

BWW Review: Ross Petty's THE WIZARD OF OZ is Pure Magic

by Taylor Long Dec. 11, 2018



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[Ross Petty](#)'s panto is back and better than ever! THE WIZARD OF OZ at the Elgin Theatre is a loose adaptation of the classic story with a modern/environmentally-conscious twist. [Ross Petty](#)'s panto has become a staple of the Toronto theatre community, entertaining generations of audiences for over 20 years. It's a communal performance experience unlike any other and a holiday tradition you can't miss.

THE WIZARD OF OZ starts off in modern-day Toronto following Dorothy ([Camille Fanga-Selenge](#)), a bright, young University grad who can't find a job and can barely pay

rent. Miss Gulch (Sara-Jeanne Hosie) enters, announcing a plan to tear down a strip of Ossington in order to build an environmentally-hostile air conditioning factory (a plan to hurt the environment in an effort to sell more air conditioners). Just as Dorothy stands up to the menacing Miss Gulch, a tornado hits Toronto, transporting Dorothy and her dog Toto (played by Eanga-Selenge's own dog, Olive) to the magical land of Oz.

But this is a very different Oz from the one L. Frank Baum imagined in 1900. The Ozians that greet Dorothy are much sassier and far better dancers. Cue the audience boos - Sulphura enters with her henchman Randy (Eddie Glenn) to find her sister, the Wicked Witch of the East (and the owner of the ruby high-tops) crushed by Dorothy's arrival in Oz. At [Ross Petty](#)'s panto, "villain music" (think Duh, duh, duh) signifies that it's time to boo for the villain. The unified experience of booing and cheering with your neighbours makes this theatrical event truly special.

Just when Sulphura is about to attack Dorothy with her dark magic, Sugarbum ([Michael De Rose](#)) the Good Witch of the North appears. This year, the panto is missing the unique and unforgettable presence of [Dan Chameroy](#)'s iconic Plumbum character - but De Rose saves the day with his side-splitting portrayal of Sugarbum, a relative of Plumbum. With Sugarbum, De Rose resurrects the comical and ridiculously inappropriate spirit of the bum family.



[Michael De Rose](#) as Sugarbum The Good Witch of the North, and the Greenies. Photo by Racheal McCaig

Matt Murray's witty lines encourage laughter from the entire family and flow effortlessly into the fabulous musical numbers - directed and choreographed by

Tracey Flye. Flye keeps everything moving, every movement interesting to the eye, and challenges the ensemble with fun, high-energy choreography. The set, designed by [Cory Sincennes](#), features bright, vibrant projections - nearly blinding the audience at certain moments. Sincennes is also responsible for the imaginative costumes, creating a seamless explosion of colour across the stage.

[Camille Eanga-Selenge](#) brings her Broadway vocals to Toronto as an impressive, confident, and independent Dorothy. In an adorable moment on opening night, Eanga-Selenge's dog Olive (a very calm and talented stage dog) joined in on the chorus, barking along with the ensemble.

As Sugarbum, De Rose shows off his thrilling range. Hosie makes the perfect villain with her spot-on witch cackle and gives a rocking performance that makes use of her great belt. [Eddie Glen](#) takes on various roles with consistent hilarity, even performing a Donald Trump impression that rivals [Alec Baldwin](#)'s!






[Ross Petty](#)'s annual panto is the perfect recipe of great music, great dancing, great direction, and outstanding comedy - and this year is even better than the last! Catch it before it blows away.

[Ross Petty](#)'s **THE WIZARD OF OZ** runs through January 5, 2019 at the breathtaking Elgin Theatre in Toronto, ON.

For tickets and more info, visit <http://www.rosspetty.com/>

Main photo credit: [Michael De Rose](#) as Sugarbum The Good Witch of the North, [Camille Eanga-Selenge](#) as Dorothy, Matt Nethersole as Scarecrow. Photo by Racheal McCaig.

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