



□ One of the most fascinating pieces of "Alice" ephemera came into my possession recently. It is a program of the Opera Comique Theatre for 1898-99, a "souvenir of the 100th Performance of Messrs. Horace Sedger's and Arthur Eliot's Pantomime of Alice in Wonderland." It consists of sixteen pages, plus cover, and deserves to be faithfully described.

The cover consists of the title surrounded by illustrations from "Alice" drawn by Carl Hentschel. Following another inside title page is a page giving a synopsis of "Alice," (and retelling the old story of Queen Victoria and the math book). The following page has photos of Lewis Carroll, Saville Clarke and the play's producers, followed by a page of "biographical notes." Then a page which seems to be an excerpt from the play, (couplets and chorus), followed by another page of drawings of the rehearsal, and members of the company.

The following page is the most intriguing of all, for it contains a facsimile of the first number of "Theatre News," a miniature newspaper "printed nightly at the theatre after the commencement of the performance of Alice, and presented to each member of the audience." (A page from the first number, as shown in the program, is reproduced here).

The balance of the program consists of "Alice" rhymes sent in by children and a L'envoie from the producers, dated February 17th, 1899.

Most intriguing is the miniature newspaper. If any of our members has copies, please tell us about them.

A LETTER FROM ALICE.

Miss Rose Hersee to the "Theatre News."

ALICE.
The Editor has asked me to write a few words about myself for the first number of our little paper. I have never written anything before, and I really do not know what to say. Mother says I am a very

MATTIE.
saying how much I love the piece. And I'm sure you'll appreciate it.

THE QUEEN.
I should like to say that I am only to the year old. It is almost funny at that age. I am no leader, and was forced to go with I must be twenty. Mr. Sedger says it is a compliment to my acting, but I don't like it, and mother sent my little getting ready to go home for show. But I am only sorry about one thing, and that is I can't read while I was rehearsing, and have had some three or four

THE KING.
I had a lot of rehearsal, and I worked several hours a day because I wanted Alice to be a great success.

HORACE SEDGER.
And I always wish for it has been so. I don't think I have any more to say. I got up at half past ten every night, and after a breakfast mother brings me down to the theatre. After the routine we have dinner

THE TWINS.
Then there is evening performance, and after that I go home to bed. It was indeed singing by my sister, Madam Rose Hersee. I do so much I am tired out. Alice and all the other girls and boys have they are the real star children, and so every night we are not having a one.

ARTHUR ELIOT.
And that's all. I'm sorry I am not more interesting little person. My love to every body (and good night).

THE KNAVE.
ROSE HERSEE.

ALICE.
IN WONDERLAND,
Opera Comique.

THE ROSE.

The above letter was pasted in the program of the 100th performance of "Alice in Wonderland" at the Opera Comique Theatre for the first number of "Theatre News." It is a facsimile of the original as it appeared.

□ Florence Becker Lennon sent us two reviews of a play that opened in Boulder, Colorado last December. Called "Hurrah! It's Lewis Carroll Day," it was written by Don Katzman, a Denver poet-playwright, who also directed. Quoting the Boulder Daily Camera, "The Highland Players production of 'Hurrah! It's Lewis Carroll Day!' is an intellectual puzzle, a teaser that contains a grain of truth in its deliberately perverse view of Wonderland, but defies the audience to find it.

"It is not a play for those who prefer to keep their childhood myths intact.

"Don Katzman, a Denver poet-playwright, is both author and director of the drama, which takes place in the mind of Lewis Carroll. Although the familiar characters are all there — delightfully costumed — the audience does not become emotionally involved with them. The method reminds me of Brecht's 'theatre of alienation' which aimed at invoking traumatic thought processes in the audience. But while Brecht's plays had a hard Marxist line to peddle, Katzman's only purpose seems to be to demonstrate what truth is not.

"The first act was originally performed at the Judson Poets Theatre in New York 11 years ago. A second act, which is essentially a commentary on the first, a sort of doubling back effect, is being performed for the first time in this production.

"It seems that the creatures of Lewis Carroll's imagination have turned against their author, and have put him on trial for the rape of Alice. It develops in the middle of the trial that since he is their Creator — a surrogate for God — they have no right to try him. He is beyond their jurisdiction.

"The Cheshire Cat, by power of the insanity conferred on him, takes charge of the trial, reveals that he is the real debaucher of Alice, and causes an usurpation in the kingdom of the Red Queen.

"The trial scene is excellently directed, with careful attention to vocal quality and stage movement. The large cast is orchestrated almost like a ballet.

"Paul Barner, as the Cheshire Cat, is outstanding in a generally strong cast. He is just sleazy enough, manipulative enough, to suggest that insanity has a reason of its own. His performance creates certain unavoidable parallels with the characters of Watergate.

"His polar opposite is the Mad Hatter, played by Larry Heineman, with a congenial, whimsical madness. Jacques Carrie is quite appealing as the Red King, his voice just this side of exhaustion. He plays the part like a racer who just manages to crawl across the finish line.

"The Queen and Alice are brilliantly drawn caricatures of feminine types. The power-mad Queen, played by Phyllis Kabin, is brittle, assertive, a woman dominated by masculine qualities.

"Alice is a study in the passivity forced upon women by society. The role is played by Pamela Gilot, reciting her lines like a doll who talks when you pull its string. 'I saw what I had been taught to see,' she says. The Queen and Alice, between them, possess a single brain, but the brain has been split in two.

"Andy Green gives a creditable performance as the Dormouse. Her story of finding Lewis Carroll's heart at the bottom of a deep hole, then venturing inside to find a replica of plague-ridden London, establishes one of the few bonds of sympathy with the audience. Meg Graham and Nancy Hammerstrom as Tweedle Dee and Dum are not grotesque enough. Separating them in the second act seems to me, visually, a mistake.

