



Alexandra Wilson by Rachel Neville

STUDY GUIDE

Created By:



**EDUCATION &
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

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How long will it be?

Act 1 – 62 min

Act 2 – 36 min

Intermission – 20 min

TOTAL RUN TIME

2 hours*

*Times are approximate

Behind the Ballet

From the revolutionary vision of Septime Webre, ALICE (in wonderland) is refreshingly original, having premiered regionally in 2012, and showcases modern production elements such as elaborate, eye-popping scenery and characters who take flight. The production features gorgeous costumes by Liz Vandal and a commissioned score by Matthew Pierce. Colorado audiences may be familiar with Webre as the choreographer of Colorado Ballet's praised production of Wizard of Oz, performed in 2019. Liz Vandal is a celebrated costume designer whose unique, elaborate designs have graced the stage of Cirque du Soleil.

For the score, Webre worked closely with composer, Pierce, throughout the creative process to give each character its own unique musical sound effects, bringing each of the favorite characters to life on stage. The vibrant cast is comprised of a combination of Colorado Ballet dancers, children from the Raydean Acevedo Colorado Ballet Academy, and even some larger than life puppets. When paired with Pierce's unique score, they are sure to pull the audience right down the rabbit hole with Alice.

Webre, with his typical flair for storytelling, draws inspiration from Lewis Carroll's classic tales Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There. A polite and well-mannered child, Alice finds herself in a fantastical but irreverent world where the rules of social etiquette don't matter and time is irrelevant. She learns how to adapt to this new world and eventually becomes the heroine that brings down the Queen of Hearts and her house of cards.

Webre's unique take results in an unusual twist. As Alice chases the White Rabbit into Wonderland, the wacky characters she discovers are oddly familiar. Although she can't quite make the connection, the audience discovers that Alice's overbearing mother has become the Queen of Hearts, her sisters have become Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, and Lewis Carroll has become the Mad Hatter.

Visually stunning and filled with wonder, Webre's vibrant new take on Lewis Carroll's masterpiece is an experience not to be missed!

Synopsis of the Ballet

Act I

PROLOGUE

Alice daydreams as her family swirls around her chaotically. She is mesmerized by the mysterious and quirky Lewis Carroll, a family friend, who takes Alice on a boat ride and picnic in the country.

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

During their picnic, Lewis Carroll begins telling Alice an astounding story of a little girl's adventures in a wonderland. As Alice drifts to sleep, a White Rabbit hops by. The nervous Rabbit checks his pocket watch because he's late. He quickly leaps into a rabbit hole; Alice follows. She falls for what seems like miles.

Alice lands with a thud in a hallway filled with closed doors. She drinks a potion and grows quite tall; she fans herself and shrinks quite small. Through a keyhole, the tiny Alice catches her first glimpse of the evil Queen of Hearts. When Alice eats a bit of cake and returns to normal size, she can no longer fit through the tiny door that leads to the wondrous world.

POOL OF TEARS AND THE CAUCUS RACE

Frightened and confused, Alice cries a pool of tears. The Dormouse swims by and befriends Alice. Then, a Dodo Bird, an Eaglet and a flock of Flamingos plop into the pool. The Dodo Bird decides the best way to get everyone dry is to dance a Caucus Race.

PIG AND PEPPER

Alice comes upon a Fish footman who is delivering an invitation to the Queen of Hearts' croquet game to the Frog footman who works for the Duchess. Inside the Duchess' cottage, bedlam reigns. The Duchess is agitated because the Cook has put too much pepper into the soup.

THE CHESHIRE CAT / ADVICE FROM A CATERPILLAR / THE MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY

While walking along, Alice comes upon a Cheshire Cat, who appears and disappears on a whim. Later, when Alice looks up to the sky she finds he has become the moon. She then meets a peculiar Caterpillar who smokes a hookah pipe before metamorphosing into a butterfly before her eyes. Next, Alice stumbles into a puzzling tea party with the Mad Hatter, the March Hare and the Dormouse.

