



ALICE-IN-WONDERLAND FOLLIES

TEACHER GUIDE

Kupferberg Center Performances @ Queens College

The Teacher Guide is a convenient source of background information, mini-lessons, and pre- and post-concert activities that coordinate with the performance and Student Guide to encourage learning across the curriculum. Most activities can be easily adapted to suit different age groups. This Guide supports the "Blueprint for Teaching & Learning in the Arts," and includes City and State Learning Standards. Click on the URL's to link directly to suggested websites. Feel free to reproduce these materials, as well as Student Activity Pages that may be posted on this website.
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Please send documentation (photographs, compositions, etc.) of class activities based on this guide so we can share your successes with other schools attending Revelations performances. Thanks!

The Alice-in-Wonderland Follies A Ballet Vaudeville

CONCEPT & CHOREOGRAPHY BY KEITH MICHAEL

MUSIC ~ A PASTICHE OF 1915 VAUDEVILLE FAVORITES

SCENIC DESIGN ~ GILLIAN BRADSHAW-SMITH

COSTUME DESIGN ~ SYLVIA TAALSOHN NOLAN

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INSPIRED BY LEWIS CARROLL'S

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND AND

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

WORLD PREMIERE: JUNE 8-17, 2001

NEW YORK CITY

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Alice-in-Wonderland Follies, which premiered in 2001, is a production of New York Theatre Ballet (NYTB), a chamber company founded in 1978 by artistic director Diana Byer. NYTB has won acclaim for its reconstructions and revivals of class ballet masterworks by Frederick Ashton, José Limón, Agnes de Mille, and Antony Tudor. They are also noted for the creation and performance of new ballets such as The Alice-in-Wonderland Follies.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

The Alice-in-Wonderland Follies is set in 1915 at New York's famed Palace Theater. A vaudeville extravaganza celebrating the 50th anniversary of the 1865 publication of Lewis Carroll's literary classic Alice in Wonderland is

underway. It is, as Carroll might have called it, "a jumble of jollifications." Alice's fantastical adventures unfold in a series of exuberant music hall acts, set to the type of kaleidoscopic musical score (both high and low brow) that filled the vaudeville houses of the period -- ragtime, waltzes, classical and operatic standards, sentimental parlor songs, marches. The dancing styles are equally as diverse: classical ballet pointe work, Irish step dancing, African Juba, ballroom, tap, Minstrel show strutting. There's also acrobatics, physical slapstick comedy, and "song and dance" from burlesque.

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

The following characters are featured in the ballet: Alice, The White Rabbit, The Queen of Hearts, The Cheshire Cat, The mad Hatter, The Dormouse, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, The Duchess, The cook, The Baby, The Flamingoes, The Hedgehogs, The Caterpillar, Playing Cards, and The Teacups.

ACTIVITY: CHARACTER COSTUMES

COORDINATE WITH STUDENT GUIDE: THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS: VISUAL ARTS

Have students create a costume based on their favorite wonderland character, many of which are pictured in the Student Guide. Each student can lie down on a piece of butcher paper and have a partner trace them. Color the front to match the Tenniel character they select and cut out the figure. Tape it to their shoulders. Add a large paper bag mask to complete the effect. Let children practice telling about their character. Organize a Wonderland parade.

Extra Credit: Create a new character for Wonderland. Ask each student to describe orally or in writing the characteristics of their creation.

