

“Alice” to fall into 21st century Friday at BC3

Moving projections may spark kids’ tunnel vision during novel approach to Carroll classic

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A scene from the National Players’ staging of “Alice in Wonderland” is shown in this undated promotional photo.

(Butler, PA) Children following Alice down the rabbit hole will find their imaginations expanding as much as the young girl’s body after that dreamy slice of cake when the National Players employ what might be the most extensive use of moving projections in the 15-year history of Succop Theater, according to the director of Butler County Community College’s Cultural Center.

The longest-running classical touring company in the United States will sweep Lewis Carroll’s 1865 novel “Alice in Wonderland” into the 21st century at 8 p.m. Friday at Succop Theater as part of the Cultural Center’s 2017-18 Performing Artists Mini-Series at BC3.

“In addition to props and sets, the (National Players) are using projections, which is a big thing in theater right now,” said Larry Stock, director of BC3’s Cultural Center. “It’s becoming more and more prevalent, and they are touring with this (technique) now.”

Moving projections will help to embellish the 75-minute play, Stock said.

“There is something visual to look at,” Stock said. “It helps children to use their imagination and may bring them into the story more.”

The National Players, Stock said, often stage classics in modern-day settings.

“They always come up with a different angle,” Stock said. “When they did ‘Romeo and Juliet’ a few years ago, they were actually using cell phones in the production instead of messengers. And they were texting people. They have also brought other Shakespeare works into modern times, and it is amazing how the show translates.”

Friday’s visit will be the National Players’ ninth at Succop Theater in his 16 years with BC3’s Cultural Center, Stock said of the 69-year-old Olney, Md., touring company.

“Everything they have done has been very well produced, envisioned, staged and directed beautifully,” Stock said, adding that experiencing “Alice in Wonderland” on stage is incomparable with any other delivery.

“It’s a totally different thing to see it acted on stage,” he said. “You can’t replace sitting in a theater with 300 other people watching a live performance with sitting in front of a computer at home.”

Maggie Stock, a former English, speech and theater professor at BC3 and Stock’s sister, will present a free 45-minute lecture on “Alice: What a Curious Story” at 6:30 p.m. Friday. Maggie Stock will discuss various adaptations of “Alice in Wonderland,” from Carroll’s fantasy novel through the use of moving projections to illustrate the children’s classic.

Tickets at the door cost \$20 for adults, \$18 for senior citizens and \$10 for students. Children under 6 will be admitted free.

Succop Theater, which draws 7,000 visitors annually to roughly 75 community and BC3’s Performing Arts Series events, is celebrating its 16th anniversary season. BC3’s Performing Artists Series – the only to be offered in Butler – features four philharmonic concerts, four performing artists and four community artists through May.