Over The Rainbow In A Different Oz

Tonight sees the opening of what sounds like a different production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Produced by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, the London premiere has all the elements of the classic 1939 movie however, it has added elements which (according to Sir Andrew) make it more suitable to the stage. Added are 4 songs which give Glinda, The Wicked Witch of the West, and the Wizard a chance to use their singing chops. Apparently, the Good Witch's short bit in Munchkinland does not count as a song. For the new songs, Lloyd Webber re-teamed with lyricist Tim Rice a partnership which dissolved 30 years ago after *Evita*.

Casting for Dorothy was done in what seems to be the Lord's new-found trademark: the televised talent show. He did it for Joseph, Maria in *The Sound of Music*, and now for Oz. I dunno about this American Idol meets theatre concept.

A familiar name was cast in the title role. Michael Crawford (the original Phantom of Lloyd Webber's production) was number one on the list. I can actually picture Mr. Crawford in the roles of Professor Marvel and the Great Humbug. Wonder how many other roles he will be filling. Taylhis, how many parts did Frank Morgan have in the movie?

This July, Fountain City Festival will be performing a version closer in production to the original movie. As soon as I get back on my feet… I really pray that it is soon… I look forward to helping to bring one of my favorite shows to the stage.