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CLASSICS

WILL TODD

# Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

OPERA HOLLAND PARK

# ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

A FAMILY OPERA BY WILL TODD

LIBRETTO BY MAGGIE GOTTLIEB

1	<b>Overture</b>	[2.15]
2	<b>Nice weather for rabbits</b> <i>Mum, Dad, Brats, Alice, White Rabbit</i>	[5.15]
3	<b>Victorian quartet "Where did she go?"</b>	[0.47]
4	<b>Down the rabbit hole</b> <i>Alice</i>	[1.34]
5	<b>Drink me!</b> <i>Alice, Bottle, Cheshire Cat</i>	[4.51]
6	<b>Humpty's new curriculum</b> <i>Humpty Dumpty, Tweedle Dum, Tweedle Dee, Alice, Cheshire Cat, White Rabbit</i>	[4.27]
7	<b>An unsatisfactory explanation</b> <i>Alice, White Rabbit</i>	[3.50]
8	<b>Victorian quartet "Pillarcat!"</b>	[0.52]
9	<b>The Wonderland Blues</b> <i>Caterpillar, Alice, Victorians</i>	[5.14]
10	<b>Victorian quartet "Teatime!"</b>	[0.49]
11	<b>The Mad Hatter's Tea Party</b> <i>The Mad Hatter, March Hare, Dormouse, Alice</i>	[4.38]
12	<b>The tea was a trap!</b> <i>Queen of Hearts, Alice, Mad Hatter, March Hare, Dormouse, Tweedle Dum, Tweedle Dee, Caterpillar, White Rabbit, Cheshire Cat</i>	[1.58]

13	<b>The Queen of Hearts (Off with their heads!)</b> <i>Queen of Hearts, Alice, Mad Hatter, March Hare, Dormouse, Tweedle Dum, Tweedle Dee, Caterpillar, White Rabbit, Cheshire Cat</i>	[2.09]
14	<b>Alice alone</b> <i>Alice</i>	[2.11]
15	<b>I flew high in my dreams</b> <i>Alice</i>	[3.40]
16	<b>A white knight</b> <i>White Knight, Alice</i>	[3.51]
17	<b>The lovelorn duchess</b> <i>Duchess, Alice, White Knight</i>	[4.23]
18	<b>Victorian quartet "I say!"</b>	[0.48]
19	<b>Rollin'...</b> <i>Caterpillar, White Rabbit, March Hare, Dormouse, Cheshire Cat, Mad Hatter, Tweedle Dum, Tweedle Dee</i>	[3.17]
20	<b>Love song with hats</b> <i>Duchess, Mad Hatter</i>	[1.10]
21	<b>Wonderland restored</b> <i>Full Company</i>	[8.36]
22	<b>It was all true!</b> <i>Alice, Mum, Dad, Brats, White Rabbit</i>	[1.28]
	Total timings:	[68.42]

OPERA HOLLAND PARK

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## COMPANY

**Alice** Fflur Wyn  
**Rabbit** James Cleverton  
**Dad / Queen of Hearts** Robert Burt  
**Mum / Mad Hatter** Victoria Simmonds  
**Cheshire Cat** Magid El-Bushra  
**Caterpillar** Keel Watson  
**March Hare / White Knight** John Lofthouse  
**Humpty Dumpty / Duchess** Maud Millar  
**Brat / Tweedle Dum** Rosie Middleton  
**Brat / Tweedle Dee** Rosanne Havel  
**Dormouse** Stephanie Bodsworth  
**Bottle / Victorian** Maud Millar  
**Victorian** Rosie Middleton  
**Victorian** Edward Hughes  
**Victorian** Henry Grant Kerswell

*For Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

**Director** Martin Duncan  
**Designer** Leslie Travers  
**Production Musical Director** Stuart Stratford  
**Associate Director** Matthew Eberhardt  
**Choreographer** Adam Scown  
**Orchestra Manager** Ian Brignall

## ORCHESTRA

**Conductor** Matthew Waldren  
**Saxophone / Flute** Paul Fawcus  
**Trumpet** William Cooper  
**Trombone** Bob Price  
**Piano** Charlotte Forrest  
**Bass** Dave Ayre  
**Percussion** Glyn Matthews  
**Accordion** Miloš Milivojević  
**Violin I** Eleanor Bartlett  
**Violin II** Esther King Smith  
**Viola** Helen Sanders-Hewett  
**Violoncello** Carina Drury

*For Opera Holland Park*

**Producer** James Clutton  
**General Manager** Michael Volpe  
**Associate Producer** Sarah Crabtree  
**Marketing and Customer Services Manager** Julia Howe  
**Operations Manager** Kasete Skeen  
**Box Office Manager** Cecilia Mahor  
**Production Assistants** Monique Foulger & Seth Richardson  
**Marketing and Customer Services Assistant** Loren Field

## SYNOPSIS

11-year-old Alice lives in the not terribly exciting town of Grimthorpe. On a boring Wednesday in the summer holidays Alice's family, wandering around town, gets caught in a downpour. They rush into the nearest shelter, which turns out to be a pet shop – much to Alice's parents' delight: now the children will be kept entertained for a while by the animals. Alice's gluttonous siblings start making plans to eat the pets, while Alice is lost in a daydream of exotic holidays... Suddenly she is jolted out of her reverie by one of the animals – a white rabbit – who starts talking to her...

