

ALICE *by* heart



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE

Elder Conservatorium Music Theatre presents

ALICE ^{by} heart

Book by

Steven Sater and Jessie Nelson

Music by

Duncan Sheik

Lyrics by

Steven Sater

Orchestrations by

Duncan Sheik

Additional Orchestrations by

Simon Hale

Vocal Arrangements by

Jason Hart

Direction by **Erin James**, Music Direction by **Peter Johns**

Lighting Design by **Christopher Snape**, Audio Design by **Jamie Mensforth**

Alice by Heart was first commissioned and produced by National Theatre Connections in 2012. Developed with the Assistance of Theatre Aspen, Aspen, Colorado.

A workshop production of *Alice by Heart* was presented by New York Stage and Film & Vassar at The Powerhouse Theatre, Summer 2018

New York Premiere at the MCC Theatre February 26, 2019 Artistic Directors: Robert LuPone, Bernard Telsey, & William Cantler. Executive Director: Blake West

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From the Head of Music Theatre

"The end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started."

- T. S. Elliot

Back in 2019, the first production presented by the brand-new Bachelor of Music Theatre was *Spring Awakening* by Duncan Sheik and Steven Sater. *Alice by Heart* is the latest offering from the same writers, and appropriately marks my final production as Head of Music Theatre.

Creating this degree and seeing it grow from nothing has been an enormous undertaking. Through countless hours of collaboration, curriculum development, and nurturing relationships within the performing arts community, we cultivated a vibrant program that blossomed from the ground up. Witnessing its growth from a mere concept to a thriving centre of talent and creativity has been profoundly gratifying.

This role has carried immense responsibility, not just in shaping the curriculum and guiding

students but also in fostering an environment where artistic exploration could flourish. Every success of our students has felt like a personal victory, affirming the dedication poured into this endeavour. As I step away, I reflect on the countless performances that have filled our spaces with energy and passion, each echoing the commitment of faculty and students alike. Indeed, the faculty and students are what I will remember most.

Though I will miss the daily interactions and the magic of leading such extraordinary people, I am filled with hope for the future of the program. It is now in the hands of others, and I trust they will continue to nurture its growth, carrying forth the legacy we built together.

George Torbay AM



From the Director

"Curious, yes... *but wonderful!*"

- Steven Sater, *Alice by Heart*

Words can imprint themselves into your memory forever.

A quote which resonates with you at a particularly vulnerable moment; a quip from your favourite teacher; a mantra which grounds you; a song lyric which captures the human experience with whimsy and truth.

Once in your memory, those words become part of your being. You remember them and hold them with you always, in your past, present and future.

You know them by heart.

Alice by Heart explores what words - and in this case, an entire book full of words - can mean to a person. It's about the power of imagination in overcoming the most difficult circumstances and how the mind copes with loss and grief.

The second year music theatre students have thrown themselves into this work, and the dual worlds of wartime London and Wonderland, with alacrity. Not only

have they collaboratively created this piece, they have designed and sourced costumes and props, marketed the show and stepped into many other technical and creative roles during the process.

The absence of set symbolises both the void left by war and the limitless expanse of the mind, and so we have relied on imagination in the same way as our characters do in the show: when we have nothing, we create.

Some meaningful words I know by heart were uttered by a director when I was an actor in training: *Ask the right questions and they will discover more than you can begin to imagine*. In other words, instead of being prescriptive, be curious.

As Lewis Carroll's Alice travels through Wonderland, she finds her adventure 'curiouser and curiouser'. And so I have endeavoured to ask questions of these young actors which allow them to explore the possibilities of their creative imaginations.

