

Alice's Wonderland

Audience Guide

CALREP Presents

An Adaptation of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland

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**written &
directed by
EZRA LEBANK**

**SEPT 22 - OCT 1
CALREP.ORG**

CSULB Studio Theatre
Individuals: \$20/CSULB ID: \$15
Seniors & Military: \$17

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Characters:

Alice – A young girl who travels to Wonderland in search of her father and learns more about herself along the way.

Alice’s Father – A parent who connects with his daughter through the stories he tells her.

White Rabbit- A frantic, harried rabbit who leads Alice down the rabbit hole to Wonderland.

Caterpillar - The Caterpillar sits on a mushroom and is full of wisdom. She directs Alice to the pieces of mushroom that allow her to shrink and grow.

Cheshire Cat - A clever cat who appears and disappears at will. The Cheshire Cat explains Wonderland’s madness to Alice.

Mad Hatter - A frazzled hatter who lives in perpetual tea-time. The Mad Hatter enjoys wordplay.

Queen - The ruler of Wonderland. The Queen is severe and short-tempered, often screaming for her subjects to be beheaded.

Synopsis:

Alice’s Wonderland reimagines Lewis Carroll’s classic story as a whimsical physical theatre journey into the curious universe of Alice’s imagination. In this new adaptation, six actors transform into long hallways, mad hatters, and everything in between while Alice uses the power of her imagination to figure out just who she really is. A wild adventure filled with high-energy and acrobatics, Alice’s Wonderland is sure to captivate children and adults alike!

Interview with Writer and Director Ezra LeBank:



Why did you choose to make an adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*? What are you most excited about in developing *Alice's Wonderland*?

I chose to create an adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* for a number of reasons. First, as a physical theatre, acrobatics, and circus director, I was excited about the wacky and diverse situations these characters encounter – falling down a rabbit hole, having a world where the rules aren't the ones we're used to, etc. So as a theatre director, I have liberty to create any kind of unexpected convention part of the world.

Another reason I adapted *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is because of the way the story examines the introspection of a child. I think it's fascinating to notice the internal struggle of growing up and the way we try to remove a child's creativity, nonsense and playfulness. I think that for children, young

adults, and even adults, it's important for us to go back and notice that internal struggle between childlike wonder and being logical and reasonable.

What can audiences expect when they see *Alice's Wonderland*?

They can expect to see acrobatics and physical theatre work that is outside of what they might be used to in a theatre. They should expect to see lots of colors and interesting characters. I hope they have a lot of fun!

What is Alice's quest throughout the story; what is she trying to achieve?

Alice's objective in our version of the story is centered on her quest to find her father. In our version, her father has gone away and this throws Alice's life out of balance. Her quest in Wonderland is based on the stories he told her when she was younger. She is now looking for him by searching for those stories in Wonderland. We explore questions like, how a young person learns to rely on herself. How does Alice learn to find what she needs to know by looking outside as well as inside herself?

Interview with Writer and Director Ezra LeBank (Cont.)

Why do you think physical theatre is the best way to tell this story?

Physical theatre is an amazing way to tell *Alice's Wonderland* because the story is nonsensical. If you try to approach it with actors acting in a traditional play it seems out of alignment. By using physical theatre, we create all sorts of shapes and characters by reimagining the way the body is used as a narrative tool. We reimagine our relationship to one another in a very physical way that allows us to enter the nonsense and madness of Wonderland.

You wrote and directed this piece. Has anything changed from the writing process through to the rehearsal process? Is there anything you weren't expecting? What were the challenges?

Working as a writer and director is a very intricate process. When I wrote the first draft of the script, I knew it was going to change radically. I knew that once we stepped foot in rehearsal, the physical life of the piece and the "writing of the choreography" was going to be as instrumental as the writing of the text. As we went into rehearsal, I radically reimagined the text as it evolved with the relationship to the physical world that we invented. It certainly began from the text as a springboard, but since then it has been a constant negotiation and discovery process of allowing the text to inform the movement, and the movement to inform the rewriting of the text.

What do you want audiences to think as they leave the theatre?

When the audience leaves the show, I hope that if nothing else, they feel exhilarated, curious, and interested in trying something more nonsensical. Maybe it's the concept of play and enjoying their childlike wonder, whatever that means to each person. Or maybe it has to do with the physical context of making the work with our bodies. If they're not used to being in their bodies, they might decide to explore something that involves creative movement or even just being curious about how our bodies function in a creative or athletic capacity. I hope this play will compel audience members to be more curious about their own physical self, and how much stronger or more capable or imaginative they might be than what they thought previously.

Discussion Questions:

Before the show

1. Are you familiar with *Alice in Wonderland*? If so, what comes to mind when you think of this story? What are the most important elements or characters? If not, have you heard other people refer to it before? What have you heard?
2. There have been many adaptations of the original story, including ballet, silent film, animated television shows, and stage musicals. Think about other adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland* that you have seen. What do you recall about them? What stands out in your memory?
3. *Alice's Wonderland* is a physical theatre adaptation of the classic story. That means that the actors' bodies will help tell the story. What does the phrase "physical theatre adaptation" mean to you? What image does it call to your imagination?

After the show

1. What images or moments from the performance do you remember? What did they make you think of, or spark in your memory?
2. What was the "world of the play" – what kind of world or atmosphere was the production trying to evoke or portray?
3. How are these characters different or similar to the characters you know in other representations of *Alice in Wonderland*?
4. Discuss the use of movement in the play. Did you feel that movement helped tell the story in an effective way? Why or why not?
5. What are some examples where the movement of a character or characters influenced the tone of the scene?
6. The actors played numerous parts throughout the performance. To show a change, actors may have to change the way they walk, talk, sit, stand, speak and look. How did they transform to represent so many characters? What aspects of their movement and characterization can you point to that shows this?

7. How did the actors' physicality help tell the story? Describe a moment where an actor's physicality captured the essence of a character.