GROUP ACTIVITY: WONDERLAND TIC TAC TOE

COORDINATE WITH STUDENT GUIDE: THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

Reproduce this playing board for your students, and distribute to groups of two. Each student selects a favorite character, and answers each question for that character. Students use the regular rules of *Tic Tac Toe* to play the game, winning their x's and o's as they respond to each question in a box, and winning by placing their marks across, down, or diagonally.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| What major problem did this character have to solve? | Change any one part of the story by placing the setting in the future. | Describe both the strengths and weaknesses of this character. Include special powers the character has. |
| Tell how this character's strengths or special powers might be useful in solving problems in today's society. | At what point in the story did the character discover his or her strengths or unusual powers? How did they find or receive their strengths or powers? | How would a friend describe this character? |
| Suppose this character wants to apply for a job. Give a résumé stating his or her qualifications for a specific job. | Describe this character from an enemy's point of view. | Summarize the basic plot of one scene in which the character plays a major role. |

CURRICULUM FOCUS: LANGUAGE ARTS, LITERATURE, VISUAL ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES, THEATER

BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS: THEATER

NEW YORK STATE ARTS STANDARDS: 1, 2, 3, 4

NEW YORK STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS: 1, 2, 3, 4

NEW YORK CITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE STANDARDS: 4A

CLASS DISCUSSION: THEATER MANNERS

Attending a live theatrical or dance performance is a very different experience from watching a movie or television show. It is also different from attending a live sports event. Before attending the performance of the Alice-in-Wonderland Follies at The Kupferberg Center, prepare your young students for watching a live performance and about expected behavior in a theater. Remind them that audiences play a key part in the overall live theatrical or dance experience. Each person affects those around them as well as the actors or dancers on the stage who can hear whispers and noise coming from the audience.

Have students compile two lists: “What To Do” and “What Not To Do.” Some examples: Good audiences watch closely and listen attentively to what is happening on stage (if you miss something happening on stage, you can’t push a “rewind” button!), and respond appropriately to what they see and hear. It’s okay to laugh if there is something funny going on, and to clap or applaud at the end of the performance if you liked the show. It is not acceptable to talk during performances, fidget in one’s seat, eat or drink, fall asleep, text messages or use electronic devices, or talk back to the actors or dancers on stage. Ask student if they can think of other behavior that is proper or improper in a theater. How might these rules differ at a sports event?

Sharing: Have any students have ever performed on a stage? If so, would they share that experience with the class? Did they act? sing? dance? What did it feel like? How did they prepare for the performance?

DANCE/THEATER VOCABULARY

Here is some dance and theater vocabulary. Discuss these with students to help enhance their enjoyment of the performance.

Artistic Director: The creative leader of a dance company; the person who makes decisions about hiring company members, casting, and selecting repertory.

Ballet/Classical Ballet: A specific style of dance that has a defined vocabulary of steps and arm Movements. Classical Ballet had its origins in the French courts of the 16th century and was first codified there in the 17th century. Ballet is a theatrical art form that employs movement and music to tell a story without words, and/or to convey moods and emotions. In ballet, the body is generally held erect with the feet pointed. Many movements call for the legs to be rotated open from the hip joints so that the knees and toes face outward at an angle of 90 degrees. This rotation is known as turnout. It takes dancers many years of training to reach a 90-degree turnout and to be strong enough to dance on their toes.

Ballroom Dancing: Recreational and competitive social dances such as the fox trot, tango, waltz, and cha-cha, in which couples follow a conventional pattern of steps. In earlier eras, ballroom dances included the polka, the mazurka, the minuet, and other dances now considered to be historical.

Choreography: The arrangement of movement in time and space. A choreographer is the person who composes or creates the steps and movements for a dance; that person may or may not be the Artistic Director of a dance company.

Composer: A person who writes music.

Costumes/Wardrobe: The clothes worn by performers on stage. Clothes often provide information about the character portrayed. In dance performances, colors are often used to distinguish the main dancers (*prima ballerina*) from the *corps de ballet*.

Irish Step Dancing: A traditional style of Irish dance in which dancers keep a stiff upper body with hands kept at their sides, and featuring quick intricate movements of the feet.

Juba: Originally brought to America by West African slaves, juba involves rhythmic foot stomping accompanied by slapping of the arms, legs, chest and cheeks. Originally, juba was performed without musical instruments because plantation owners were afraid of secret codes that might be hidden in the drumming. But by the mid 1800s, public performances, usually in minstrel shows, had both musical and lyrical accompaniment. Juba influenced American tap dancing.

