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Tumble down the rabbit hole with *Alice in Wonderland*

Welcome Spring with the March Hare and this unique adventure

COLUMBUS, OH—Follow Alice down the rabbit hole in BalletMet Columbus’ *Alice in Wonderland* **March 6-14 at the Capitol Theatre**, 77 South High Street. Choreographed by BalletMet Artistic Director Gerard Charles with a script by Phoenix Theatre for Children Artistic Director Steven Anderson, the production is as clever for adults as it is playful for children. This whimsical adventure features BalletMet’s professional Company dancers and Academy student dancers performing alongside local actors.

Alice in Wonderland premiered in 2006 and was called “an exceptional experience” by *The Columbus Dispatch* and “a great way to introduce [audiences] to ballet” by a delighted audience member. Truly, the unique show transports audiences to a place of pure imagination. Lewis Carroll’s celebrated tales come to life with larger than life characters including Alice, the White Rabbit, Tweedledee and Tweedledum, the Mad Hatter and more. Two actors help move the story along through multiple speaking roles including Mock Turtle, Humpty Dumpty, Caterpillar and Alice. Filled with both logic and nonsense characteristic of Carroll’s work, the literature leaps from the page to stage through innovative choreography, expressive spoken word and wildly colorful and fanciful costumes, sets and lighting. This season’s production offers new choreographic elements and updated sets.

This surreal fantasy features:

- Choreography by Gerard Charles with contributions from BalletMet dancers Jimmy Orrante and Adam Hundt and former Company dancer Justin Gibbs.
- A script adapted by Steven Anderson from Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*.
- Spoken dialogue by two actors, Jeff Horst and Heather Burley.
- In addition to BalletMet’s 28 professional Company dancers, about 16 Academy student dancers in roles including hedgehogs, fish and young Alice.
- More than 75 vibrant costumes designed by Linda Pisano and created by the BalletMet Costume Shop.
- A score compiled from the music of British composer Edward Elgar.
- Innovative scenery, including myriad doors and doorways, by set designer Stephanie Gerkens and constructed by the BalletMet Scene Shop.
- Lighting by Michael Lincoln, professor of Lighting Design for Ohio University.

For Charles, who as a child loved the poem *Jabberwocky* from *Through the Looking Glass* so much that he memorized it (the cast recites the entire poem on stage during the production), creating a ballet around such a popular work was both exhilarating and daunting. “You want to stay true to the original but also to be creative and invent something new,” he said. “In this case, the challenge was balancing everyone’s expectations with the fact that the original work was in fact literary, not dance.” Besides that, he added, “there’s always the challenge to produce something that’s as fabulous as the concept you have in your mind.”

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CHOREOGRAPHY: GERARD CHARLES

BalletMet Artistic Director Gerard Charles notes that Carroll's stories factor into the movement in enchanting ways. "The base of my dance is always very much classical ballet; however, as *Alice* is a fantastical work that involves imaginative costumes and scenic elements, I enjoyed working in a much more experimental manner in creating the movements, allowing the physical realities of the sets and costumes and the characters and the dancers dancing them to help inform the movement choices."

Charles has choreographed and staged works internationally and received a Choreographic Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Known for combining humor, classical technique and engaging narrative, Charles has delighted BalletMet audiences with his productions of *The Nutcracker*, *Cinderella*, *Coppelia*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Alice in Wonderland*. He teamed up with Steven Anderson again in BalletMet's 30th anniversary season for *Aladdin* (2008). Charles was named Artistic Director of BalletMet in 2001, having served as Interim Artistic Director and Associate Artistic Director for the previous three seasons. Charles was born in Folkestone, England, and trained at the Royal Ballet School in London, where he received the Harold Turner Award. In addition to numerous guest appearances, he danced professionally for Ballet International in London, Milwaukee Ballet and BalletMet. Upon retiring from the stage, he served as Ballet Master for BalletMet and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

SCRIPT: STEVEN C. ANDERSON

Steven C. Anderson, Artistic Director of the Phoenix Theatre for Children, said adapting Carroll's lexis for the stage was an awesome experience. "The amazing thing was learning to trust the movement to tell the story. Each rehearsal I was able to pare away more words. When you're working with a dense text like *Alice*, the freedom from so many words is transformative."

