

The Gooseberry Park Players

present

*The WIZ*

- 2008 -

- ★ The Gooseberry Park players will begin its next 25 years by producing a major urban classic, reinvented for this 2008 generation of young people. Created in 1975 and the winner of two important Tony Awards on Broadway, *The WIZ* was originally created to showcase the talents of amazing actors of color at a time when the opportunities for black performers were extremely limited.
- ★ The ideas and production elements were based upon the now legendary book, film and Broadway production, *The Wizard of Oz*. Written by author L. Frank Baum, the book detailed the allegorical and hidden story of politics, government, and the financial culture of the 1900's in the United States, as banking factions argued over the gold and silver standard, and governmental treatment of the common man, agriculture, and conflicting elements of society struggled to find power and control in a conflict of values for American society.
- ★ In 1939, the film was created in the newest medium, movies, with the popular stars of the cinema, like Judy Garland, to entertain audiences wanting relief from the depression. Characters like the Tin Man (heart), the Scarecrow (smart), and the Lion (bravery) helped Dorothy find the one thing in her life for which she searched - Home and Peace.
- ★ Most recently, audiences are familiar with *WICKED*, written as a prequel to *The Wizard of Oz* which has been adopted - through the Broadway production - by a youth culture searching for stories of hope for their future.
- ★ All Gooseberry Park Players activities are housed in the Frances Frazier Comstock Theatre in the heart of the campus at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, USA.

- 30 -

**Press Release Information**

Monday, February 11, 2008.

The Gooseberry Park Players

For More Information, contact

[gooseberryparkplayers.org](http://gooseberryparkplayers.org)

Jim Cermak, Managing Artistic Director

via email: [jcermak@cord.edu](mailto:jcermak@cord.edu)

or office: 218-299-3728