

"Alice" premieres in UCSD Theatre

April 7, 1978

"Alice," a musical adaptation in rhyme of the Lewis Carroll classic, will premiere at 8 p.m. Thursday, April 20, in the UCSD Theatre at the University of California, San Diego.

What prompted the play's director, William Glover, to attempt a version in verse of "Alice in Wonderland" and have it set to music and what kind of story is this particular "Alice?"

"If Carroll had written a play, he would have written it in verse," Glover avers. "There just isn't any other version of 'Alice' as a play, except for one done in New York about 18 years ago and we couldn't use that. Then, because so much of the book is narration, the story turned out to be a bit thin so I realized it needed music."

Glover says his adaptation hews quite closely to the original, utilizing many of Carroll's own lyrics for songs which have been set to music by Santa Monica composer, musician and teacher Larry Delinger. Since Carroll writes so much in verse, explains Glover, he decided to versify the entire play.

"I had to get away from Carroll at times to give the animals more of a sense of character. He could explain them in non-vocal passages but we had to have more dramatic conflict. For instance, one of the birds is a Mrs. Malaprop who thinks she's grand and mispronounces words."

As to the tales of Lewis Carroll told with increasing gusto in this age of psychohistory, Glover calls them "so much twaddle."

Carroll (mathematician Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), says Glover, was not an abnormal admirer of young girls but a "shy man who stuttered and loved children." He gave and received love from children, Glover believes, more easily than from adults.

"He was a very warm man," says the writer/director, "very influenced by the English class system. His animals sound like his contemporaries, upper-middle or upper-class people in a society which put down children."

For this reason, Glover's Alice is not a Disney girl. She's able and spirited and talks back to the animals (adults) who try to belittle her.

"She says 'shan't' to the king and 'rubbish' to the hatter," Glover offers by way of example.

This "Alice" is a childlike story, rather than a child's story. It is, says Glover, for the child in us all, though it is a play for adults. And, though its language is a bit advanced, it is designed for the delectation of children.

"But then," Glover explains, "most people talk down to children, so even the use of words like 'ineluctable,' which children might not understand, is a reflection of the way most of the world treats a child."

Guest director Glover is himself a veteran actor, having appeared in such films as "Torn Curtain," on television in "Kung Fu," "Run for Your Life" and "Man From Atlantis," and on Broadway in "Private Lives" and "Ross," as well as at the Alley Theatre in Houston in "Camino Real," at the Mark Taper Forum in "The Devils" and with both

the Stratford, Ontario, and Stratford, Connecticut, festivals. He also appeared in San Diego with the Old Globe Theatre.

Glover has directed at the Oregon and Great Lakes Shakespeare Festivals, at the Seattle and Missouri Repertory Theatres and at Ohio University, among others.

UC San Diego's "Alice" will be performed in ensemble style with a cast which includes Sandra Franklin in the title role and others portraying over 100 characters. Among other members of the cast are Jonas Abraham, Scott Anderson, Kip Baker and Jeanne Paulsen.

The technical staff includes the following: David Kriebs, lighting; Ray Swedenburg, sound; Margaret Marshall, choreography; Francis Thumm, pianist and choral master; Robin Doane, costumes; Dan Cork, technical director, and Tom Kamm, sets.

"Alice" will also be presented at 8 p.m. April 21-23 and 25-30. General admission is \$3.75; UC San Diego student tickets are \$2.50. Tickets are available at the UCSD Theatre Ticket Office, 203 Warren campus, 452-4574 or 452-3791.

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