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“Spellbinding, magical, bewitching even. This Broadway phenomenon lives up to its hype.”

-The Tampa Tribune

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**BROADWAY’S BIGGEST BLOCKBUSTER TO RETURN TO THE
STRAZ CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, FEB. 3 - 28**

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BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ AND WINNIE HOLZMAN
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY GREGORY MAGUIRE

Feb. 3-28

Carol Morsani Hall at the Straz Center

Regularly priced tickets start at \$50

Tampa, Fla. – After breaking box office records and selling out in record time in 2006 and 2007, the smash-hit musical **WICKED** returns to the David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts (formerly the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center), Feb. 3-28. Tickets are on sale now.

With music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz (*Godspell*, *Pippin*, Academy Award®-winner for *Pocahontas* and *The Prince of Egypt*) and book by Winnie Holzman (“My So Called Life,” “Once And Again” and “thirtysomething”), **WICKED**, the untold story of the witches of Oz, is directed by two-time Tony® Award winner Joe Mantello (*Take Me Out*, *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, *The Vagina Monologues*, *9 to 5*) and features musical staging by Tony® Award winner Wayne Cilento (*Aida*, *The Who’s Tommy*, *How To Succeed...*).

Based on the best-selling 1995 novel by Gregory Maguire, **WICKED**, winner of 26 major awards, including a Grammy® and three Tony® Awards, is the untold story of the witches of Oz. It is produced by Marc Platt, Universal Pictures, The Araca Group, Jon B. Platt and David Stone.

“We are delighted to host the return of **WICKED** at the Straz Center,” said Straz Center President and Chief Executive Officer, Judy Lisi. “The show generates so much excitement in our community and among our patrons. We are looking forward to a month of high-quality performances and sold-out houses.”

Long before Dorothy drops in, two other girls meet in the Land of Oz. One – born with emerald-green skin – is smart, fiery and misunderstood. The other is beautiful, ambitious and very popular. **WICKED** tells the story of their remarkable odyssey, and how these two unlikely friends grow to become the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda the Good Witch.

WICKED has “cast quite a spell” (*Washington Post*) throughout North America, breaking box office records in every city that it has played, including Toronto, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington, DC, Philadelphia and Boston to name a few.

Called “a cultural phenomenon” by *Variety* and “the best musical of the decade” by *Entertainment Weekly*, **WICKED** continues to thrill audiences around the world. There are currently eight productions of **WICKED** worldwide, including two North American tours, a Broadway production, San Francisco production, London production, a Japanese-language production, a German-language production and an Australian production. A Dutch-language production of **WICKED** will open in 2011.

WICKED features set design by Tony® Award winner Eugene Lee (*Ragtime, Show Boat, Candide, Sweeney Todd*), costume design by Tony® winner Susan Hilferty (*Into the Woods, Assassins*), lighting design by Tony® nominee Kenneth Posner (*Hairspray*) and sound design by Tony Meola (*The Lion King* and the recent *Man of La Mancha*). Stephen Oremus is the show’s musical director. Orchestrations are by William David Brohn, with dance arrangements by James Lynn Abbott.

Grammy Award-Winning Cast recording available on Decca Broadway. For more information about **WICKED** log on to www.wickedthemusical.com.

WICKED is presented as part of the Bank of America Best of Broadway Tampa Bay series and will play Carol Morsani Hall at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts, Feb. 3-28. Performances are Tuesday-Thursday and Sunday at 7:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m., with matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. and a matinee on Thursday, Feb. 4, at 2 p.m. There will be a post-show talkback on Wednesday, Feb. 10, in the theater following the performance. Regularly priced tickets start at \$50 and may be purchased by calling 813.229.STAR (7827) or 800.955.1045 outside Tampa Bay, in person at the Straz Center Ticket Office or online at www.strazcenter.org. For more information about the David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts and its upcoming events, please visit www.strazcenter.org.

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Events, days, dates, times, performers and prices are subject to change without notice.

The David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts and its programs are funded in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts; the Arts Council of Hillsborough County and the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners; the Tourist Development Council/Hillsborough County; and the City of Tampa.