

DEFYING GRAVITY

Cinemas Get Creative for a *Wicked* Weekend

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→ The final six weeks of 2024 were a thrilling time for domestic exhibition. A slew of releases across the ratings, genre, audience, and budget spectrums left moviegoers spoiled for choice.

The holiday season kicked off in grand fashion on November 22 with the release of Universal's *Wicked* and Paramount's *Gladiator II*, in a canny bit of counterprogramming reminiscent of *Barbenheimer*.

And the comparisons don't end there. During the first weekend of the *Barbenheimer* phenomenon, Universal Pictures executive Jim Orr spoke with Boxoffice Pro, saying, "When audiences realize the occasion is worth the value proposition, they come out to theaters—and they come out in droves." Studios, exhibitors, and vendors worked together to make *Barbenheimer* weekend an event for cinema guests, and their efforts paid off. In theaters across the United States and Canada, moviegoers arrived in droves,



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1. Alamo Drafthouse
2. Marcus Theatres
3. Cinemark
4. AMC Theatres
5. Emagine Entertainment
6. Cinergy Entertainment



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showing off their costumes, posing for photos in the famous “Barbie box,” and enjoying custom food, drinks, and merchandise with friends and family.

The movie industry got the message. A year and a half later, the pink that dominated cinema lobbies turned into the pink and green of *Wicked* frenemies Galinda and Elphaba. It felt like the culmination of something big. In the months since Universal gave CinemaCon attendees a preview of the *Wicked* November in store for them, the film reached borderline ubiquity. With so many promo spots and brand collaborations, everyone knew when *Wicked* was coming out. As pre-sales mounted, cinemas brainstormed ways to turn the weekend into, to use Orr’s term, an occasion. The appetite was there, as Orr told Boxoffice PRO about *Wicked*’s spectacular opening: “Anecdotally, we’re hearing about people showing up at theaters all across the country dressed up as the characters in the spirit of the movie. It’s so much fun when something captures the imagination and encourages people to get out to theaters and experience a film—that’s the best way to see *Wicked*, on the biggest screen possible, with a large audience.”

As audiences look forward to *Wicked: For Good* in November, BOXOFFICE PRO looks back at a few ways cinemas enticed audiences into the Land of Oz the first time around. ■

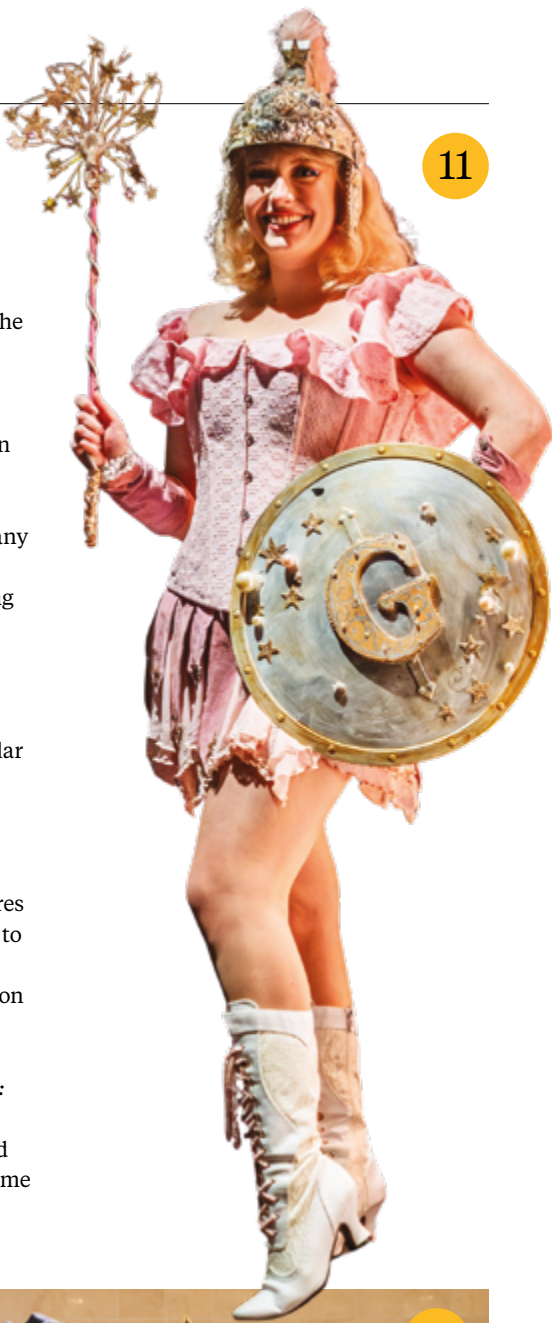


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- 7. Look Dine-In Cinemas
- 8. Marcus Theatres
- 9. Regal
- 10. Santikos Entertainment
- 11. Showcase Cinemas



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Boxoffice

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