

Learning Places Fall 2016  
Chin/Swift

# **SITE REPORT [part II: performer/spectator]**

## **Gershwin Theatre**



### **STUDENT NAME**

09.09.2016

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Gershwin Theatre first opened as the Uris Theatre on November 28, 1972, and was rechristened in honor of brothers George and Ira Gershwin in 1983 during the 37<sup>th</sup> Tony Awards. The theatre was designed by Ralph Alswang in an Art Nouveau style and is situated on the lower levels of a \$12.5 million office complex built on the former site of the historic Capitol Theatre. Today, the Gershwin is home to the highly successful, award-winning musical, *Wicked*, which first played at the theatre in October of 2003.

## PRE-VISIT REFLECTION

Before the visit, I wanted to see how the actors of the show performed their roles and what makes their role so important.

## SITE DOCUMENTATION (photos/sketches)



Elphaba Thropp and Galinda Upland in a scene from *Wicked*, a highly successful Broadway musical that first opened at the Gershwin Theatre in 2003.



The interior of the Gershwin Theatre, which, since 2003, has been home to the award-winning musical *Wicked*.

## QUALITATIVE SITE OBSERVATIONS

1. Behind the scenes of *Wicked*, 250 pounds of dry ice is used during each show to create the drama onstage. The electronics department uses enough power to supply approximately 12 houses (18 if you include the sound and automation departments). The carpentry department has about 175,000 pounds (or 87 ½ tons) of scenery that are automated by about five miles of cable.
2. The choreography of *Wicked* uses different styles to move the scenes and characters. The natural movements of the characters and the musical staging of the show is all part of the choreography.

3. The performance takes place entirely on the stage.
4. The audience is seated, directing their attention to the performance on the stage.
5. Being that it is a family-friendly production, the audiences who see the show are mostly family-oriented.
6. The performers are energetic. They are in tune with the emotion and the drama of the musical as they perform in front of the audience.
7. I notice that the stage resembles the Clock of the Time Dragon from the Gregory Maguire novel *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West*, of which the musical was based on.

## QUANTITATIVE DATA for Area of Study

Subject	Data
Size of performance space	Very large
Size of spectator space	Enormous
Range of dynamic change	N/A
# of points of focus	3
Number of spectators (range)	Up to 1,933 spectators
Time period of performance	2 hours, 30 minutes, with a 15-minute intermission.
# of repetitions	8 performances per week Tuesday-Sunday
Cost of performance (if any)	Individual seats range from \$79 (rear mezzanine) to \$222 (premium seats)
Other data	Other than <i>Wicked</i> , the Gershwin has hosted <i>The King and I</i> , <i>Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street</i> , <i>Annie</i> , and <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> .

## QUESTIONS TO RESEARCH FURTHER

### QUESTIONS:

1. What was the first production of the Gershwin Theatre when it opened in 1972 as the Uris Theatre?
2. In 2013, what musical set a record for the highest one-week gross income made by any show in Broadway history?

### RESEARCH METHOD/SOURCE FOR EACH QUESTION ABOVE:

1. Question 1
  - a. Wikipedia.org
  - b. [Gershwintheatre.com/about.php](http://Gershwintheatre.com/about.php)
2. Question 2
  - a. [Artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/12/30/a-record-setting-week-on-broadway/?\\_php=true&\\_type=blogs&\\_r=0](http://Artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/12/30/a-record-setting-week-on-broadway/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0)

## SUMMARY / POST VISIT REFLECTION

After visiting the Gershwin, I saw that the actors were amazing in performing their roles and that each actor has an important part of the show's performance. I also learned about the mystique of the Gershwin that brings each performance to life. I hope to discover more about musicals and plays like this one, as well as the history of Broadway theatres.