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Our mission—
to educate, entertain
and enrich the lives
of young audiences

**Founding Executive
Director**
Judy Kafoury

Managing Director
Nick Fenster

Artistic Director
Sarah Jane Hardy

Press Release: February 25, 2026

ALICE in WONDERLAND

A JAZZ MUSICAL

Conceived and Composed by Ezra Weiss
Based on the book by Lewis Carroll
Directed by Sarah Jane Hardy

Northwest Children's Theater Invites Audiences Down the Rabbit Hole with *Alice in Wonderland: A Jazz Musical*

Featuring five of Portland's beloved jazz musicians on stage at The Judy!

Northwest Children's Theater (NWCT) is thrilled to announce the return of its wildly imaginative and much-loved production, *Alice in Wonderland: A Jazz Musical*, running March 28 – April 19 on The Mainstage at The Judy. This marks the third time NWCT has produced the show—and the first time audiences will experience it at The Judy!

Conceived and composed by **Portland jazz pianist Ezra Weiss** and based on the classic book by Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland: A Jazz Musical* invites audiences into a topsy-turvy world where music, language, and imagination collide. Directed by Sarah Jane Hardy, the production blends the technical precision of jazz with joyful improvisation—mirroring Carroll's playful yet rule-bending use of language.

In this version, the instruments being played on stage are as much a character in the story as the iconic Wonderland personalities themselves, and every jazz-infused character draws inspiration from iconic jazz musicians. The Miles Davis-inspired Caterpillar plays the trumpet instead of smoking a hookah; the March Hare sings a song inspired by avant-garde saxophonist Ornette Coleman's "Congeniality"; and the Mad Hatter takes his inspiration from piano genius Thelonious Monk.

The production stars **Jazz Society of Oregon Hall of Fame inductee Marilyn Keller as the Queen of Hearts**. A celebrated jazz headliner well known throughout Portland, Keller leads a cast that brings both theatrical bravado and musical sophistication to the stage.

The show also features Asher Smith as Alice and NWCT favorites Kevin-Michael Moore as the Caterpillar and John Ellingson as the Mad Hatter.

Sharing the stage with the cast is a four-piece jazz band of Portland all-star musicians, including **Charlie Brown on piano, Patrick Goličnik on bass, Tyson Stubalek on drums, and Mary-Sue Tobin on saxophone**.

Weiss first conceived of this show in the early 2000s while he was teaching and music directing with NWCT. The show premiered in 2009, and the original cast album made *Talkin' Broadway's* 2009 Top 10 Cast Albums list. The show even caught the attention of the jazz world, earning Weiss a feature article in *DownBeat Magazine*.

Bringing together *Alice in Wonderland* and jazz is a natural fit, as both balance foundational forms of language and music along with improvisation and creativity. The show is fun, silly, entertaining and a great way to introduce kids to the world of jazz music. With this production, NWCT

continued on next page

Release Date
February 25, 2026

End Date
April 19, 2026

Media Contact
To set up interviews
or discuss other
possibilities for
stories,
please contact:
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continued from previous page

invites families into an imaginative new world where stories swing, music comes alive, and the excitement of live theater and live jazz unfolds right before your eyes.

Alice in Wonderland is presented on The Schnitzer Stage at The Judy in downtown Portland. Performances run March 28-April 19 with showtimes at 12pm and 3pm on weekends. Additional weekday school matinee performances will bring thousands of students to downtown Portland to experience this production.

NWCT offers a sensory-friendly performance of *Alice in Wonderland* on Sunday, March 29 at 3pm with pay-what-you-will tickets starting at \$5. These performances feature shorter run times, reduced or removed lighting and sound cues, and the constant presence of house lights, and are designed for children on the autism spectrum or with other sensory sensitivities.

An ASL-interpreted performance is offered on Sunday, March 29 at Noon.

Alice in Wonderland is produced in part through the support of the Oregon Arts Commission, Kafoury McDougal: Lawyers for the People, and NWCT's donor families, plus media sponsors PDX Parent and NW Kids.

VENUE >> NWCT's HOME:

THE JUDY

The Judy Kafoury Center for Youth Arts
1000 SW Broadway, Suite T-100
Portland, OR 97205

March 28-April 19, 2026
Saturdays & Sundays
12 pm & 3 pm

Most enjoyed by ages 6 and up



SENSORY FRIENDLY SHOW
Sunday, March 29 at 3pm



ASL INTERPRETED SHOW
Sunday, March 29 at 12pm

TICKETS \$25-\$35

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\$5 Arts for All tickets are available for Oregon Trail/SNAP Card holders. Please see nwcts.org/faqs for details.

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