Erin James

Synopsis

It is 1941 during the London Blitz of World War II. We are in an emergency bunker in a tube station amid posh kids sipping tea, working-class kids gambling rations, and a wounded soldier crying out from PTSD. Amidst the chaos sits a young girl, Alice, who loves nothing so much in the world as her ailing, near-dying young friend, Alfred. He lies in quarantine, suffering from tuberculosis under the care of a Red Cross Nurse. The Nurse warns the girl: "Catch that boy's cough, he'll be your death." Alice is in denial about the impending death of her friend and yearns to escape from the horror of the world she's in. (West of Words)

Alice begs Alfred to escape with her into the world of the book they used to read as children Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. She promises he'll be able to run and breathe there. "It's too late for all that now," Alfred declares. And before Alice can read another word, the Nurse snatches the book from her hands, rips it apart, and hurls it across the tracks, its dusty pages scattering everywhere. Alice becomes very defiant and declares: "I'll show you. I'll bring you. I know it all by heart."

With that, Alice begins reciting the book, filling the words with her passion. And as she recites, Alfred rises from his cot and turns into the White Rabbit. A homeless girl in bandages transforms into a grinning Cheshire Cat. The Red Cross Nurse becomes the Queen of Hearts, the PTSD-stricken soldier becomes the Mad Hatter, and the entire Underground transforms into Wonderland. (Down the Hole)

Alice begins a journey through a rather different Wonderland, with characters as bizarre and alive as the world she's just left. As she wanders through Wonderland she runs into two Caterpillars, both older and roguish, who tease her about the way her body has changed, and they seduce her with the sweet fumes of hookah. (Chillin' the Regrets)

The White Rabbit finds Alice with the Caterpillars, and she has succumbed to the allures of hookah. Seeing that she has been distracted, he reminds her that she is not following the story and that she has skipped a chapter. They try to resume from where they left off, but Alice begins to entice the White Rabbit with hookah. He reminds her that the Queen will have his head if he relents. Alice tells him that they are in charge of their own story, and the White Rabbit takes a puff. (The Key Is)

Shortly after, Alice and the White Rabbit meet the Cheshire Cat, who entices them into a golden waltz with lobsters. As the two shyly dance together, they realise their full feelings for one another (Those Long Eyes). After their dance, White Rabbit becomes anxious about keeping up with the time and runs off.

In the meantime, Alice encounters the Duchess, who demeans her body and antagonises her for growing up too fast. The Duchess tells Alice that her body developing is causing hers to fade away. As she berates Alice, she informs her that the Queen has invited them to play croquet. (Manage Your Flamingo)

At the croquet game, a bomb sounds and the entire world of Wonderland disappears. We are transported back to the bunker where we see all of the young people under their cots afraid for their lives. Alfred begins to read from the book again, but Alice notices he's skipping to the end. He tells her he has to get to the story's end before he reaches his own end. Alice begs Alfred to stop talking like that and refuses to let him go. Alfred comforts her, assuring that he will try to make it easy for her.

Alfred rises from his cot, turns into the March Hare, and joins the Mad Hatter and Dormouse at a table for a Wonderland Tea Party. They push Alice around the table, telling her that there is no room at the table. As they insult and taunt her, the March Hare says the meanest things of them all - to get Alice to hate him. (Sick to Death of Alice-Ness)

Alice finally has had enough and declares she hates Alfred. He succumbs to a cough and is taken away on a stretcher. She tries to take it back, but soon after, the doctor spewing medical jargon turns into the terrifying Jabberwocky. The Underground becomes a macabre party, blaring with house music (Brillig Braelig). Alice fights back against the Jabberwocky and banishes him.

