The Wizard of PersOz

Written by Rabbi Richard Agler and Cantor Stephanie Shore

Scene 1 - Prologue/Opening

Dorthesther enters from one side of stage; Mother and Father enter from other side of stage. Dorthesther throws down the books she is carrying.

Dorthesther: That's it. I've had it with all this studying and memorizing. I don't want to go to Hebrew School anymore… Not now, not never.

Mother*: Now, now dear. You know it's important. It's one of the ways that we pass our religion from one generation to the next and anyhow everyone here in Judea has a Bat Mitzvah.

*Mother is played by actress who later appears as Witch of the East.

Dorthesther: Well as far as I'm concerned, it's about time to have a generation gap… I don't see the point. I wanna be like all the other girls at my regular school. They don't have to learn Hebrew or study Torah. They just want to learn how to do their makeup.

Father**: Your mother is right, dear. We Jews have always believed that studying torah is a great blessing. Besides, you can't have your Baa-aaat Mitzvah… I mean, Bat Mitzvah… unless you study Torah.

*Father is played by actor who later appears as Dr. DillyDally.

Dorthesther: What happened to your voice just now?

Father: What?

Dorthesther: Your voice… you said Baa-aaat Mitzvah.

Father: Oh, it's just foreshadowing, dear. Don't pay any attention to it.

Mother: Now march right into your room and start studying, young lady…

Dorthesther: (Exasperated) Mother… you can be such a witch sometimes!

Mother and Father exit. Dorthesther crosses stage and sings.

SONG: SECULAR

Dorthesther finishes song while spinning in circles. She grows dizzy.

Dorthesther: Ohhhhhhh… I shouldn't turn around like that… I'm really dizzy. Oy vey. The whole room feels like it's spinning.

She drops to her knees, holding her head.

MUSIC: CYLONE

Scene 2 - Pershkinland

Lights dim during cyclone music. Pershkins (Munchkins) enter and circle around Dorthesther, waving their arms and shouting out "Secular" intermittently in a barrage of sound. All at once they stop – still in a circle around Dorthesther. When the music and shouting stop, they back away upstage. Dorthesther rises to her feet, looks to her left and to her right.

Dorthesther: Oh my. I've got a feeling I'm not in Judea anymore. And it doesn't look much like Boca, either. Where am I?

Glashti enters and moves to center stage with Dorthesther.

Glashti: Why, you're in PersOZ, dear. Anyone around here knows that.

Dorthesther: But that's just the point. I'm not from around here. Where's the deli? Where's the butcher? Where's the temple? And who are you?

Glashti: I'm Glashti. The Good Witch of the North.

Dorthesther: You can't be a witch. Witches are old and ugly… But you're beautiful.

The Pershkins laugh.

Glashti: Thank you, dear. The King – who is also a very powerful Wizard - used to tell me that, too, when I lived in the Emerald City.

Dorthesther: You lived with the King? How do you get a job like that?

Glashti: Well, the beauty part doesn't hurt… But it didn't last. The King – his real name is Ahashverosh, but hardly anybody can pronounce it - wanted me to come down to the throne room to do some sort of silly dance for him, but I was too busy doing my makeup, so I told him no. Then he banished me and I had to come here – to Pershkinland… which if you don't mind my saying so is a pretty big step down from the castle.

Dorthesther: Oh, so that's the name of this place. Pershkinland.

Glashti: Right. So now that you know who I am, who are Jew? Er, I mean, you?

Dorthesther: Is it that obvious?

Glashti: That six-pointed star you're wearing on your jumper is a pretty big clue. (Pause) You might as well make yourself at home. I think you'll find that the natives are friendly.