Things quickly get out of hand and Alice, chasing after the rabbit, falls down a rather deep hole. She emerges into Wonderland; and in this fantastical place Alice comes across a number of peculiar characters, including a highly-strung drinks-container, an egg-stremlay pompous teacher, a very relaxed caterpillar, a happy cat, a depressive hare, a mad hatter and a dozy dormouse, and learns that all is far from sunny in Wonderland: a mysterious (and very cross) Queen of Hearts seems distressingly keen to chop off everyone's heads...

The Queen interrupts a not very jolly tea-party and hauls everyone off under guard (except Alice) to slave away in her evil sweat-shop making teatime treats. Alice, with the help of a chivalrous but impractical white knight and a romantic, forgetful duchess, has to cook up a plan to rescue the others and deal with the unstable Queen....



## ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

*Robert Thicknesse*

It's fitting to be nervous when you try to turn a literary classic into something else – a play, a film, an opera. How should you approach something as iconic as Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*?

Maggie Gottlieb, the librettist who wrote the opera with Will Todd, says: "When we were commissioned by Opera Holland Park back in 2012, we thought there were three main issues. First we needed to ask 'why are we making this into a musical piece?'. Second, the characters are sacred – and they are also the greatest gift you could have. The last was that the *Alice* books are really a succession of episodes, not obviously connected or linear, something that it is hard to make work on stage, particularly for an audience that includes children. So while you really want to use plenty of those episodes – both because they are funny and because the audience would go crazy if you didn't – you also need to join them up into a narrative. But really, my job was easy-peasy – I was just building the framework on which Will could create his musical Wonderland."

"You basically try to create something that is not too unworthy of the original..." agrees the composer. "When I first met James Clutton and Sarah Crabtree, the producers of Opera Holland Park, in 2012, I had no idea what they were going to ask me, and it was a surprise when they mentioned *Alice* – it's daunting to take on a book that is so well known and loved. My starting point was to try to find a musical character for Alice, the only real 'human'. So we began with Alice's song, which eventually became 'I flew high in my dreams', the moment in the show when she is at her most anxious, but also the moment where she realises 'the world is bursting with wonder!' Then I looked for a language for Wonderland, something slightly eerie and chromatic and uneasy, a completely unfamiliar place where all these fantastic characters could spring to life."

For an opera, Todd's score sounds pretty jazzy, with interludes of blues and swing. "I wanted to make it musically various. For one thing, we didn't want to be boring. Maggie wrote words that lend themselves brilliantly to the characters – *of course* the caterpillar would sing the blues! The characters are really individual, and they need their own characterisation in music. I like to let the

audience relax in a familiar musical idiom so that they can get into the words and action without fretting about missing something. And at the same time there are many lyrical, more traditionally operatic episodes where the music and emotion and action are very closely intertwined."

He goes on: "The musical texture I chose, the style and scoring, was a result of where the opera was going to be performed: on a lawn surrounded by woodland in Holland Park, with a number of different 'stages' where the action moves from scene to scene – with the audience moving too. So we needed a mobile band, and also one which would sound good outdoors, would be jolly and characterful without drowning the singers."

That's where the "Victorian Quartet" comes in too – a foursome of argumentative and not very intelligent characters who react to the action, and lead the audience to the next location around the lawn.

Contemporary opera is not an easy form, but when Opera Holland Park commissioned this piece they were making a point about the future of the company and about their belief in the

artform. "In our theatre we stage masterpieces from 400 years of opera," says Clutton; "but we also believe that we should contribute to present-day opera by performing contemporary works and by keeping in touch and developing the audience. What better way could there be than creating a new work designed especially for families? New opera can be a genuine delight, and the children who come will grow up thinking that going to an opera might, after all, be quite a normal thing to do!"

Will Todd and Maggie Gottlieb's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is entering on its third season of performances in Holland Park in 2015, with more productions planned further afield in future too, including at The Royal Opera's Linbury Theatre. The writers have captured the glee and madness of Lewis Carroll's creations, and brought his characters vividly to life in a musical world of great charm. "Our *Alice* opera is totally a homage to Lewis Carroll's books and characters," says Will; "if we have made them alive in music on the stage in a way that doesn't belittle them, we are happy!"

