

**Lifestyle:** Neighbors from the Village of Belvedere enjoy a get-together. From left are Ken Mercer, Todd Durant, Joe Koller and host, Billy Andrews.



**Sports:** Anthony Bongiovanni, of the Village of DeSoto, shot his third hole-in-one at Loblolly executive golf course, hole No. 4, 108 yards with a pitching wedge.

# Journey Down the Rabbit Hole in MOMIX's 'Alice'

The Lewis Carroll-inspired dance show debuts in The Villages at 7 p.m. March 21 at The Sharon.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND  
Daily Sun Senior Writer

Nothing is as it seems in MOMIX's "Alice."

"Alice" is the latest invention of Moses Pendleton, the founder and artistic director of the MOMIX dance company. Inspired by Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," MOMIX's "Alice" presents Wonderland as it has never been seen before.

"We're taking quite a lot of liberties with Alice — as Lewis Carroll would have wanted," Pendleton said. "It's more of an impression of 'Alice in Wonderland' than an exact replica."

In "Alice," costumed dancers use a mixture of projection and theater magic to bring Alice's Wonderland to life. Using stage props set against light and shadow, Alice shrinks down to the size of a spider or grows 10 feet tall, a lobster quadrille transforms into a garden of giant roses and white rabbits rush along to the tick of an unseen clock.



Submitted photo

MOMIX's "Alice" is a Lewis Carroll-inspired dance show coming to The Villages at 7 p.m. March 21 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

One of the most critically acclaimed part of the show is "Advice from the Blue Caterpillar," which uses MOMIX dancers and cerulean exercise balls to create the undulating segments of a caterpillar's body. "It's a wonderfully kinetic piece," Pendleton said.

Although audiences are sure to recognize characters like

Alice, the White Rabbit, the Blue Caterpillar, the Cheshire Cat and the mad Queen of Hearts, "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" aficionados may note that the show's narrative focuses more on the feelings the book evokes instead of faithfully recreating each scene.

"I think we try to involve some kind of mystery,"

Pendleton said. "We try to leave some things up to what audiences interpret them as, which is typical of a MOMIX production."

MOMIX is a dance company that is internationally recognized for seamlessly blending illusion, theatrics, acrobatics and whimsy to create beautiful worlds of fantasy and surrealism. Past MOMIX shows include "Alchemia" and "Botanica," which revolve around the imagery of the four elements and the four seasons, as well as "Opus Cactus," which is a visual journey of the Southwestern desert.

Pendleton has a long history of adapting Lewis Carroll's work, beginning with choreographing a "Mad Hatter's tea party" for his daughter's school play more than 35 years ago and incorporating various "Alice in Wonderland" themed numbers in smaller performances. However, "Alice" is the first full-length show Pendleton has adapted from the existing source material.

"The Alice story is full of imagery and absurd logic — before there was surrealism there was 'Alice,'" Pendleton said. "Alice" is an invitation to invent, to let imagination run and play outside."

In Pendleton's research for

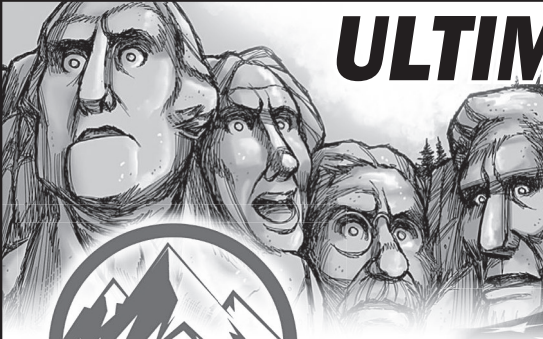
the show, he discovered that Carroll carefully oversaw adaptations and stage productions of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," and that the late author's greatest wish was to see the story grace the London stage. Pendleton believes Carroll would be gratified to see all the adaptations artists have made of his work, from Salvador Dalí to Disney to Jefferson Airplane, and now MOMIX.

Like all MOMIX shows, "Alice" is appropriate for audiences of all ages. Pendleton describes it as a kids' show for adults and an adult show for kids. He said that children seem to enjoy the show's humor and fantastic costumes, while adults can appreciate the darker aspects of the show's surrealist whimsy.

"It's funny, but there are dark moments," Pendleton said. "You can expect more of a Mad Hatter's tea party than what you prepared for."

MOMIX's "Alice" comes to The Villages at 7 p.m. March 21 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$40 and up.

Senior writer Taylor Strickland can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5334, or taylor.strickland@thevillagesmedia.com.



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