Props or Properties: Items (except costumes, scenery and furniture) used to create a mood, a setting, or a sense of place; items held or used by the dancers to add to the movement of their bodies.

Repertory or Repertoire: The dances performed by a company.

Scenery: The environment or setting of a dance or play created through the use of painted flats, painted backdrops, cloth drops or slides on the cyclorama, a white screen-like curtain at the back of the stage.

Score: The musical or sound accompaniment to a dance or musical play.

Set: Arrangement of scenery and props on a stage; they can be painted, three-dimensional, realistic or symbolic. A Set Designer is the person who imagines and creates the scenery and decides how the sets and props should be arranged.

Tap Dance: An American art form and style of percussive dancing that blends the syncopated drumming and dance rhythms of West African traditions with dances from the British Isles such as reels, jigs, hornpipes, and clogging.

Wings: The areas right and left of the stage that are out of sight of audience members. Performers make their entrances and exits from “the wings.”

LESSON: CAREERS IN A DANCE COMPANY

NEW YORK STATE STANDARD FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT & OCCUPATIONAL STUDIES: 1

Putting on a ballet (or any theatrical production) is a collaborative effort involving many individuals. Discuss all the jobs required to create a dance production, from those who work backstage or “behind the scenes,” to the dancers, to the “front of house” staff. What do these people do? What training do they need? Here’s a list of some of the people who are typically involved in a full-scale presentation, like *The Alice-in-Wonderland Follies*.

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| CHOREOGRAPHER | DANCERS | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MUSICAL DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR |
| COSTUME DESIGNER | MUSICIANS/ORCHESTRA | COMPOSER | SET DESIGNER |
| REHEARSAL/BALLET MISTRESS OR MASTER | PROPERTIES DESIGNER/PROPERTY MASTER | LIGHTING DESIGNER | HAIR/MAKE-UP DESIGNER |
| COSTUME SHOP/DRESSERS | STAGE MANAGER | THEATER MANAGER | MARKETING/PUBLICITY/DEVELOPMENT (FUND RAISING) |
| BOX OFFICE MANAGER | USHERS/TICKET TAKERS | STAGE HANDS | ELECTRICIANS |

CURRICULUM FOCUS: SOCIAL STUDIES, LANGUAGE ARTS, THEATER, MUSIC, DANCE, READING

BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS: DANCE, MUSIC, MOVING IMAGE

NEW YORK STATE ARTS STANDARDS: 1, 2, 3, 4

NEW YORK STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS: 1, 2, 3, 4,

NEW YORK CITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE STANDARDS: 2A, 2B, 3C, 4A, 5A, 5B

ACTIVITY/DISCUSSION: BOOKS VS. BALLET

Before performance, familiarize students with the *Alice in Wonderland* books. Older students can be assigned to read them; younger students could have the books read to them. Discuss the important themes in the books. Who are the major characters? What happens to them? After seeing the performance at Colden Auditorium, ask students to compare the ballet to the novels.

Note: There are a number of difficult words or British expressions in the Alice books. Teachers might want to prepare a vocabulary and discuss with students before reading books.

DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY: BOOKS INTO BALLET

What other favorite books or stories would the students like to see as ballets? Ask students to write a short description of a scene or event in such an imagined ballet illustrating it with a drawing.

ACTIVITY: WRITE A POEM

1) After the performance: Ask the students to write a poem about what they have seen. Have the students read them to the class. Photocopy the results and bind them into folders so that each member of the class has a remembrance of their visit to The Kupferberg Center.

2) Have the students compose an acrostic poem about a character or scene or situation from the Alice books or from the ballet. In this form, students chose a word or words associated with Alice in Wonderland, i.e. Alice, White Rabbit, Wonderland, Vaudeville, Ballet, etc. The first word in each line should start with the corresponding letter of the chosen word/s. Read the poems to the class and see if they can recognize the words being used as the acrostic. Photocopy the results and bind them into folders so that each member of the class has a remembrance of their visit to The Kupferberg Center.

