

Sounds of Musical Theatre

coast fm963 classic hits

Alice In Wonderland Jr

Produced by Gosford Musical Society. Based on the Walt Disney 1951 feature. Directed by Rosie Ross. Musical Direction by Vivienne McLaren. Choreographed by Nicole Seggie. Laycock Street Theatre, Gosford from 14 January until 18 January.

Back in the late sixties (well before the invention of videos, DVDs and downloading, kiddies), the Disney organisation in San Francisco was deluged every week with requests to hire 16mm prints (there's another media gone the way of the dinosaur) of the 1951 animated classic, *Alice in Wonderland*. The requests were coming from college students who were getting high on mind expanding drugs while watching Alice's adventures with white rabbits, caterpillars, Cheshire cats, a march hare, dodos and an unruly queen of hearts who was lopping the heads of anyone and everyone who crossed her path. Not to mention the walrus and the carpenter.

Such was the impact of Disney's take on the imaginative Lewis Carroll story.

Disney's characters and songs are the basis for the latest GMS Jr production that opens today at Laycock Street Theatre - *Alice in Wonderland: Jr the Musical*.

Word is between 160 and 200 aspiring entertainers auditioned for parts in this show - turns out they were so good, the production team hastily took some liberties by expanding the cast and chorus.

Director Rosie Ross and her crew have created a wonderful adventure for all ages - Evie Pierce is perfectly cast as Alice and leads the charge down the rabbit-hole to her amazing adventure. But how to solve the size difference when Alice nibbles on the cookie and shrinks? Easy. Introducing Charlotte Page as Small Alice!

Some nifty special effects give the illusion Alice floats across the stage and several inanimate objects come alive and dance around our girl.

Great performances from Scotia Emmett as the White Rabbit, Eva Berry as the Queen of Hearts, Erin Hobden, Lily Kennedy-Head and Sophie Stiffle as the truly threedimensional Cheshire Cat while Finn Alexander and Jada Johnston make a perfect Tweedle-Dee and Tweedle-Oum.



Choreography by Nicole Seggie was outstanding, but the Dee and Oum brought it energetically alive.

Liam Barbelier as the Mad Hatter leads the unbrithday brigade and Keegan Morley makes a nice Dodo Bird!

The knockout, standalone performance came from GMS newbie Jamie Croft as the Caterpillar. Like the beautiful butterfly emerging from the cocoon, Jamie's performance soared.

Musical Direction by Vivienne McLaren was so good, polished and professional, I thought the entire musical score was pre-recorded. And that is praise indeed.

Reviewed by
David Wicks