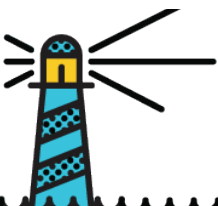


## **Journey to Oz**

*Written and Directed by Christopher Parks of Experiential Theater Company  
Based on the work of Author L. Frank Baum and Illustrator W.W. Denslow*

**February 13 - March 21, 2024**

*Content for this activity packet was created with the help of  
The Children's Theater of Charlotte and Florida Repertory Theater*





## About the Show

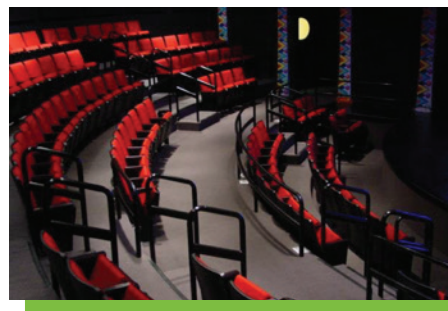
This unique adaptation of the *Wizard of Oz* puts the audience front and center, literally! Kids become cast members, singing, dancing, and acting onstage alongside the actors. One of our most interactive shows at LICM Theater, this production received rave reviews in its 2017 run. Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion take the audience with them on this lively, playful trip down the yellow brick road.

*Journey to Oz* was commissioned by Florida Repertory Theatre and written by Christopher Parks for their 2014-2015 season. The play was first produced as a staged reading as part of Florida Repertory Theatre's Inaugural PlayLab Festival in May 2014, with the original production premiering in October 2014.

## Know Before You Go

### Where You Will Go

**Long Island Children's Museum Theater** is a professional family theater at the heart of the Museum. We offer a range of performance styles for families and schools including musicals, plays, puppetry, dance and music. Our high-quality live performances celebrate audience interactivity, are often literature based and always tell a great story.



**Question Quest!** Have you ever seen a live theater performance? What do you do when you see something on stage that you like? Do you clap? Cheer? Smile?

Give acting a try with

[\*On Stage: Theater Games and Activities for Kids.\*](#)

## Who You Will See...

### The Production Staff

**Theater Program Director** – James Packard

**Playwright/Director** – Christopher Parks

**Puppet Artist** – Austin Costello

**Stage Manager/Swing** – Lisa Rudin

**Assistant Stage Manager/Swing** - Scott Earle

### The Cast

**Player 1 (Glinda)** - Carrie Heffernan

**Player 2 (Wicked Witch)** - Freyja Goldstein

**Player 3 (Scarecrow)** - Kyle Mahoney

**Player 4 (Cowardly Lion)** - Austin Costello

**Player 5 (Tin Woodman)** - Dontalle Sylvester

## What is Experiential Theater?

"If you are in the room, you are in the show." - Experiential Theater Company

Student and family audiences typically come to the theater expecting to see a play, but what they find out very quickly is that they are there to *be* in a play. They are co-creators and collaborators who sing, dance and act alongside professional performers. It is a safe environment, so whatever our audience's interest in participating, everyone feels just as welcome to watch as those who come up and play.

## About the Playwright/Director.

Christopher Parks is a director, playwright and board game designer. He is the Producing Artistic Director of the Experiential Theater Company, an international touring company dedicated to creating immersive theater productions for young audiences and their families. He was also the founding Co-Director/Owner of the New Jersey Kingdom of Somerset (1989-1998). As a playwright, he has written plays, musicals and interactive immersion experiences for family audiences. Past playwriting commissions include *The Odyssey Experience*, *The Arabian Nights* and *The Adventures of Perseus* (McCarter Theatre Center); *Aesop's Fables*, *Healthily Ever After* (Young Audiences NJEPA); *The Spirit of Poe*, *Journey to Oz* (Florida Repertory Theatre); *Sunjata Kamalenya* (John F. Kennedy Center for the Arts/McCarter Theatre); *GRIMMZ Fairy Tales*, *The Invisible Boy*, *Step into the Looking Glass* (Children's Theatre of Charlotte); *Eréndira: Una Cenicienta Mexicana* (tricycle Theater for Youth); *Ms. Vivi's Class: Together* (Cleveland Playhouse); *Playing at Peter Pan* (Hangar Theater); *A Christmas Carol - Experiential* (Long Island Children's Museum) and *The Sleepy Hollow Adventure* (Sigmon Theatrical). Christopher is also currently the lead designer for the Make-A-Play series of board games produced by Trike Theater. [www.exptheater.org](http://www.exptheater.org)

## Books to Life

Our production is set in a library, where the Players are surrounded by books that they are excited about reading. Individual books and stacks of books are used as props and set pieces, and the actors cut and fold pages of books to create costume pieces and puppets. Books are not only the center of the story, but an integral part of how the actors tell the story!