ACTIVITY: DRAWING

Ask students to draw their favorite character from the ballet or create a diorama of their favorite scene.

ACTIVITY/DISCUSSION: BE A DANCE CRITIC

Ask each student to pretend to be a dance critic at a local newspaper and to write a review of the Alice-in-Wonderland Follies. What did they like or dislike and why. Did they have a favorite section? A favorite dancer? Did they like the music? The choreography? Was the music appropriate for the choreography? Were the costumes and scenery appropriate? Students should back up their opinions. If, as a journalist for that same local paper, they had the opportunity to talk with the choreographer, discuss what questions they would like to ask, such as Where do you get the ideas for your dances? What got you started in dance? Lead a discussion about why there may be different student reactions to the performance.

ACTIVITY: MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC

Listen to recordings of popular songs from the turn of the last century (two of them—"Oh, You Beautiful Doll" and "Glow Worm" are included in the score of The Alice-in-Wonderland Follies). After the performance, discuss whether these songs were used at appropriate points in the production. Discuss why some songs stay popular for so many years. Listen to examples of the

other musical styles used in the production: ragtime, waltzes, opera standards, marches. Ask students to discuss how these different musical styles make them feel. What are the similarities/differences in these musical styles?

ACTIVITY: RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

THE COMPOSERS: The works of a number of composers are featured in the score, including John Philip Sousa, Scott Joplin, Giuseppe Verdi, Robert Schumann, and Claude Debussy among them. Divide class into small groups to research the lives of these men: when were they born/died, where did they live, what kind of music did they write? What were their most famous pieces of music? Download their portraits from the web or photocopy from books. Each group to prepare a poster with this portrait and the information about the composers' lives for display in the classroom. Listen to examples of their music and have each group present a summary of their research to the class.

THE DANCE STYLES: Ask the class to research the different dance styles that are performed in this production. If available, show videos of examples.

NEW YORK STATE SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARD: 1

LESSON: NEW YORK CITY AT THE TURN OF THE LAST CENTURY/THE WORLD OF VAUDEVILLE

Have students research life in New York City at the turn of the 20th century: how did people dress, what jobs did they have, what did they do for fun? What kinds of music did they listen to? What were important historical events? Who was President? Are there any important buildings still in existence that were built in New York City during this period? Motion pictures were in their infancy—what were early silent films like? Collect pictures for a classroom collage reflecting the turn-of-the-century city. Look at old films of vaudeville [see bibliography].

CURRICULUM FOCUS: LANGUAGE ARTS, DANCE

COORDINATE WITH STUDENT GUIDE: A DANCER'S DAY

BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS: DANCE

NEW YORK STATE ARTS STANDARDS: 2

NEW YORK STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS: 1, 4

DISCUSSION/ACTIVITY: THE TRAINING OF A PROFESSIONAL DANCER

Discuss the training of a professional dancer. If one of the students takes dance lessons, ask that student to describe a typical class. If a student is taking ballet lessons, ask for a demonstration of some basic ballet steps and movements. Have others in the class try to duplicate these movements as best they can, reminding them that it takes dancers many years of training to move and pose as they do. Bring in a pair of toe shoes that can be examined by the class. Invite a local dance teacher or professional dancer to speak to the class. Have the class prepare a list of questions to ask, for example: How long does it take to become a professional dancer or dance teacher? As performers, do they ever get nervous before going on stage? How do they memorize all the different dance steps?

CURRICULUM FOCUS: MUSIC, THEATER, DANCE, NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

COORDINATE WITH STUDENT GUIDE: BALLET VAUDEVILLE/ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

BLUEPRINT FOR THE ARTS: MUSIC, THEATER

NEW YORK STATE ARTS STANDARD: 1

ACTIVITY: TELL A STORY THROUGH MOVEMENT

Divide class into small groups. Have each group select a familiar story or an event in a familiar story and see if they can tell that story through movement. No speaking, but props are allowed. See if they can set their story to music.

