

Los Angeles Times

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/news/arts/la-et-alice29-2008jul29,0,4142691.story>

From the Los Angeles Times

THEATER REVIEW

'Brady's' Alice finds 'Looking Glass'

The housekeeper's quintessential 1970s experiences come in handy in a sendup by Troubadour Theater.

By David C. Nichols

Special to The Times

July 29, 2008

It's a sunshine day at the Falcon Theatre, where "Alice in One-Hit-Wonderland 2: Through the Looking Glass" attacks the karaoke circuit with delightful lunacy. Troubadour Theater Company returns with a frabjous sequel to its 2007 Lewis Carroll parody, running in rep with the upcoming "As U2 Like It."

For those who missed the previous edition, zany-in-chief Matt Walker and his high-velocity cohorts open on a gonzo recap that is easily worth admission. This ends where we last left company stalwart Beth Kennedy: waking up as "Brady Bunch" housekeeper Alice Nelson. Her cheery '70s-clad employers dismiss her curious dream and the Pop-Tart it put in her pocket.

Nonetheless, as Walker's demented Carroll interjects from his laptop, discontented Alice eventually tumbles through the title mirror. Amid a blast of reconfigured Frankie Goes to Hollywood, the denizens of One-Hit-Wonderland joyously greet her arrival.

Tirelessly mugging around designer Sherry Santillano's fanciful set, Alice pits her episodic "Brady" experiences against key chess players from Carroll's classic and countless pop-culture throwaways. The Red Queen (Lisa Valenzuela) and White Queen (Erin Matthews) may resemble John Tenniel's drawings, but their entrance music -- Michael Sembello's "Maniac" -- is more truly descriptive. Wonder Woman (Audrey Siegel) bears Wonder Bread; inventor Ned Peters (Matthew Morgan) bares his Wonderbra, and that's hardly as cracked as "Glass" gets while remaining family-friendly.

Like his colleagues, Morgan plays multiple roles, such as daft Tweedledum to Dan Waskom's dim Tweedledee, serenading Alice with the Proclaimers' "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)." As always, Walker retools lyrics to ridiculously grinning effect, which also typifies Nick McCord's hallucinatory lighting, Sharon McGunigle's convulsively funny costumes and the propulsive choreography by Nadine Ellis, Ameenah Kaplan and Christine Lakin.

Wisely keeping Kennedy's endearing Ann B. Davis sendup front and center, Walker and company turn the self-referential proceedings into a sidesplitting fun-house ride. The loopy pleasure of the Red Knight (Morgan) and White Knight (Walker) jousting astride inner tubes becomes sheer hysteria when Alice rolls about in a stack of them. Puppet master Matt Scott wields the wacky Gnat (voiced by Jennie Fahn) as selflessly as he inhabits fearsome Mr. J. (alias Jabberwocky). The gooey fate of Humpty Dumpty (Mike Sulprizio) will sate snarky adolescents of any age, and the 12-step meeting of various Alices defies sober assessment.

Jack Voorhies, Andy Lopez and Lorin Shapiro complete a fearless ensemble that, along with Eric Heinly's sensational band, nails the rotating songbook of dubious chart-toppers, such as "Unbelievable" and "Double Dutch Bus."

Such anti-formulaic, seat-of-your-pants spontaneity, especially when something goes askew, defines the Troubies. Their subversive frivolity continues, hilarious and irreplaceable.

If you want other stories on this topic, search the Archives at latimes.com/archives.

TMSReprints

Article licensing and reprint options

Copyright 2008 Los Angeles Times | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)