The Cheshire Cat appears again. Alice asks for advice on how to make Alfred stay with her. The Cheshire Cat tells her that there's no bargaining with death and that she must let Alfred go. (Some Things Fall Away)

Alice then meets the Mock Turtles, who encourage her to not move on and to live in her grief. (Your Shell of Grief)

Alfred returns, telling Alice that he wants to finish the story with her, but Alice, taking the Mock Turtles' advice, pleads with him not to move on. Alfred asks how Alice will grieve him, both of them lamenting about what could have been. But alas, he truly is the White Rabbit. He is running out of time. Alfred just wants to make it through the story one last time. Alice tries to kiss him, hoping to contract tuberculosis and die with him, but Alfred stops her. In time, she will be fine, he assures her. (Another Room in Your Head)

Against Alice's pleas, Alfred continues the story, turning back into the White Rabbit as Alice's trial begins. The Queen and King of Hearts come forward. The Queen dresses down Alice, ridiculing her in front of the citizens of Wonderland (Isn't It a Trial?). As the White Rabbit reads off the accusations, the characters gang up on her, telling her that she isn't the only Alice that enters Wonderland. (Do You Think We Think You're Alice?)

Tired of all the ridicule and abuse, Alice finally stands up for herself, with Alfred coming to her defence. The Cheshire Cat helps them break out of Wonderland and return to reality (I've Shrunk Enough). Alice and Alfred admit their feelings for one another as he dies. (Afternoon)

The show ends with Alice accepting Alfred's death and looking to the future. After her adventures, Alice has learned how to love, how to let go, and how to move forward. (Winter Blooms)

Musical Numbers

London, 1941, an Underground Station—a make-shift shelter from the Blitz of World War II.
And, one golden afternoon in Wonderland.

West of Words	Alice, Ensemble
Down the Hole.....	Alice, Alfred, Ensemble
Still.....	Alice, White Rabbit, Ensemble
Chillin’ the Regrets	Caterpillars, Alice, Ensemble
The Key Is	Alice, Caterpillars, Ensemble
Those Long Eyes	Cheshire Cat, Alice, White Rabbit
Manage Your Flamingo.....	Duchess, Queen of Diamonds, Wonderland
Sick to Death of Alice-ness	Mad Hatter, March Hare, Dormouse, Alice
Brillig Braelig	Jabberwock, Alice, Ensemble
Some Things Fall Away.....	Cheshire Cat
Your Shell of Grief	Turtles
Another Room in Your Head.....	Alfred, Alice, Ensemble
Isn’t It a Trial?	Queen of Hearts, Knave of Hearts, Wonderland
Do You Think We Think You’re Alice?	Wonderland, Alice
I’ve Shrunk Enough.....	Alice, Cheshire Cat, Alfred, Wonderland
Still (Reprise).....	Alice, Alfred, Young Alice, Young Alfred
Afternoon	Alice, Alfred
Winter Blooms.....	Alice, Cheshire Cat, Ensemble

Cast

Thurs / Sat / Sun (Matinee) Fri / Sat (Matinee) / Sun

Alice Spencer	Ellie Esdene McMahon	Erica Jones
Alfred / White Rabbit / March Hare	Matt Hawke	Matt Hawke
Red Cross Nurse / Queen of Hearts.....	Melanie Cowmeadow	Sally Harrop
Dr Butridge / King of Hearts / Jabberwock.....	Jaxon Joy	Jaxon Joy
Tabatha / Cheshire Cat.....	Bella Thomas	Jazz Garcia
Clarissa / Mock Mock Mock Turtle	Billie-Rose Russell	Ella Simpson
Harold Pudding / Mad Hatter.....	Ryan Murphy	Ryan Murphy
Dodgy / Duchess / Mock Mock Mock Mock Turtle	Damian Lee	Damian Lee
Nigel / Dormouse / Knave of Hearts	Joey Haenen	Joey Haenen
Angus / Caterpillar	Ranz Custodio	Ranz Custodio
Caterpillar / Ensemble.....	Phoebe Rodger	Mia Lupton
Queen of Diamonds / Ensemble	Bree Hall	Sophie Carmody
Young Alice / Ensemble.....	Lara Wilson	Amelia Chapman
Young Alfred / Mock Turtle / Ensemble	Josh Rocca	Josh Rocca
Mock Mock Turtle / Ensemble	Nam Hoang	Nam Hoang
Ensemble / Swing	Madison Schubert	Ali Clark
Ensemble / Swing	Jacinda Tsakalos	Jacinda Tsakalos