ACTIVITY: DANCE RECITAL

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a different piece of music in one of the styles used in *The Alice-in-Wonderland Follies*. Each group is to choreograph a brief dance to that music to be presented to the class. If they could, what kind of costumes would be appropriate for their dance? Would they want to use props or scenery? Would their dance tell a story?

COORDINATE WITH STUDENT GUIDE: PRATFALLS SLAPSTICK AND MIME

ACTIVITY: CHARADES

Telling a story in ballets involves mime or pantomime -- acting without words. Divide the class into small groups to play Charades. Write various emotions and actions on slips of paper. Have each group act out these emotions/actions before the class and see if the others can correctly guess what is being portrayed. Have each group select a different character from *The Alice-in-Wonderland Follies* and see if they others can guess who they are.

CURRICULUM FOCUS: LITERATURE, LANGUAGE ARTS

COORDINATE WITH STUDENT GUIDE: LEWIS CARROLL

NEW YORK STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARD: 2

NEW YORK CITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE STANDARD: 2B

ACTIVITY/DISCUSSION: BOOK REPORT/FANTASY LITERATURE

Lewis Carroll wrote his fantasy books for children nearly 150 years ago. This genre of children's literature has remained popular since then and there have been a number of 20th and 21st century authors who have written novels that have become fantasy classics. Assign students to select an age-appropriate book of this type and assign a book report. Suggested series and titles: *The Wizard of Oz*, *Harry Potter*, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, *Our Dark Materials*.

FIELD TRIP

Take a class trip to visit the Alice in Wonderland statue in Central Park, located off East 75th Street in Manhattan. The 11-foot-high bronze statue, created by José de Creeft in 1959, depicts Alice sitting on a giant mushroom surrounded by the Mad Hatter, The White Rabbit, The Cheshire Cat, and the Dormouse. The sculpture's design is modeled after the Tenniel drawings, but Alice's face is that of the artist's daughter. The inscription on the statue, which was a gift to the children of the City of New York from philanthropist and publisher George Delacorte, comes from a poem by Carroll, *The Jabberwocky*: "Twas brillig and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe." Unlike most sculptures, kids are encouraged to climb, touch and crawl all over this one. If you can't visit in person, visit online at: <http://www.centralpark.com/guide/attractions/alice-in-wonderland.html>. When you return to the classroom, read the poem, "The Jabberwocky," to commemorate the visit.

CURRICULUM FOCUS: LANGUAGE ARTS, LITERATURE
NEW YORK STATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARD: 1
NEW YORK CITY ENGLISH LANGUAGE STANDARD: 5A

ACTIVITY: MORE DOUBLETS

COORDINATE WITH STUDENT GUIDE: TAKE IT HOME: PARENT & KID CORNER

Try making your own doublets as a class activity or homework assignment. If our students like these doublets, visit this site for even more: <http://thinks.com/words/doublets.htm>

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| ↓ | MUM | CAR | BAT | TEA | JACK | FLOUR | NOUN |
| | MUD | CAN | MAT | PEA | SACK | FLOOR | NOON |
| ↓ | MAD | VAN | MAN | PET | SICK | FLOOD | MOON |
| | DAD | | | POT | SILK | BLOOD | MORN |
| ↓ | | | | | SILL | BROOD | MORE |
| | | | | | JILL | BROAD | MERE |
| ↓ | | | | | | BREAD | HERE |
| | | | | | | | HERB |
| | | | | | | | VERB |

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BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll, Tribeca Books, 2011
Lewis Carroll: Through the Looking Glass by Angelita Carpenter. Lerner Publications, 2003
Rediscovered Lewis Carroll Puzzles, Dover Publications, 1996. Contains drawings by Tenniel
The Universe in a Handkerchief: Lewis Carroll's Mathematical, Recreations, Games, Puzzles, and Word Plays by Martin Garner, Springer, 1998
The World of Ballet by Kate Castle, Kingfisher, 2005

