

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR TERRENCE S. ORR
PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

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**Madcap Illusions, Costumes and Scenery in Store for Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's
'Alice in Wonderland'**

PBT Stages Lewis Carroll Classic Over Valentine's Day



PITTSBURGH, PA (January 2016) – Complete with size-shifting scenery and a full slate of special effects, Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre performs Derek Deane's "Alice in Wonderland" for two weekends over Valentine's Day – Feb. 10-19, at the Benedum Center.

Choreographed by Derek Deane for the English National Ballet (ENB), "Alice in Wonderland" made its 1995 world premiere in London. PBT gave the production its North American premiere in April 2008.

The production features costume and set designs by Sue Blane, costumer designer for the original "Rocky Horror Picture Show," illusions by Paul Kieve, who consulted on some of the Harry Potter films, and a whimsical medley of Tchaikovsky works arranged, and added to, by Carl Davis. The score includes 15 excerpts from Tchaikovsky's "Album for the Young" among others.

Deane stays true to classic chapters from Lewis Carroll's 1865 novel: the chaotic dive down the rabbit hole, the pool of tears, the mad tea party, the garden of live flowers, the Queen of Hearts' croquet match and more.

"This production is a true adventure – fast-paced, fun and quirky with some really meaty dancing alongside the stunning special effects and scenic design," said Terrence S. Orr, PBT artistic director. "It just draws you into this unbelievable world from start to finish."

With the help of 90 costumes, it also brilliantly brings to life the curious characters Alice meets along the way – favorites from the original Carroll story like the White Rabbit, Mad Hatter, Cheshire Cat, Caterpillar and Queen of Hearts.

Wardrobe also includes 18 wigs and 30 prosthetic pieces, like the Mad Hatter's nose and chin, the White Rabbit's nose, upper lip and ears, the Duchess' jowls, nose and ears, and the Caterpillar's nose. The character makeup can take hours for each performance.

For each of these characters, Deane has devised a quirky movement vocabulary – like the undulating dance of the Caterpillar or the harried hops of the White Rabbit – to give them space to show off both personality and technique.

The production also taps into the classical sweep of the corps de ballet – first as a twirling garden of Tiger Lilies, Pansies and Sweet Peas and then as a deck of cards with square tutus and a crisp edge to their movements.

Meanwhile, the scenic design does justice to the surrealist world Carroll and illustrator John Tenniel created for the page, morphing from scene to scene through an elaborate series of painted drop curtains and 3D set pieces, including the assortment of doors, the Caterpillar's toadstool, the Duchess' house and a variety of oversized objects.

Illusions add to the wonder – whether it's the size-shifting table that puts Alice's own growth in scale, roses that change color as they're painted or the rabbit hole's swirling succession of floating teacups, clocks and over-sized objects.

PBT will stage 10 performances of "Alice in Wonderland," including a 7:30 p.m. Valentine's Day show and a Student Matinee, sponsored by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 10.

Tickets start at \$28, and are available at www.pbt.org, 412-456-6666 or by visiting the Box Office at Theater Square.