Covers

Covers never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement for the appearance is made at the time of the performance

Alice Spencer	Sophie Carmody, Ella Simpson
Alfred / White Rabbit / March Hare	Joey Haenen
Red Cross Nurse / Queen of Hearts.....	Billie-Rose Russell
Dr Butridge / King of Hearts / Jabberwock.....	Joey Haenen
Tabatha / Cheshire Cat.....	Lara Wilson
Clarissa / Mock Mock Mock Turtle	Madison Schubert
Harold Pudding / Mad Hatter	Jaxon Joy
Dodgy / Duchess / Mock Mock Mock Mock Turtle.....	Josh Rocca
Nigel / Dormouse.....	Nam Hoang
Angus / Caterpillar.....	Josh Rocca
Caterpillar	Amelia Chapman
Queen of Diamonds	Ali Clark
Young Alfred / Mock Turtle.....	Nam Hoang
Mock Mock Turtle.....	Ranz Custodio
Knave of Hearts	Ali Clark

Production

Executive Producer.....	George Torbay AM
Production Manager.....	Peter Johns
Director.....	Erin James
Music Director.....	Peter Johns
Lighting Designer.....	Chris Snape
Stage Manager.....	Jess Wolfendale
Front Of House Manager.....	Cathy Clark
Program Design.....	Lisa-May Pellaschiar, Richards Rose
Poster and Program Cover Design.....	Matt Edwards at Emptyhead Digital
Photography.....	Gregory Balcombe
Mosaic Audio Visual Pty Ltd	Craig Williams (Director)
Sound Design.....	Jamie Mensforth
Sound Mixer.....	Cambell Lawrence
Radio Mic Technician.....	Ruby DeBroughe

Band

Conductor/Keyboard.....	Peter Johns
Guitars.....	Curtis Woden and Tim Wilsden
Drums.....	Max Ziliotto
Reeds.....	Daniel Burgess
Trumpet.....	Tim Frahn
Cello.....	Hamish Netting
Keyboard Programming.....	KeyboardTEK
Ableton Programming.....	Peter Johns

Student Production Roles

Dance Captain	Amelia Chapman
Assistant Dance Captain	Jacinda Tsakalos
Assistant to the Director.....	Bree Hall
Assistant to the Music Director	Jaxon Joy
Assistant to the Production Manager	Lara Wilson
Costumes	Joey Haenen (leader) Bella Thomas (assistant) Matt Hawke, Damian Lee, Ellie Esdene McMahon
Wigs, Hair and Make Up.....	Melanie Cowmeadow (leader) Sally Harrop (assistant) Ali Clark, Bree Hall
Properties	Ella Simpson (leader) Phoebe Rodger (assistant) Erica Jones, Mia Lupton, Billie-Rose Russell
Stage Management.....	Lara Wilson (leader) Ryan Murphy (deputy) Jaxon Joy, Josh Rocca
Marketing	Ranz Custodio (leader) Sophie Carmody (assistant) Jazz Garcia, Nam Hoang, Madison Schubert
Assistant Stage Managers	Natalia Soares, Kaemon Wilcox
Lighting Operator.....	Josh McDonald

With thanks to

State Theatre Company of South Australia, Martine Micklem, Robin Balogh, Gregory Balcombe, Abigail Jaudian, Toni Pihodnya, Bethany Ottaway, Eleanor Danenberg, Neil Humphries

Creatives





Erin James

Director

A graduate of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (Music Theatre), Erin's professional career began as a performer in some of Australia's most popular musicals including Opera Australia's productions of *My Fair Lady*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, as well as various Australian and international tours of *CATS*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Blood Brothers*, and *Love Never Dies*, among others. Her work in the arts extends to film and television, and Erin was fortunate enough to receive AACTA Award and Film Critics Circle of Australia Award nominations for her role in the feature film *The Little Death* (2014).