Synopsis of the Ballet

(continued):

Act II

QUEEN'S GARDEN PARTY AND CROQUET GAME

Card gardeners have accidentally planted white roses in the Queen's garden. The Queen of Hearts only wishes to grow red roses. Fearing her wrath, they paint the roses red. The Queen's court spills by and Alice sees her friend the White Rabbit and the Queen's Joker. Alice is invited by the Queen to play a very different game of croquet using Flamingo mallets and Hedgehogs as croquet balls. Blaming the Hedgehogs for losing the match, the Queen proclaims, "off with their heads." Alice saves the Hedgehogs and the angry Queen chases her into the forest.

TWEEDLE DUM AND TWEEDLE DEE AND THE JABBERWOCK

In the forest, Alice happens upon a Rocking-Horse-Fly, a Bread-and-Butterfly and beautiful Snap-Dragon-Flies. Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee playfully argue as they pass by. Alice reflects on her amazing journey with the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter, the White Rabbit and the Tweedle Twins. The languid group is suddenly threatened by the ultimate danger: the Queen's Jabberwock. To protect her new friends, Alice slays the beast.

THE TRIAL AND HOME AGAIN

Back at the Queen's palace, Alice is arrested and put on trial for her crime. Utter confusion breaks out in the court while the Queen shouts, "off with her head." Alice realizes the silliness of the Queen and her court and they fall like a house of cards. She awakens from her dream and finds herself at home.

Choreographer

SEPTIME WEBRE was appointed artistic director of The Washington Ballet in 1999, after a six year tenure as artistic director of American Repertory Ballet in New Jersey. In his tenure as TWB's artistic director, The Washington Ballet's impact regionally, nationally and internationally has deepened in three areas. First, the Company's work has continued to grow and expand in its level of excellence and bold creativity with projects including the "American Experience," a series featuring original full-length ballets based on iconic works of American literature, and the pursuit of full-length original classic works including Swan Lake, a significant milestone for a dance company. Also, The Washington School of Ballet's enrollment has tripled and the organization's commitment to community through its visionary DanceDC and



Septime Webre

TWB programs has positively affected the lives of tens of thousands of children in the District of Columbia. Much in demand as a choreographer, Webre has created works that appear in the repertoires of many companies in North America, including Pacific Northwest Ballet, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, North Carolina Dance Theatre, Ballet Austin, Atlanta Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet, Ballet San Jose, Kansas City Ballet and Colorado Ballet, among many others. As a dancer, he was featured in works by George Balanchine, Paul Taylor, Antony Tudor, Alvin Ailey and Merce Cunningham, as well as in principal and solo roles from the classical repertoire. Mr. Webre has sat on the boards of Dance/USA and the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington. Among his many awards, Webre received the DC Mayor's Arts Award for Visionary Leadership, Excellence in Artistic Discipline and numerous metro DC dance awards. He has been a recipient of a number of fellowships for his choreography. He is the seventh son in a large Cuban American family and graduated from the University of Texas with a B.A. in history and pre-law.

What is a Choreographer?

A person who creates the sequence and movements for a dance performance.



Composer

MATTHEW PIERCE is celebrated for his new classical scores commissioned by major American ballet companies. He has written ballet scores for Joffrey Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, Atlanta Ballet, Ohio Ballet, BalletMet, Cincinnati Ballet, Miami Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Ballet Hawaii, Post Ballet, Ballet Coeur d'Alene, Kansas City Ballet, New York City Ballet, Houston Ballet, and the San Francisco Ballet. *Night*, a full orchestra score set to a Chagall-inspired dreamscape ballet, has been seen at the Opera Garnier in Paris, Covent Garden in London, and City Center in New York. San Francisco Ballet's *Imaginal Disc* was voted "Best Cultural Event of 2003" by the San Francisco Chronicle and Sarah Kaufman of



Matthew Pierce

The Washington Post called his 2012 score for Washington Ballet's *Alice (in wonderland)*, "The cherry on top: Pierce's visionary result, a shimmering landscape that weaves together bits of our own world—Asian, Middle Eastern, pop riffs, jazz—with a contemporary edge and a spirit of discovery. And, yes, wonder."

What is a Composer?

A person who writes music, especially as a job.



