

## Guest Column: Mother and daughter reflect on 'Lookingglass Alice'



*Our mother-daughter reviewing tandem especially loved Molly Brennan as the Red Queen wearing a 10-foot-tall dress in 'Lookingglass Alice.' Photo credit: Adams Visual Communications.*

*Editor's Note: The DCPA NewsCenter offers occasional guest columns from a variety of local and national voices covering a wide range of theatre topics. This week's guests are [GoPlayDenver.com](http://GoPlayDenver.com) editor Tara Bardeen and her daughter, Finn. To submit a proposed guest column, email your name and topic to [jmoore@dcpa.org](mailto:jmoore@dcpa.org).*

**By Tara Bardeen**

For the DCPA NewsCenter

*Lookingglass Alice* is a delightful romp through the nonsensical world of Lewis Carroll that is sure to please theatergoers of all ages. Seriously, I couldn't believe how many times both adults and children laughed out loud during the 90-minute performance at the DCPA Theatre Company's Stage Theatre.

Involving only four actors (or should I say acrobats?) who play 15 different characters drawn from Carroll's beloved stories, this fast-moving play follows Alice down the rabbit hole as she sets out on her quest to become a queen. She meets many bizarre characters along the way including the Red Queen, the White Knight, the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter, the March Hare, the Caterpillar and Humpty Dumpty.

While the play is based on the works of author Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (Lewis Carroll was his pen name) and fans of his books will recognize many exact lines, Chicago's Lookingglass Theater Company brings a fresh, contemporary styling to this well-known story. The staging is highly deconstructed with the action of the play taking place on a mostly barren stage with stagehands regularly appearing to help move props and set pieces and even coordinate the show over the intercom. The actors completely smash the fourth wall (that's the invisible divide between the stage and the audience) by dangling above the seats from ropes, leading the entire crowd in a rendition of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Bat" and even inviting everyone to play with giant balloon balls tossed into the seats.

While the show begins with actors wearing period clothing typical of the 1800s, the audience is soon surprised by a Red Queen in a dress 10 feet high, a White Knight on a unicycle wearing what appears to be a colander-inspired helmet, and a Mad Hatter dressed as a 1970s disco enthusiast. In this land of irrational characters who sometimes speak imagined words, these whimsical costume choices that seem more playful than foreign. The creativity of the costumes alone brought smiles to our faces.

*Lookingglass Alice* is a definite must-see show that engages the audience through dance, aerial acrobatics and song. It and delights through wondrous characters and inspired comedic acting.

But you don't have to take my word for it. Here's what my 10-year-old daughter, Finn, had to say about the show:

"I loved how funny *Lookingglass Alice* was. I also thought it was so cool how much they could do with so few actors. One minute an actress played the Red Queen and in the next scene, she was the Dormouse at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. I was also surprised by how well each of the actors could dance, do tricks, sing songs and play musical instruments.

I also liked how the actors let the crowd participate - like when Alice sat down for a tea party with a girl sitting in the first row, or when the Mad Hatter and the March Hare led the audience in singing a song together. This made the show feel like something everyone could enjoy together.

I thought the actors did a really good job with all the tricks they performed during the show, and the costumes were really cool. I especially liked the Red Queen's wigs and giant dress. I think other kids my age would like the show. But because of the bright lights that flash when Alice changes squares on the chess board, and some of the loud noises, I think younger kids might not like it. Otherwise, I think *Lookingglass Alice* was a really fun show."



## THE POST-SHOW 'BEHIND THE LOOKINGGLASS EXPERIENCE'

Audiences are invited to extend the *Lookingglass Alice* experience after select performances. Meet members of the cast, learn behind-the-scenes details on how the show is staged, get your picture taken with Alice, and leave with a signed, limited-edition poster. A limited number of slots are available following Friday evening, Saturday matinee, Saturday evening and Sunday matinee performances. Purchase tickets (\$35 each) by adding on to your online order, or by mentioning the 'Behind The Lookingglass Experience' at the box office.

**FROM TARA:** Ever feel like you just don't want to leave the theater after a great show? The 'Behind the Lookingglass Experience' allows you to linger a little longer in the theater and enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of backstage spaces, followed by a photo op with Alice herself. Other highlights of this unique opportunity include an inside look at one of the most memorable tricks performed during the play and an autographed poster to take home. What a special way to end an afternoon or evening at the theater!

**FROM FINN:** I really enjoyed seeing the costumes during the tour, and I was really curious to find out how they did the trick involving Humpty Dumpty's fall. It was neat to meet Alice after the show and to take a picture with her. She's really nice and did a great job during the show. In fact, all of the actors were so funny and did such a good job that I wish I could have met all of them. I love the signed poster that I got to take home as a keepsake, and I plan to hang it in my room near my desk.

**About our Guest Columnists:** Tara Bardeen is a Denver native and author of the blog [GoPlayDenver.com](http://GoPlayDenver.com), which is dedicated to connecting people to accessible arts and culture in Denver. Finn is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Denver School of the Arts studying creative writing. As a mother-daughter project, the two have been reading aloud *Alice in Wonderland* at bedtime and went to see *Lookingglass Alice* as a special mother-daughter outing.

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[Jessica Jackson](#) on Creede Repertory Theatre's 50th anniversary season

[Susan Lyles](#) on 10 years of staging plays for women in Denver

### Ticket information: *Lookingglass Alice*

Performances through Oct. 11

Stage Theatre

ASL interpreted & Audio described performance: 1:30 p.m. Oct. 3

Call 303-893-4100 or [BUY ONLINE](#)

TTY: 303-893-9582

Groups of 15 or more: 303-446-4829

Also: Purchase in person at The Denver Center Ticket Office, located at the Helen Bonfils Theatre Complex lobby.  
Buy and print online at [Denvercenter.org](http://Denvercenter.org).

*Please be advised that the Denver Center for the Performing Arts – [denvercenter.org](http://denvercenter.org) – is the only authorized online ticket provider for the Denver engagement of 'Lookingglass Alice.'*

**Previous NewsCenter coverage of *Lookingglass Alice*:**

[Photos: Opening night of \*Lookingglass Alice\* in Denver](#)

[Lookingglass Alice: A tumble through time, childhood in tow](#)

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***Lookingglass Alice* cast profiles:** [Adeoye, the Cheshire Cat](#)

[Molly Brennan, the Red Queen](#)

[Kevin Douglas, the White Rabbit](#)

[Micah Figueroa, understudy](#)

[Samuel Taylor, the White Knight](#)

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