After working as a dance captain, swing and assistant director for the last decade, her professional directorial debut came in 2018 with *She Loves Me* at Hayes Theatre Co, which received Sydney Theatre Awards and Broadway World Award nominations. She was promoted to Staging Supervisor for Julie Andrew's production of *My Fair Lady* (Opera Australia), worked as Assistant Director for *Vernon God Little* (2014) and *Stalking*

The Bogeyman (2018) and the Resident Director for the 2022/23 Australian tour of *Phantom of the Opera* (Opera Australia) at the Sydney Opera House and Arts Centre Melbourne. She directed the CONDA Award winning production of *Mamma Mia!* 2019 and The Very Popular Theatre Company's *CHESS* in Concert, starring Silvie Paladino and David Harris, in 2021.

As an educator and theatre practitioner, Erin has worked with Elder Conservatorium of Music's Music Theatre program to direct *Little Women* (2024), *Shrek The Musical* (2023), *On the Town* (2023), *Les Misérables* (2022), *Cabaret* (2021), and *Showcase: Our Time* (2021).

Most recently, Erin sat on the *Hadestown Australia* audition panel, starred in Anna Goldsworthy's new play *Welcome To Your New Life* for State Theatre Company of South Australia, and was a guest director and performer at the 2024 Australian Music Theatre Festival.



Peter Johns

Music Director

Peter is an accomplished music theatre repertoire coach, music director, pit orchestra musician, production manager and stage manager with over 25 years of experience spanning more than 80 productions. He is the Founder and Executive Producer of Irregular Productions and joined the teaching staff at Elder Conservatorium of Music in 2020.

Alice by Heart is Peter's seventh project as one of Elder Conservatorium Music Theatre's (ECMT) resident Music Directors. Credits with ECMT include *Cabaret*, *Urinetown*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, and first year *Songs and Scenes* projects.

Other music theatre credits include Music Director for *Next to Normal*, *Mamma Mia*, *Beautiful, Violet*, *The Story Of My Life*, *The Light In The Piazza*, *A New Brain*, *Les Misérables*, *You're A Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Into the Woods*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Avenue Q*, *Bring It On*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Oliver!*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*, *Chicago*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Sound of Music*, *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Seussical the Musical*, *Grease*, *Once Upon a Mattress*; Associate Music

Director for *Kinky Boots*; and Associate Conductor for *City of Angels* and *RENT*.

Peter's company Irregular Productions is the co-creator of *Broadway Sessions*, a monthly curated music theatre performance night (www.broadwaysessions.com.au). His company has also staged the South Australian premieres of *Songs for a New World*, [*title of show*], and *Edges*, as well as co-producing a new production of *Godspell* in partnership with Martin Cheney's Lydian Productions.

Earlier this year, Peter was appointed to the position of conductor for the Adelaide chapter of the Australian Music Theatre Choir – a dynamic ensemble providing opportunities for singers of all experience levels to sharpen their ensemble singing skills and perform with other passionate Music Theatre fans.

Beyond music theatre, Peter is the music director of one of Australia's largest candlelight Christmas events, *Civic Park Carols*, broadcast locally on Channel 9, where he has worked with high-profile artists including Rachel Beck, Justine Clarke, Guy Sebastian, Paulini, and numerous contestants from *The Voice*.

Cast





Sophie Carmody

Queen of Diamonds / Ensemble / Alice Spencer (cover)

Sophie grew up in Newcastle, New South Wales, and relocated to Adelaide to pursue a Bachelor of Music Theatre at the Elder Conservatorium of Music. In 2022, she completed a Diploma of Music Theatre at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, where she performed as Gangster 1 in *The Drowsy Chaperone* (dir. Tyler Jacob Jones). In her first year at ECMT, Sophie played Vicki in *A Chorus Line* (dir. Matthew Hyde). Sophie is thrilled to be a part of the South Australian premiere of *Alice By Heart*.



