

Madcap Dance Production Updates ‘Alice in Wonderland’

By Veronica Velasquez
Staff Writer

A guy swings a pink plastic flamingo around and dances with it. Nearby, a young lady chases a young man around and around, yelling “Woo hoo, woo hoo!” while a queen minces by with her nose in

the air to the sound of a crouching cat blowing raspberries at passers-by. This is not a scene from a mental institution but the Cal State Hayward Department of Theatre and Dance rehearsing for “Alice in Love (?),” a dance spin-off on the beloved Lewis Carroll tale, “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland.” Directed by theater arts major Bong

Dizon, the production features the familiar characters of Alice, the Cheshire Cat, the White Rabbit and others. “It’s not an alternate version of ‘Alice in Wonderland,’” said C. Lindsey, a cross-theater major who co-wrote the dance showcase and does the narration. “It’s more about things that could have been happening when Lewis

Carroll wasn’t looking.” “A lot of lines have been taken directly from the books, with the same rhythm and rhyme schemes for the new lines,” Lindsey said. “We have tried to stay true to the characters, story and poetry of Carroll.” “‘Alice in Love’ was inspired by the original, but it is a humorous takeoff

on the characters,” said Nina Haft, theatre arts advisor. “(Dizon) wanted to feature all the different dance styles, while telling a very clear story.” “Blah, blah blah,” says Lindsey in the background. She is abridging her narration in yet another run-through of the big dance numbers. Meanwhile, Dizon runs back and forth between the characters, making last-minute adjustments. In this version, Alice, played by Keiko Otaka, is debating whether or not she is in love with the White Rabbit. The other characters run about, spouting witticisms and dancing to an eclectic musical mix, including jazz, jug band music and disco tunes.



Bong Ian Dizon and Victoria George collaborate. Photo / Howard Gerstein

The show is not a play, although it has narration and speaking parts. Several dance styles have been incorporated, including jazz, ballet, ballroom, hip-hop and modern.

The 23-year-old Dizon, who directed and choreographed the production and stars as the White Rabbit, is graduating this year with a theatre arts major dance option. He has collaborated in the past with faculty and students on several projects, including the Winter Wonderland student dance showcase, as required for a senior project.

But Dizon wanted to do more. “It is very rare that a student asks for permission to be in charge of an entire project, instead of just having a solo in a collaborative effort,” said Haft, “but (Dizon) is more motivated, more ambitious than that. He is completely absorbed and truly passionate about this show.”

“I lied,” Dizon announces apologetically to the cast, as he explains that he has decided to change the dance they have just completed.

“NO!” the characters, in unison, gasp in mock horror. Dizon, dripping with sweat, grins sweetly. Groups of dancers form and break apart endlessly, as they run through the entire show at high speed yet again.

“Blah, blah, BEGIN TO PRATTLE!” orders Lindsey, hand on hip, and the characters obligingly break into a melee of chatter for the caucous race scene. Tweedle Dum goes rolling by unconcernedly.

“Alice in Love (?)” will be presented at the Cal State Hayward Theatre May 14 and 15.

Both shows will be presented at 8 p.m. Tickets information is available at the Theatre box office, (510) 885-3261.

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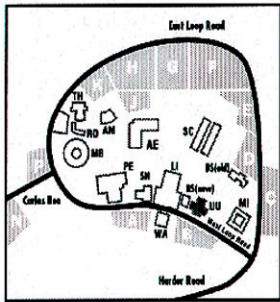
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