

"Lookingglass Alice" is a colorful mix of theater and circus



Molly Brennan portrays the Red Queen in "Lookingglass Alice." (*Adams Visual Communications*)

"Lookingglass Alice" is a mix of theater and circus, an acrobatic adaptation of Lewis Carroll's works taking audiences down a rabbit hole for 90 entertaining minutes.

Humor, clever costumes and gymnastics mark the colorful work, frankly more suitable for adult audiences than youngsters.

Less a storytelling success than a visual treat, the fast-paced series of acts based on "Alice in Wonderland," "Through the Looking-Glass" and other works, brings a number of Carroll characters to life. The Cheshire Cat, Red Queen, White Knight, Mad Hatter, Caterpillar and others are all inhabited by a cast of only five. (Each cast member other than Alice plays at least three characters.) The piece — adapted and directed by David Catlin, produced in association with The Actors Gymnasium — has been a Chicago favorite for a decade.

The constant motion includes Cirque du Soleil-inspired trapeze work and gymnastics, plus an injection of humor and much running and yelling, all in service to the famous tale of the young girl and her trip down a rabbit hole. There's also room for bits of improvisation.

A stuttering Charles Dodgson (who later became known as Lewis Carroll) leads young Alice into the world of nonsense, wordplay, irony and chess moves loved by the author's fans since Victorian times. Speaking of Victorians, a steampunk sensibility in the costuming is among the show's highlights.

Lauren Hirte as Alice (alternating with Lindsey Noel Whiting), first played the role almost 10 years ago. Adeoye as the

Cheshire Cat is most physically commanding. Molly Brennan, as the Red Queen and others, is a good singer in addition to being a strong athletic and comic presence. Samuel Taylor makes the most of the White Knight role, a unicycling comedian, and Kevin Douglas shows off acting chops as the Mad Hatter and Humpty-Dumpty.

Credit Sylvia Hernandez-DiStasi with inventive, hyper-active choreography.

Spoiler alert: Humpty Dumpty has a great fall.

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"LOOKINGGLASS ALICE"

Adapted and directed by David Catlin from the works of Lewis Carroll. Produced in association with The Actors Gymnasium. With Adeoye, Molly Brennan, Kevin Douglas, Lauren Hirte, Samuel Taylor and Lindsey Noel Whiting. **Through Oct. 11 at The Stage Theatre. Tues.-Thurs. and Sun. evening at 6:30 p.m.; Fri. and Sat. 7:30 p.m.; Sat.-Sun. matinee at 1:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$35. At the box office in the Helen Bonfis Theatre Complex, online at denvercenter.org or call 303-893-4100**