## Activity

### Fold your own pages to create your own Toto!

If available, get your grownup's permission to use pages from old books to repurpose them into a textual Toto.

**Question Quest!** Do you go to the library at school, or the public library? What do you like best about it?

**Try this library scavenger hunt!**

**More fun library Activities**



## The Weather in Oz

In the Oz stories, the characters travel to Oz because of a big weather event: a cyclone, an earthquake, falling through a volcano, swept away by a tidal wave...

In our show, the players use their bodies to react to the event as if it is really happening. They pretend to fight a strong wind or fall from an avalanche. You can do that too with this game!

## Activity

First, imagine that you are outside. Pretend that the wind is blowing. Which direction is it coming from? Imagine you can feel it on your face and that it's blowing your hair. What does it feel like? Now imagine that there is force to it, and it is making it hard to walk. Pretend to walk into the wind. Maybe you must put an arm up to block it, or it pushes your body backwards. Oh no, you are starting to lose your battle against the wind and blow away! Aaaahhh!

[Sing and Dance along to this song about the weather!](#)

## Dorothy Goes on Trial

In our show, Dorothy is put on trial for squashing the Wicked Witch of the East and stealing her shoes. She is brought to a courtroom to determine whether she is guilty or innocent, and what her punishment might be if found guilty. A flying monkey lawyer is conducting the trial for the Wicked Witch of the West. He questions Dorothy and some witnesses, like the Mayor of Munchkinland and Little Anna Lou. The Witch of the West is presiding over the trial and decides the outcome.



Photo credit: Image by pikisuperstar on Freepik

### What is a trial?

Imagine you are playing on the jungle gym at school with three friends. You all decide to go play on the swings, but there are only two swings, and three people. Everyone starts arguing about who gets to use the swings. How is a decision going to be made? There are three options:

- 1) Figure out among yourselves. For example, you could take turns, let each kid swing for five minutes and then switch, or some other plan.
- 2) You could bring in a fourth friend to help work out a compromise.
- 3) You could go to a teacher to help solve the problem. This is the equivalent of litigation, which can lead to a trial. An authority figure who is unbiased can listen to both sides of the situation and device a fair solution.

## Activity

Hold a mock trials with these resources from the New Jersey State Bar Association:

[Grades K-2](#) [Grades 3-6](#)





Image by Rawpixel.com

## What would Dorothy do? Thinking like the character.

Some of our audience members volunteered to become characters in our world of Oz. They join the actors onstage as Dorothy, or the Scarecrow, among other roles. They are asked questions and answer as if they are the character they are pretending to be. It's fun to pretend to be a character!

To practice a character that might be different than you, try this improv game!

Answer this questions: What is your favorite food?

Now answer it as if you are your parent... is the answer different than yours?

Now answer it as if you are a 3-year-old... what might their favorite food be?

Now answer it as if you are a puppy... what would a puppy like to eat?

Were the answers different from one another? How else are these characters different than you?

### **Here's a theater game to practice thinking like a character.**

Work in groups of four. Imagine you are all at a family dinner. Choose which family member each person is going to play. It could be any character that might be at a family dinner, like a parent, a child, a baby, or maybe a grandparent. Then act out a scene where the family is having dinner together.

While playing the scene, think about the characters and what they would do. For example: who sets the table? Who serves the food? Who helps the baby or secretly feeds the dog under the table?

How might the characters feel, for example: maybe one is very hungry? What if your character didn't like the food being served?

The first step to playing a different character is to try to think like them. And they might think differently than you. Putting ourselves into other people's shoes helps us see the world differently and develop empathy.