## INVESTEC OPERA HOLLAND PARK

One of the UK's foremost opera companies, Investec Opera Holland Park produce a summer season performed each year under a spectacular canopy in Holland Park. OHP have developed an international reputation for producing rare Italian works as well as giving traditional favourites thrilling reinterperations. The company has powerful accessibility aims and is a crucible for the development of emerging talent through its year round Inspire and Young Artists programmes. Following three sell out years with their family opera based on Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox*, OHP commissioned *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* which premiered to critical acclaim in 2013. *Alice* has been delighting audiences for two years on the lawns of Holland Park and it will returning for further performances in 2015, the story's 150th year.

For more information, visit  
[www.operahollandpark.com](http://www.operahollandpark.com)  
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## WILL TODD

Will Todd is a remarkable artist whose output encompasses opera, musical theatre, song, orchestral pieces, jazz works, community projects and a huge body of choral music ranging from simple anthems for church and youth choirs, to complex works for professional chamber choirs.

His *The Blackened Man* won second prize in the International Verdi Opera Competition in 2002 and was later staged at the 2004 Buxton Festival and at The Linbury - Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. *The Screams of Kitty Genovese*, a music theatre work, has been produced at the Boston Conservatory and New York Musical Theatre Festival and more recently at the Tête à Tête Opera Festival in London and the Edinburgh Festival.

Written for Welsh National Opera Max, *Sweetness and Badness* had over 40 performances in a tour during autumn 2006, and *Whirlwind*, commissioned by Streetwise Opera, was first performed at The Sage Gateshead. *Damned and Divine* was commissioned by English National Opera Studio, and Glyndebourne Youth Opera commissioned *Firework* in 2003. His ever-popular

*Mass in Blue* (2003) for choir and jazz orchestra is performed all over the world by choirs of all ages. It is available on the Signum label. Todd's anthem *The Call of Wisdom* was commissioned for the Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral, London, on the occasion of HRH Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and was broadcast to millions worldwide on the BBC. The anthem was later included on same named album and was recorded with award-winning chamber choir Tenebrae and the English Chamber Orchestra. Will Todd released a subsequent album with Tenebrae, ECO and again on the Signum label entitled *Lux et Veritas* which reached number 3 in the Classic FM albums of the year in 2014.

Will grew up in the North East of England and is a self-taught pianist who started singing in choirs as a boy treble. He has since gone on to work with prestigious names in the music world including the Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera, Opera Holland Park, Glyndebourne Youth Opera, English National Opera Studio, the BBC Singers, The Sixteen, Tenebrae and clarinetist Emma Johnson.



**With very many thanks to all those that made this project possible including:** The Carntyne Trust, Jack Goldhill Charitable Trust, Isabelle Schirmer-Baudon & Theiry Baudon, Anthony Bunker, The Fischer Fund, Lady Tucker, Indira Panditt, Catherine Wilson, Veronica Metter, The Phillimore Charitable Trust, Mr & Mrs Anwar Al Qatami, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Arts Grants, Friends of Opera Holland Park and Anonymous Donors.

Douglas Turnbull, Liz Rowe, Rupert Enticknap, Emily Renard, Patricia Orr, Elaine Tate, Ciara Hendrick, James Laing, Hannah Hipp, Natalie Murray, Claire Williams, Benjamin Newhouse-Smith, Ian Watson, Jack Pinter, Ian Taylor, T.C.Murphy, Andreas Ayling, Sades Robinson, Françoise Herard, Claire Litton, Elizabeth Fielding, Emily Palmer, John Nicholl, Jenny Cumming, Alan Benton, Sophie Skelton, Ralph Woodward, Bethany Halliday, Cathy Boyes, Gareth Huw Davies, Lesley the Horse, Kate Dixon, Tim Angel and all at Angels the Costumiers, Frank Maguire and all at Capital Scenery.

Recorded at Angel Recording Studios & Jazzmouse Studio

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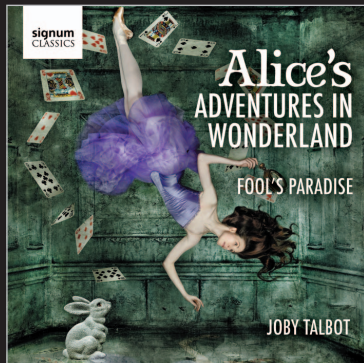
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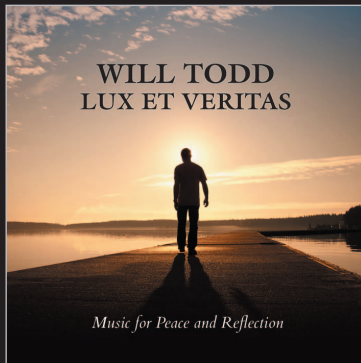
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