Colorado Ballet Orchestra By Amanda Tipton

Activity

Name: _____ Date: _____

Alice In Wonderland Word Search

DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.



ADVENTURE
ALICE
BILL THE LIZARD
CATERPILLAR
CAUCUS RACE
CHESHIRE CAT
CROQUET
DODO
DORMOUSE
DUCHESS

FLAMINGO
GRYPHON
KEY
KNAVE OF HEARTS
LEWIS CARROLL
MAD HATTER
MARCH HARE
MOCK TURTLE

MUSHROOM
QUEEN OF HEARTS
RABBIT HOLE
ROSES
TARTS
TEA PARTY
TEARS
TRIAL
WHITE RABBIT
WONDERLAND

Creative Writing Prompts



Follow the YouTube link/QR to listen to the song that plays when Alice falls down the rabbit hole. As you listen, write down any feelings or images that come to your mind. You may even draw what you are feeling.

(start at 1:20) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpceTAftUyY>

Write a short story that places Alice and the other characters in a modern or futuristic world. How do the themes and events of Wonderland adapt to this new environment? What new challenges or exciting elements emerge in this reimagined version?

Group Activity

ALICE Dance Charades

Students will use their movement skills to portray characters, scenes, and elements from ALICE deepening their understanding of the story.

Materials Needed:

- Charades cards
- Time
- Space for dancing

1. Preparation

- Create a set of charades cards with terms and phrases such as:
 - Alice
 - Cheshire Cat
 - Mad Hatter
 - Queen of Hearts
 - White Rabbit
 - Tea Party
 - Rabbit Hole
 - Tweedledee and Tweedledum
 - Caterpillar
 - Jabberwocky
- Write each term or phrase on a separate card or slip of paper and place them in a container or hat.

2. Explanation

- One player from each team will draw a card and dance the term or phrase without speaking.
- The rest of the team will try to guess what is being acted out.
- Each round is timed (e.g., 1 minute per round).

3. Playing the Game

- Divide students into small teams (3-5 students per team).
- Teams take turns drawing a charades card and dancing the term or phrase.
- The opposing team guesses what is being acted out. If they guess correctly within the time limit, the dancing team earns a point.
- Rotate the dancer each round to give everyone a chance to perform.

4. Discussion

- After the game, discuss the terms and scenes that were danced out. Ask students which ones they found the most challenging or funniest.
- Encourage students to share their thoughts on how charades helped them better understand the way movement describes a character.