### **[Read about the benefits of Improv.](#)**

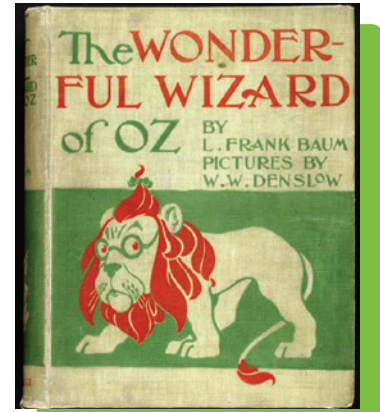


## There's No Place Like Home

Dorothy wants to go home! She misses her family. Her home is where she feels warm and cozy. Draw a picture of a place where you feel warm and cozy. Would you include family or friends in the picture? Maybe a special toy or stuffed animal?

## About The Book

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* is an American children's novel written by author L. Frank Baum and illustrated by W. W. Denslow, originally published by the George M. Hill Company in Chicago on May 17, 1900. It has since been reprinted numerous times, most often under the title *The Wizard of Oz*, which is the title of the popular 1902 Broadway musical, as well as the iconic 1939 musical film adaptation. Another musical theater adaptation called *The Wiz*, was produced on Broadway in 1974. It is being brought back to Broadway in March 2024.



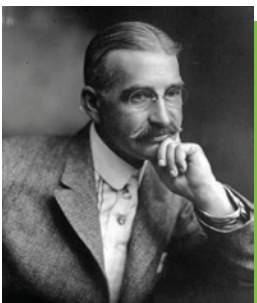
The story chronicles the adventures of a young farm girl named Dorothy in the magical land of Oz, after she and her pet dog Toto are swept away from their Kansas home by a cyclone. The novel is one of the best-known stories in American literature and has been widely translated. In January 1901, George M. Hill Company finished printing the first edition, 10,000 copies, which quickly sold out. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* sold three million copies by the time it entered the public domain in 1956.

The Library of Congress has declared it "America's greatest and best-loved homegrown fairytale." Its groundbreaking success and the success of the Broadway musical adapted from the novel led Baum to write 13 additional Oz books that serve as official sequels to the first story.

**Question Quest!** Are you familiar with the story of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*? If so, what did you think about it? Do you like to read? What is your favorite book to read?

**Click Further:** [Check out this complete list of books based on the land of Oz.](#)

## About The Author



L. Frank Baum is one of the most significant American authors who ever lived, largely in part because of his canon of stories about the amazing and fantastical world of Oz.

In addition to the Oz series, Baum wrote many other fantasy novels, short stories, poems and scripts. Prior to acquiring fame as an author, Baum worked in a wide variety of jobs including as a salesman, department store owner, newspaper editor, manager of an Opera house and breeder of prize-winning chickens! Baum's experiences and adventures surely enhanced the sense of imagination and wonder that emerged in his writing.

"No thief, however skillful, can rob one of knowledge, and that is why knowledge is the best and safest treasure to acquire."

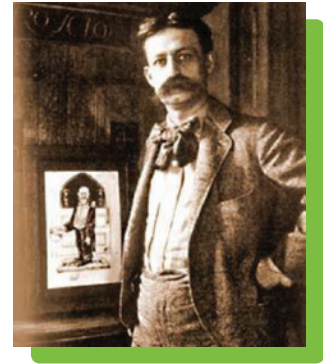
- L. Frank Baum, *The Lost Princess of Oz*.

**[Read more quotes by L. Frank Baum](#)**

## The Illustrator

Illustrator and caricaturist W. W. Denslow lived from 1856 to 1915. He created the illustrations for *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* book. Several of his illustrations are featured in the stage production of *Journey to Oz*.

Denslow worked with L. Frank Baum on two other books before their professional relationship dissolved following an argument over the royalties for the 1902 stage adaptation of Oz. After their collaboration ended, Denslow went on to purchase a small island in Bermuda and crown himself King Denslow I.



**Click Further:** [Check out more of W. W. Denslow's illustrations.](#)



## Fun Facts: Movie vs. Book

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was a wildly successful book when it was published in 1900. When it became a movie in 1939, movie producers made a few significant changes. Many audiences today are more familiar with the movie than the book. *Journey to Oz* is a more faithful adaptation of the book. Here are a few key differences between the movie and the book!