Anderson founded the Phoenix Theatre for Children in 1993. He has received numerous honors, including recognition from the deaf community for his pioneering work in creating plays that were sign-language interpreted; a lifetime achievement award from the Ohio Theatre Alliance; multiple nominations for the Governor's Award for the Arts; and recognition for Best Director of a Play and Best Director of a Musical by the *Columbus Dispatch* in 1999. While his passion is for the creation of innovative work for children and families, he has a list of distinguished credits in adult theater as well, including works for Players' Theatre, Actors' Theatre, New Harmony Theatre, CATCO and The Ohio State University. His collaborations with Central Ohio arts organizations include *Alice in Wonderland* and *Aladdin* with BalletMet, *The Firebird* with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and *The Secret Garden* with Opera Columbus and CAPA, a musical production which employed deaf and hearing actors on stage together.

SCORE: EDWARD ELGAR

English composer **Edward Elgar** (1857-1934) was a self-taught musician who became a leading composer of his generation and a significant figure among late Romantic European musicians. He worked as an organist, violinist and teacher in his native West Country before marrying Caroline Alice Roberts in 1889 and moving to London to compose full time. After they returned to the West Country, his career took off in 1899 with the success of his *Enigma Variations*. Among the many honors Elgar received was an honorary music doctorate from Yale in 1905; in his honor, the commencement ceremony closed with his *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1* (1901), now a favorite at American graduations.

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ORIGINAL TEXT: LEWIS CARROLL

Author **Lewis Carroll** (1832-1898) was an Oxford math lecturer named Charles Dodgson who penned *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865 for Alice Liddell, a young friend who was the daughter of one of his colleagues. Full of wordplay and logical intricacies, the brilliantly whimsical story follows its heroine down a rabbit hole in search of the White Rabbit, who is late for a tea party. Among the characters she meets are the quarrelsome Queen of Hearts, the grinning Cheshire Cat, and the argumentative March Hare and Mad Hatter. In Alice's second adventure, *Through the Looking Glass* (1872), she finds herself a pawn in a life-sized game of chess in the company of Humpty Dumpty, Tweedledee and Tweedledum, and others.

EXTRAS

Character Meet and Greet March 6 and 12 *Free*

Join cast members after the performance for a special autograph signing.

Wonderland Photo Stop Prior to and during intermission, all matinee performances
Have a photo taken with Alice's friends for \$8.

The Great Late Debate Feb. 1-28; winner will be announced March 2

Late for a very important date? Submit your best excuse to www.GreatLateDebate.com. You could win four tickets to the show and a wonderful new watch so you'll never be late again.

Alice's Tea Party March 7, 12:30pm; Capital Club, Huntington Center

Spend the afternoon with your family and characters from the show. Tickets: \$80 (includes tea party refreshments and Main Floor seating); \$35 tea party only. RSVP: 614.586.8673.

SHOWTIMES AND TICKETS

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	March 6, 7:30pm	March 7, 2pm & 8pm	March 8, 1pm* & 5:30pm
March 12, 7:30pm	March 13, 8pm	March 14, 2pm	

*Audio description available. Reservations required: 614.229.4848.

Senior Dress Rehearsal March 6, 11am. For ages 55+. Tickets are \$13 through balletmet.org, CAPA (614.469.0939) or Ticketmaster (614.431.3600, ticketmaster.com). Sponsored by WMNI.

Tickets are \$25-\$45 through balletmet.org, CAPA (614.469.0939), and Ticketmaster (800.982.2787, ticketmaster.com). BalletMet Member-Subscribers and MetPass members may contact the BalletMet Box Office (614.229.4848) for tickets. College students with ID can purchase \$10 Student Rush tickets at the theater beginning two hours prior to showtime. Students age 13 to 18 can purchase \$5 High Five vouchers at any Kroger Ticketmaster location. Group discounts are available through BalletMet (614.229.4848).

SPONSOR SUPPORT

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BalletMet Columbus, renowned for its versatility and innovative repertory, ranks among the nation's 15 largest dance companies, and its Dance Academy ranks among the five largest professional dance-training centers. Since its inception in 1978, BalletMet has added 143 company premieres to its repertoire and produced 118 world premieres. It has also developed DanceReach, a series of educational and outreach programs that serve 30,000 people annually, as well as a scholarship program that provides tuition for youth based on financial need or talent.

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