More Classroom Activities

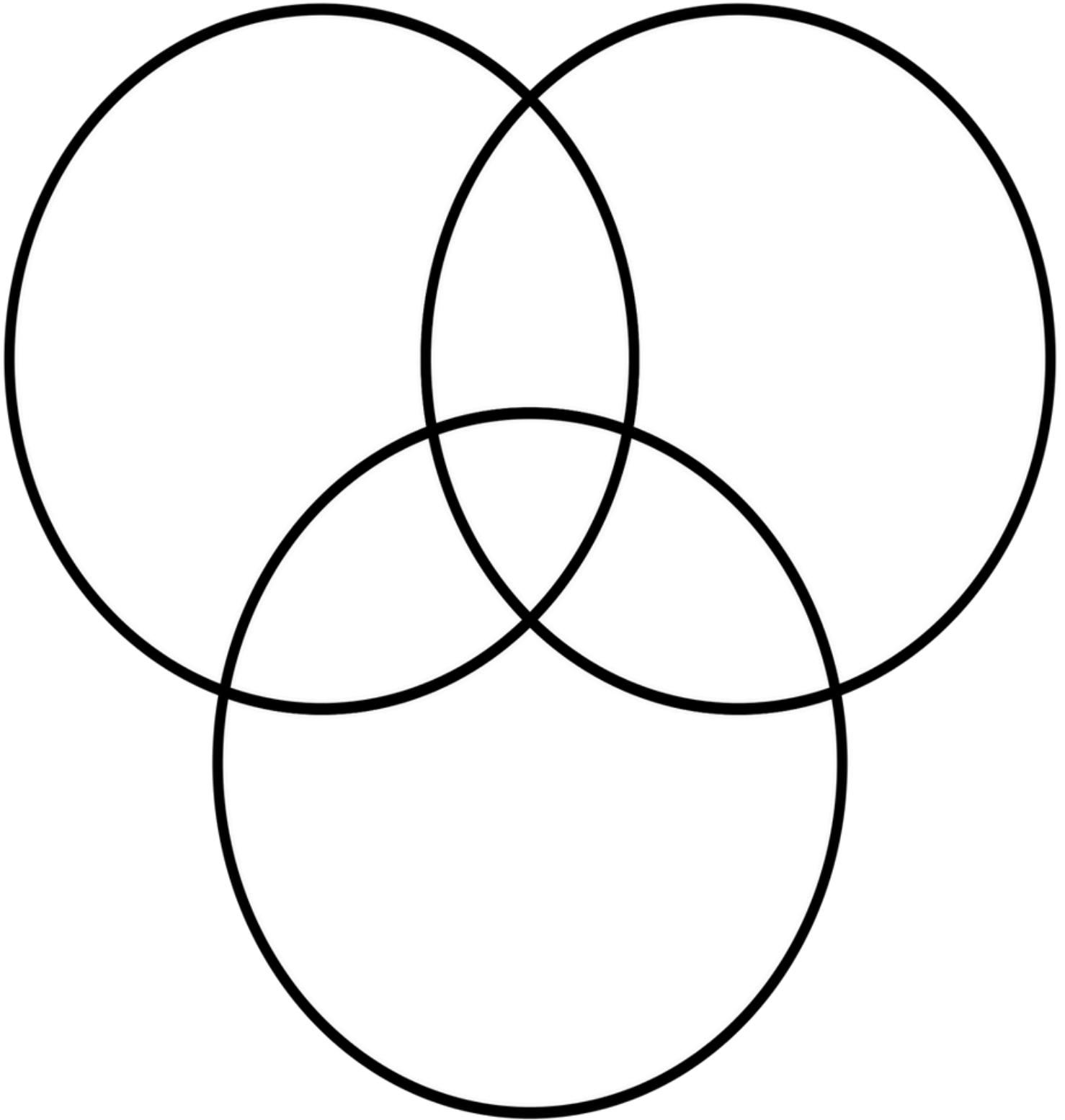
LISTEN AND LEARN: Listen to music composed by Pierce. Close your eyes, if you need to. Now, answer the following questions: If this piece of music were a shape, what shape would it be? A color? An animal? A season? A place? Why? Is it fast, slow, or varied? What is the mood of the piece, or what emotions do you feel when you listen to it? Think of three more adjectives that you believe describe the music. Compare your answers with other students' answers. Are any of your answers the same? Why do you think you came up with similar or different answers?

MOVE TO THE MUSIC: Now, divide into groups and create movements that go with your team's answers from the listening activity. Try to incorporate some of everyone's answers. How do the animals move? How would you move in winter that's different from how you move in summer? How would blue move, as opposed to orange? Some movements should be high; others should be low. Some should be fast; others could be slow. Be mindful of using all of your body, not just your feet. Link your movements together into a dance and perform it for the class.

POETRY IN MOTION: After seeing the production, write a poem inspired by the performance. Now, try reversing that process! Get into groups, find a poem that you really like, and create a dance to go along with it! Identify powerful words and themes within the poem, and associate movements with them. Link the movements together to create a dance to perform for your peers. If you were to make an entire production out of your dance, what kind of sets and costumes would be fitting? Draw or make a collage of pictures representing how you would set the scene.

STORYTELLING THROUGH DANCE: Dance is an art form that tells a story through movement. Using a story or text your class is studying, you can recreate scenes from the story using dance. Put the students in small groups and assign different scenes from the story. Instruct the students to reinterpret the story using only movement. Invite the students to be creative in their reinterpretations, allow abstract or literal movement.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST: Utilize the Venn diagram as a way to compare and contrast three different media mediums for storytelling. Now that you've seen ALICE (in wonderland) told on stage through movement, try comparing and contrasting it to two other stories – one in literature and one in film.



Surveys

Teacher/Facilitator Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below



Student/Viewer Survey

CLICK HERE

or scan QR code below