- In the book, the Land of Oz is a real place. In the movie, it is a place that Dorothy only visits in her dreams.
- Dorothy encounters three magical women who help her along the way. They are the unnamed Good Witch of the North, Glinda the Good Witch of the South and the Queen of the Field Mice. In the Movie, Dorothy only meets Glinda, the Good Witch.
- The Color of Dorothy's shoes is silver in the book. The movie changed them to ruby slippers to take advantage of the movie being in Technicolor.
- Everything is green in the Emerald City. In the book everyone must wear spectacles so that everyone and everything appears green.
- Even though the book contains the winged monkeys, they are not the Wicked Witch's army. They are only called at the command of the magical cap that the Wicked Witch has control over. She can only call the monkeys three times with the magical cap. It is like a genie offering three wishes only.
- In the book, when the Lion falls into a deadly sleep in the field of poppies, a group of field mice rescue him by pulling him out of the field with bits of string.
- The Witch plays a relatively small role in the book, only meeting her in the second half of the story. In the film, however, the witch practically drives the entire plot.

**Click Further:** For a more in-depth comparison between the book and the film, read this [blog post](#).

## Show Time!

### Before the Show

- Please do not bring food or beverages into the Theater (bottled water is permitted).
- Please turn off or silence cell phone when entering the Theater.

### During the Show

- LICM is a place that encourages audience interaction in most of our shows. However, we ask that the audience remain seated until prompted by the actors to enter the stage area or respond to questions.
- The use of recording and/or photographic equipment is strictly prohibited.

### After the Show

- Stay and meet the performers!



## Making Connections

Visit LICM exhibit galleries to extend your *Journey to Oz* fun.

### KEVA Planks

Build your own Emerald City using KEVA Planks!

**Question Quest!** What types of buildings are in your Emerald City? Why did you choose these buildings? Who lives there? How many KEVA Blocks tall is your tallest building?

### Pattern Studio

Become the Wizard of Patterns and create your own yellow brick road for Dorothy to follow using tessellation tiles, pattern stamps, or any of the other stations in this magical gallery.

**Question Quest!** What is a pattern? Do you see patterns at school, or at home?

*Click Further:* Play more with patterns in this free online **game!**







### **Your House My House**

Dorothy lives in Kansas on the prairie. Her house is different from one in a city or suburb. Our exhibit Your House My House takes us on a fantastic journey into the home of people around the world - no passport or luggage required! People live in all kinds of houses around the world; big houses, small houses, ones that float or pack up and go! Geography, weather, culture, available materials and much, much more influence the house we live in.

Walk into versions of a Mongolian herders ger, a stilt house from a Malaysian fishing village and an m'bare from the tropics of Fiji in this bilingual exhibit. In each house, you can explore furniture, cooking utensils, games and musical instruments to learn about the lifestyle and culture of the people who live in these houses. After exploring these three unique houses, sit down at a computer and design your own "dream house" - choose furniture, colors and patterns to make it perfect for you! You can also "Build Your Own" as you design your own log house. World maps, globes and photographs are found throughout the exhibit to serve as reference points.

## **Next at the LICM Theater**

April 2024 to June 2024

### **Back by popular demand after a sold-out 2023 run!**

The Pigeon, Bus Driver and some zany passengers sing and dance their way to helping The Pigeon find his "thing" in this upbeat, energetic comedy based on four of Mo Willems' popular Pigeon books. Featuring a live band to bring Deborah Wicks La Puma's jazzy score to life, our audiences will thoroughly enjoy singing and flapping along with The Pigeon and friends.



"Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus" is a perfect way to introduce children to theatre and the humorous stories from Willems' books. Families learn about the power of persistence, the importance of trying new things, and handling big emotions.

By Mo Willems and Mr, Warburton

Music by Deborah Wicks La Puma

Produced by special arrangement from Music Theater International.

### **Long Island Children's Museum appreciates the support of the following individuals, foundations and organizations:**

Roni Kohen-Lemle and Robert S. Lemle • Cornelia T. Bailey Foundation  
The Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation



**Council on  
the Arts**