

9-28-1974

## Eastern Theatre's 'Alice in Wonderland' Purer Adaptation

Walter Lazenby

Follow this and additional works at: [http://thekeep.eiu.edu/lazenby\\_reviews](http://thekeep.eiu.edu/lazenby_reviews)

---

### Recommended Citation

Lazenby, Walter, "Eastern Theatre's 'Alice in Wonderland' Purer Adaptation" (1974). *Walter Lazenby Reviews*. 5.  
[http://thekeep.eiu.edu/lazenby\\_reviews/5](http://thekeep.eiu.edu/lazenby_reviews/5)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Theatre Arts at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walter Lazenby Reviews by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

By WALTER LAZENBY

CHARLESTON—Lewis Carroll's Alice and her mad Wonderland friends have visited the Eastern campus in two incarnations this week. First, on Tuesday night, the Eastern Film Society showed the 1933 film featuring Cary Grant, Gary Cooper, and W.C. Fields. Now, and continuing through Sunday, the Theatre Arts Department is retelling the story in an interpreters' theatre performance.

The former was a mishmash of incidents from both "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass." The latter, a purer version adapted and directed by Jack Rang, contains virtually every pun, every character, every incident from Carroll's first work.

It is a show-and-tell affair, utilizing a narrator but occasionally putting narrative matter and awkward third person references to herself in Alice's mouth. Of course, in a world where, as one character admits, everyone is mad, this

effects and by relying on the principle of relativity, Rang has solved the problem of making Alice seem to be now three inches, now nine feet tall. He calls on his actors to provide scenery, as when they become the sides of the tunnel Alice falls through or the doors she is trying to unlock.

Yet an even more choreographic treatment of the tunnel scene and faster pace might have given it more grace, and the trial scene needs a sharper edge of satire.

Most of the roles in Carroll's story challenge actors to efface their own humanity and to become in effect cartoon characters. Surely it must be somewhat difficult to present a poker face while imitating a swimming mouse upset at mention of the word cat or to

absorb oneself in impersonating a frantically agitated rabbit worried about the loss of his gloves and fan.

For approaching their roles with good heart, despite the silly antics involved, and for overcoming self-consciousness, the cast deserve praise, but some are more effectively mad than others.

Karen Eubanks gives a funny performance as the Dormouse; and Dan Dailey, more detached, exhibits a nicely appropriate grin and self-satisfied voice for the Cheshire Cat.

Anne Shapland totally immerses herself in the role of the Mock Turtle (but takes other roles too) and delivers a mock-serious rendition of a song about turtle soup that is truly hilarious.

## Eastern Theatre's 'Alice in Wonderland' Purer Adaptation

### A Review

is no great objection.

In general the stage business, acted out on a bare stage and with minimal costuming, stimulates spectators' imaginations without being realistically explicit. With such stylized