

WEEKENDER

YOUR GUIDE TO EVENTS IN THE PERMIAN BASIN



‘Wicked’ actress’ career path defies gravity

By Rich Lopez
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As an entertainer, there are no roads less traveled for Nicole Parker. Her career path is more of a roller coaster than a direct route. Fortunately, that tenacity has given her what most actors strive for — work. That same approach has also led her to Midland.

“I guess it is a little bizarre how I’ve worked on my career,” Parker said in a phone interview. “I really am an example of how this business is full of surprises.”

Parker will share the stage with fellow singer Katie Rose Clarke and the Midland Odessa Symphony and Chorale for Saturday’s “Wicked Divas,” the first pops concert of the season. And it’s wicked for a reason. Both have appeared in “Wicked.” Clarke as Glinda and Parker as Elphaba.

Parker was a regular on the sketch comedy show MadTV from 2003 to 2009 before moving into an array of television and film roles, theatrical productions and comic and cabaret shows. Her career may seem erratic, but it works for Parker in several ways.

“I’m lucky to have my toe dipped in several arenas. It can leave my brain a bit jumbled but I love all of it. It keeps me on top of what I can do for a hybrid like me,” she said.

In some ways, it led her to this Saturday night’s show.

As a former Elphaba, she is officially part of a sisterhood that looks out for each other in the entertainment scene.

IF YOU GO

MOSC Pops & Family Series: Wicked Divas,
7:30 p.m. Saturday at Wagner Noel Performing Arts Center, 1310 N. Farm-to-Market Road 1788. \$26-\$46. MOSC.org.

“Yeah, it’s like this ‘Green Witch Network’ and we all recommend each other for different gigs,” she said. “If you play Elphaba, then that already communicates what your abilities are. It’s very underground.”

That led her to performing in one Wicked Divas concert, which in turn led to the Midland one.

This is how it happens so often, she said.

Parker is comfortable switching in and out of types of gigs and roles, and she said it fulfills her creative needs. However, each is a different animal. She describes comedy as more cerebral and said she has to dig into characters for her onscreen roles, but singing is where she feels the most free.

“That’s what’s great about a concert. I can really be myself and I get to interact with the audience. It’s really a different experience singing with a symphony,” she said.

Of course, “Wicked Divas” will feature songs from the now-iconic musical and Parker expects to dive all the way into those numbers.

“I’m going to take myself back to that world again and bring as much as I can,” Parker said. “I’ll definitely be playing Elphaba in those ‘Wicked’ songs.”