this year. These musicals include "Wicked," "Jersey Boys," "Young Frankenstein" and "Les Miserables." Some are more realistic than others: "Les Miserables" deals with a French prisoner in the 1800s, while "Wicked" is set in the mythical land of Oz.

Freshmen Toni Ptacek and Julie Brumbach both saw the musical "Wicked." They both agree that it was a very high-energy performance. "I like how Galinda was always perky," Ptacek said.

"I liked how the set looked and the actors' energy," Brumbach said.

Musicals have been coming and going in the Omaha area. "Wicked" is making its second return to the Orpheum Theatre, its first time being two years ago. Other musicals that are coming in 2012 include "Fiddler on the Roof" and "Rock of Ages."

From the old Vaudeville stage to the contemporary musicals shown throughout the world today, musical theatre has evolved significantly over the course of the past century.

The universal symbol of theatre at its finest is Broadway. Broadway is not only a famous street in New York City, but an embodiment of the efforts of thousands of performers who dedicate their lives to the arts.

Sometimes called "The Big White Way," Broadway became popular in New York City's Time Square in the 1920s. It is now home to more than 40 theaters, including the Nederlander Theater and the famous Broadway Theater.

Broadway plays are written all the time, some common ones being "Phantom of the Opera," "Mary Poppins" and "Jesus Christ Superstar."

Wolf saw "In the Heights," a contemporary Broadway musical, as a birthday present from her aunt.

"Last year I went to Connecticut to see my aunt over my birthday for spring break. I opened up a birthday card, and there were two tickets inside. I had never heard of it, so I was like 'Oh this should be good.' I tried to be open-minded," Wolf said.

"My aunt described it to me, so I kind of knew what it was about when we got there. It's about the lives of young people in Washington Heights, New York, over a very special weekend."

Some elements of contemporary musicals are the unique song and dance numbers performed, which Wolf claimed "In the Heights" exhibited.

"It's very modern, and the dances in it are incredible. Some of the songs were even in Spanish. The performers were really talented - Corbin Bleu played the lead role," Wolf laughed. "I saw him when I was in Times Square before the show, but when I saw him in the show, he did really well. He is a very talented actor and singer."

Wolf had the opportunity to see "Wicked" with her mother and sisters when it came to Omaha. When asked how "Wicked" compared to "In the Heights," she had this to say: "In the Heights' is equally amazing, but it's gritty and real."

The curtain opens to the final scene. The scarecrow comes out and opens a trap door. There is a collective gasp as Elphaba herself appears. The last song, a combination of the opening number "No One Mourns the Wicked" and "For Good," makes the entire audience teary-eyed. The curtain falls and the actors receive a standing ovation for their latest endeavor.

As musicals like "Wicked" and "In the Heights" show, Broadway is still at its peak in popularity and will continue for many years to come.

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-Hailey Wolf, junior

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Tickets for shows at The Orpheum can be purchased online at <http://theatreomaha.com/> or at <http://www.omahaperformingarts.org/orpheum/>. Tickets are also available at the box office at The Holland Center. For select shows, students can bring their ID's a half hour before the show and buy any available seats at a reduced price.

Sources: <http://theatreomaha.com/?gclid=CPOrmYCX5acCFYpN2godejchSw>
<http://www.applause-tickets.com/wicked-broadway-tickets-nyc.asp>
<http://www.show-and-stay.co.uk/les-miserables.html>
<http://www.panicmanual.com/2010/06/16/musical-review-jersey-boys-2009-des-mcanuff/>