

## Alice in Wonderland

Based on the novel by Lewis Carroll

Music: Roland Fister

Choreography: Rosemary Helliwell

Stage and costumes: Till Kuhnert

World premiere 03/18/2017 - Landestheater Coburg

**1<sup>st</sup> Act:** Alice is waiting for the train in a lively train station with her uncle Lewis Carroll and her sister. Many fellow passengers are present who later will transform into the inhabitants of Wonderland:

A grumpy elder lady (later the Queen) enters the scene with two servants (later fish and frog servants) who struggle with her heavy luggage.

A boy (later the March Hare) shows Alice his caged mouse.

A man (later the Rabbit) waits impatiently and continues staring at his watch.

A group of men (later the Caterpillar) pass carrying a boat on their heads.

Another boy (later the Cheshire Cat) appears.

A young dandy (later the Mad Hatter) is flirting with a young lady.

The boy (March Hare) shoots the old lady with a sling. When she turns around angrily, he quickly passes the sling to Alice, so that the lady wrongly accuses her of being responsible. Lewis Carroll intervenes and acts as an arbitrator. He calms Alice. Suddenly a rabbit jumps on the scene, he is in a big haste. Alice tries to get in contact with him, but he ignores her and vanishes in a hole.

Alice is startled and follows him through the hole.

In her long fall suitcases, numbers and the hands of the station watch swirl around her until she lands ungently on the ground of a cave. She discovers three doors, all of which turn out to be closed.

A liveried frog wearing a wig appears with a key on a tray. Alice tries the key on all doors, finally it opens the lock of the smallest one. Unfortunately she can only fit her head in the opening but she is glancing at the Wonderland for the first time. She greatly wants to go through the door but she is too tall.

# ROLAND FISTER

Komponist und Dirigent

Another servant surfaces, this time a fish with a small bottle. After initial hesitation she drinks from it and shrinks instantly. Now, she is small enough to fit through the door.

She enters Wonderland, a fantastic place full of exotic plants and animals. In the distance Alice sees the rabbit again and runs after him. He however has vanished again and Alice faces a large Caterpillar. She asks it whether it knew where the rabbit had gone but gets no answer. Instead, the Caterpillar asks Alice who she was. Alice introduces herself, but the Caterpillar interrupts her and states that she could not be Alice, because the original Alice was a lot taller. Alice again answers that she is the genuine person, but the Caterpillar remains with its opinion and vanishes into the dark.

Night has fallen, and the Wonderland seems a lot more threatening. Alice is afraid and starts crying. The Cheshire Cat appears and dances the "Cheshire-Cat-Walk". Alice is delighted and wants the Cat to teach her the dance.

Disturbed by the noise, the Caterpillar shows up again and complains. Alice tries to persuade it to join them in the dance. The Caterpillar grumpily denies as it never dances. Alice insists and in the end succeeds: both learn the dance. Finally, the whole forest is dancing with them.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Act:** The second act commences with a quirky tea party of the March Hare and the talkative Mad Hatter. The procedures of the party seem rehearsed and stereotypical.

Finally, the Mad Hatter decides to wake the mouse in the clock in order to make the time move forward. Whenever the clock moves, the Mad Hatter and the March Hare can change places.

The mouse wakes up and hastily starts to turn the clock. At the climax the clock strikes 5, the Mad Hatter and the March Hare have changed places and the mouse falls asleep again.

In come Alice and the Cheshire Cat with the "Cheshire-Cat-Walk". The Cat vanishes and Alice tries to talk to the Mad Hatter and the March Hare. They ignore her however and continue with their tea party. Alice sits down at the table, but all of a sudden it is time to switch places again. The mouse is woken up, the place-switching commences again.

However now, Alice is in the way so that the routine ends in chaos. Finally, the clock breaks out of its housing and rolls from the stage. Panically, the Mad Hatter and the March Hare run after it. Alice stays on the scene alone.

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In this moment, the White Rabbit appears and hands Alice the Queen's invitation to a game of croquet. Gardeners arrive with rosebushes to prepare for the arrival of the Queen. She enters with her complete court, the knave and her soldiers. All of a sudden she realizes that the roses are not as desired red, but white. She demands the heads of the gardeners. The soldiers brutally change the colors of the roses whereupon the queen gets notably calmer.

A fanfare announces the commencing of the game of croquet. The hedgehogs, which pose as the balls, arrive late. Another fit of rage by the queen follows, which Alice is able to avert just in time. The queen opens the game. The soldiers are the goals, flamingos the bats.

Since the queen is a bad player, she makes sure by threatening them, that the soldiers always move their goalposts exactly that way that the Queen's ball passes and the opponents' balls fail to hit the goals. Thus, she wins the game.

It is time for tea, and the frog and fish servants offer a tray of cookies. The Queen starts inspecting the cookies thoroughly and notices that some are missing. She asks as for who stole the cookies and thinks to have found the culprit in the Knave. The court demands for a trial.

The King, who also is the superior judge, is being called to the scene. He however is like a young boy, continuously distracted by various events and things – so he is not at all interested in the trial. The Knave is accused but but asserts his innocence. The Mad Hatter and the March Hare are summoned as witnesses but cannot help due to their utter excitement.

Ultimately, the Queen demands the head of the Knave. Alice however takes side with the Knave and interrupts her.

In this very moment the scenery changes again and Alice is again in the train station from the first scene. Alice has matured through her adventures and now can stand up against the elder lady for herself.