Amelia Chapman

Dance Captain / Young Alice / Ensemble / Caterpillar (cover)

Amelia recently performed in the ensemble of *A Chorus Line* (ECMT, dir. Matthew Hyde) where she also served as an understudy for the characters of both Kristine Urich and Judy Turner. Prior to selection into the ECMT Bachelor program, Amelia successfully completed the Diploma of Musical Theatre at Brent Street. Outside of university studies, Amelia supports performing arts students as the Creative Arts Tutor at Lincoln College, is the current VP for ECMTA and shares her 16 years of classical ballet, jazz, and tap training as a dedicated dance teacher.



Ali Clark

Ensemble / Swing / Queen of Diamonds (cover) / Knave of Hearts (cover)

Ali is a professional performer who has performed in the live music industry for numerous years in Australia and internationally. Her love for acting and theatre performance has grown through her studies in Sydney and now at Elder Conservatorium. Ali is currently studying for her 8th Grade piano exam and has previously worked with prominent Australian music producers creating her own music. Developing her love for story-telling and songwriting, Ali is working on her EP and is soon to release her next single.



Melanie Cowmeadow

Red Cross Nurse / Queen of Hearts

This will be Melanie's second production at the Elder Conservatorium of Music Theatre, her first being *Shrek The Musical* (ECMT, dir. Erin James). She is a singer/songwriter from Adelaide who most notably featured on Channel 7's *The Voice Australia* Season 11, where she made it to the top 24. As a pop-rock artist, Melanie has released original music and has her new EP *Snakes and Ladders* coming out soon.



Ranz Custodio

Angus / Caterpillar / Mock Mock Turtle (cover)

A proud Filipino-born, Ranz is a commercial model, hip-hop dancer, and television actor. Before relocating to Adelaide, his credits include: Miggy in the daytime kids show, *Jollitown* (Jollibee Food Corporation), Wacks in the late-night paranormal series, *Midnight DJ* (TV5) and Lester in the hit family sitcom, *Pepito Manaloto* (GMA Entertainment Group). Recently, he appeared in *Swan Lake* (The Australian Ballet, dir. David Hallberg) and *Candide* (State Opera South Australia, dir. Mitchell Butel). This is Ranz's second ECMT show, following *Shrek The Musical* (dir. Erin James) as Papa Bear/Swing.



Jazz Garcia

Tabatha / Cheshire Cat

Jazz is an Adelaide-based performer and paediatric Speech Pathologist. Jazz has an extensive background in theatre with professional credits such as *Candide* (State Opera of South Australia, dir. Mitchell Butel), *Granpa* (Windmill Productions, dir. Andy Packer), *Snugglepoot & Cuddlepip* (Windmill Productions, dir. Neil Armfield), *Candyman* (Kermond Creative, dir. Wayne Scott Kermond), *Kia Ora Khalid* (Capital E, dir. Sara Brodie), *Turandot* (State Opera South Australia, dir. Kim Walker), and *Ode to Nonsense* (Slingsby Theatre Company, dir. Andy Packer). Additionally, Jazz holds a certificate II and III in Auslan (Australian Sign Language).



Joey Haenen

Nigel / Dormouse / Knave of Hearts

Alfred Hallam / White Rabbit / March Hare (cover)

Dr Buttridge / King of Hearts / Jabberwock (cover)

This is Joey's second production with ECMT. His first was as Papa Ogre in *Shrek The Musical* (dir. Erin James). Coming from the regional town of Loxton, he was fortunate to be a scholarship recipient and part of the *Class of Cabaret* at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival 2022 (dir. Tim Overton). He was also the keynote speaker for the *Dream BIG Festival 2023* opening ceremony. In his spare time Joey is a recording artist who has music released on streaming platforms and performs at weddings and events around the Riverland and Adelaide regions.