BOOKS FOR TEACHERS

Lewis Carroll: A Biography by Morton N. Cohen, Vintage, 1996
Lewis Carroll in Numberland: His Fantastical Mathematical Logical Life: A Biography by Robin Wilson, W. W. Norton, 2008
On Wings of Joy: The Story of Ballet from the 16th Century to Today by Trudy Garfunkel, EReads, 2005. Also suitable for older students
New York Life at the Turn of the Century in Photographs by Joseph Byron, Dover Publications, 1985. Also suitable for students
The Annotated Alice edited by Martin Gardner, WW Norton & Company, 1999
The Norton/Grove Concise Encyclopedia of Music, Edited by Stanley Sadie and Alison Latham, WW Norton, 1994
The Voices of the City: Vaudeville and Popular Culture in New York by Robert W. Snyder, Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 2000

COMPACT DISCS

After the Ball plus Highlights from Vaudeville, Popular turn of the century songs sung by Joan Morris, Nonesuch
Real Ragtime: Disc Recordings from its Heyday performed by various artists, Archeophone Records, 2005

Teasing': Turn of the Century Parlor Songs and Rags, sung by Julianne Baird, Helicon Records
The Greatest Ragtime of the Century performed by various artists, Shout Factory, 2003

DVDs/VIDEOS

Classic Art of Ballet: Basic Positions and Movements, BFS Entertainment, 2002

Vaudeville: A DVD Documentary, Volumes 1 & 2, Always Above Average Entertainment, 2010.

Includes original historical footage of vaudeville acts—burlesque, animal acts, magicians, comedy sketches, dance, dramatic sketches, tableaux, acrobats, even Annie Oakley.

Vintage Variety Stage and Vaudeville Film Collection: Black and white films from 1897-1920, Amazon, 2008

WEB SITES

www.abt.org/education/dictionary/index/html, online ballet dictionary with definitions of over 100 terms

www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/11, online text of Alice in Wonderland; downloadable ebook

www.lewiscarroll.org, The Lewis Carroll Society of North American site contains resources, publications, links, biographical information, performance information, mathematical games and puzzles, and more

www.lewiscarrollsociety.org.uk/, The Lewis Carroll Society of Great Britain

www.literature.org/authors/carroll-lewis/alices-adventures-in-wonderland/chapter-01.html, online book includes Tenniel's illustrations

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/vshtml/vssnde.html>, a Library of Congress site containing sampling of original recordings of slapstick routines, ethnic skits, romantic ballads, popular songs of the vaudeville stage

www.nycballet.com/families/kids/alphabet.htm/, Interactive Ballet Alphabet Storybook includes dance terms and ballet history

www.nypl.org/locations/lpa, entry into the web sites of the New York Public Library's Performing Arts Library collections, including the dance and music divisions and the Billy Rose Theater division. The Library has one of the world's most comprehensive collections devoted to dance, music, theater, and recorded sound.

www.nytb.org, web site of New York Theater Ballet

www.theatredance.com/tap, information on the history of juba, tap and Irish step dancing

<http://thinks.com/puzzles/carroll/carroll.htm>, Games and puzzles devised by Lewis Carroll

www.usadance.org, Information on social dances. This organization promotes all social and recreational ballroom and Latin dancers in the U.S. from pre-schoolers to senior; publishes American Dancer Magazine.

REVELATIONS is made possible thanks to generous support from the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, Harkness Foundation for Dance, The Kupferberg Foundation, The New York Community Trust, and the Selma and Max Kupferberg Family Foundation. This series is supported in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council, and with the support of Queens Borough President Helen Marshall.



REVELATIONS: Arts Education for Young People is presented by Kupferberg Center Performances, Queens College, CUNY.

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