"Lewis Carroll, as played by Tom DeMer, is a lovable duffer who stabs himself with his own needle. He recites a poem about war from a book he is reading, 'The story is not to be told. The story is to be eaten alive.' There are some dead moments in the second act, which will no doubt be eliminated as the author studies his production.

"Stanley Li is quite effective as the Captain of the Guard, and William Dohne adds an authentic 'Alice' touch as the March Hare."

□ An Alice in Wonderland mirror to hang – Alice and the White Rabbit are on a pink and purple background, framed in white. Size: 16” x 20” with an 8” x 10” mirror. \$15.50. Artisan Designers, Dept. G51, 485 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.



□ Alice in Wonderland: On blue silk cord. Hand-painted porcelain. \$10.00. Horchow Collection, P.O. Box 34862, Dallas, Texas 75234.



□ From a recent issue of a British stamp magazine ... “Way back in 1965, Gerald King, of Walthamstow, London, had the idea of celebrating the centenary of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by producing a set of covers and stamps of his own design. The original idea was to produce a short set depicting half a dozen characters, but the idea snowballed. Eventually he produced more than 20.

“I really had a job on my hands. Thinking out reasons for the issues, and designing them, took the best part of my spare time for a year. Then, of course, I had the problems of finding a printer, perforator, etc. ...

“The original printing – over 100 complete sets – sold out quickly and about 1968 I had them reprinted, adding extra designs. I tried to keep the spirit of Carroll’s delightful lunacy throughout the whole project ...’

“The covers and stamps and postmarks form an attractive off-beat series and the cancellations, especially, attract my attention for their flair and originality. Among them I note cds impressions of ‘Square Two, Looking Glass-Land’, ‘Cape Chimney, Wonderland’, ‘Tulgey Wood’, ‘Pool of Tears’ and ‘Law Courts, Wonderland.’ ”

On a factual, practical note, there are, of course, a number of genuine postmarks which have links of one kind or another with the Alice in Wonderland theme.

At Wonderland, California, a special cover with an art design depicting Alice was issued in September 1938. There was also, in 1968, a post office named Wonderland (a rural station of Blacklick) in Franklin County, Ohio.

The family name Carroll is also widely represented as a postal place-name in America – not in deference to Lewis Carroll, but generally as a tribute to Charles Carroll (1737-1832), of Carrollton, Maryland, one of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence. Carroll, Manitoba, Canada, on the other hand, was named for an early postmaster, A. H. Carroll.

Alice has also made its mark on the map, and in postmark form, in regions of the world ranging from South Africa and North Dakota to the oil-bearing zone of Jim Wells County, Texas.

□ The Rolling Stone of February 13, 1975 features an ad for Fender musical instruments, which illustrates Alice talking to the Caterpillar. Beautifully illustrated in full color by "Wolfe," it contains the following copy:

"I am *precisely* three inches high," said the Caterpillar, "though I frequently become much higher."

"With that magic mushroom?" Alice asked eagerly.

"With music!" retorted the Caterpillar, conjuring visions of Fender guitars and matching amplifiers. "I play inhumanly hot licks on my Stratocaster and back myself with everything else."

"But *I* have only *two* arms," sighed Alice. "If I am to reach new heights on a Strat, I shall need your backing on electric bass."

"On a *Fender!*" smiled the Caterpillar. "Or two or three. I should much rather get *my* hands on what TV concert bassmen play."

"And of course," Alice sang out ...
"9 out of 10 pick a Fender bass"



The full color poster is available by sending \$1.00 to Fender, Box 3410, Dept. 175, Fullerton, Calif. 92634.

□ YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED ...

B. W. Sewell

It is always a surprise to find Alice in the strangest places. For example, a new face on the newsstand was a publication entitled Comix Book, whose No. 1 issue proclaims, "It's New! It's Strange! It's Subterranean!" Well, it's certainly that. The magazine comes somewhere in the middle of Mad Magazine and the traditional hard core "underground comics," with the result that it is a bit in limbo. One bright spot, however, is an appearance by Alice in a four-page parody called "Alice in Watergateland." Bill Sanders, the artist and writer, has produced a delightful little Alice amongst the strange creatures of this strange land, drawn somewhere in between Doonsbury and Shultz. (COMIX BOOK, John S. Ryan, Director of Circulation, Magazine Management Company, 575 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022, \$1.00 per copy).

And then there was the photograph of President Ford in the August, 1974 issue of National Lampoon, page 5 in their monthly feature of "News on the March." Here we see the President as the Tweedle twins, complete with "Tweedledumb!" and "Tweedledeh!"

□ RECENT AND OF INTEREST

Ed Guiliano

- Kathleen Blake, Play, Game, and Sport: The Literary Works of Lewis Carroll (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 216 pp.

Traces influence of certain games and sport on the form and meaning of Carroll's major and minor works.

- Alvin C. Kibel, "Logic and Satire in Alice in Wonderland," The American Scholar, 43, No. 4 (1974), 605-629.
- J. R. Christopher, "On The Hunting of the Snark as a Romantic Ballad," Orchrist, A Journal of Fantasy in the Arts, No. 7 (Summer 1973), pp. 30-32. [Published much later — The Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin J.R.R. Tolkien Society.]

Ruth Berman, Patterns of Unification in Sylvie and Bruno (Baltimore: T-K Graphics, 1974), 30 pp.

NOTICE — Please send your 1975 membership dues to the Treasurer, Ray Wapner, P.O. Box 1667, FDR Station, New York, NY 10022.