Bree Hall

Queen of Diamonds / Ensemble

Bree is currently in her second year of training at the Elder Conservatorium. *Alice By Heart* will be Bree's second production with ECMT, her first being *Shrek The Musical* (dir. Erin James) where she appeared as Queen Lillian. In 2022, she completed a Diploma of Musical Theatre at WAAPA where she played Madame Feldzig in *The Drowsy Chaperone* (dir. Tyler Jacob Jones). Bree recently made her professional debut in the Chorus of State Opera South Australia's production of *Candide* (dir. Mitchell Butel).



Sally Harrop

Red Cross Nurse / Queen of Hearts

Sally is delighted to be performing in her second ECMT production after having portrayed the Tooth Fairy in *Shrek The Musical* (dir. Erin James). In 2022, Sally earned her Diploma in Musical Theatre at WAAPA, where she had the opportunity to play the role of Janet Van De Graaff in *The Drowsy Chaperone* (WAAPA, dir. Tyler Jacob Jones). Her other credits include *Seussical TYA* with Stage School Australia (Malthouse Theatre & Adelaide Fringe) and *Guys and Dolls* (National Theatre). Sally has also performed in Adelaide's Cabaret and Fringe Festivals.



Matt Hawke

Alfred Hallam / White Rabbit / March Hare

This is Matt's second production with ECMT having previously been an ensemble member in *A Chorus Line* (dir. Matt Hyde) last year where he covered the roles of Mark and Don. Since then, he has taken up various supernumerary work with The Australian Ballet and GWB Studios. He is a member of local Adelaide band Sally Navara and is an avid singer-songwriter in his own time.



Nam Hoang

Mock Mock Turtle / Ensemble

Nigel / Dormouse (cover)

Young Alfred / Mock Turtle (cover)

Alice By Heart will be Nam's second show with ECMT, having previously appeared in *A Chorus Line* (dir. Matthew Hyde). Originally from Melbourne, Nam completed a Musical Theatre Foundational Course at Associated Studios in 2022. In 2023 Nam also performed as a Supernumerary for *Swan Lake* (Australian Ballet, dir. David Halberg) and *A Christmas Carol* (dir. David Spencer). Prior to studying music theatre, Nam studied at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, specialising in the saxophone. He has been playing the saxophone since he was 8 years old.



Erica Jones

Alice Spencer

This will be Erica's second production with ECMT. Her most notable past roles have been Sophia in the Australian premier of *Vocal Strain* (dir. Joshua Holdyk) at Perth Fringe Festival, her involvement in the music video for Jawbreakers' single *Cheats and Liars* (dir. Ryan Whitworth-Jones), *NIDA DMT Showcase 2022* (dir. Jay James Moody), and most recently, Mama Bear in ECMT's 2023 production of *Shrek The Musical* (dir. Erin James). Outside of Music Theatre, Erica is a keen contemporary vocalist, kickstarted by her enjoyment of guitar.



Jaxon Joy

Dr Buttridge / King of Hearts / Jabberwock
Harold Pudding / Mad Hatter (cover)

Helming from Adelaide, Jaxon has been part of various productions within the amateur setting as well as Fringe and Cabaret Festivals. His previous credits include the premiere of *The Boy with the Golden Fox* (Flying Elephant Theatre Company, dir. Benji Riggs), and his premiere cabaret *Sondheim and Me*. Jaxon is also a keen conductor and theatre technician in his spare time. Most recently, Jaxon performed as Kel Knight in *Fountain Lakes* (dir. Jayden Ayling, AKCreative) and as part of the Chorus in *Candide* (State Opera South Australia, dir. Mitchell Butel).



Damian Lee

Dodgy / Duchess / Mock Mock Mock Mock Turtle

Damian is in his second year studying a Bachelor of Music Theatre. In 2022, he played the role of Davey in the South Australian Premiere of *Newsies Jr.* (Adelaide Youth Theatre, dir. Michelle Davy), which later won the TASA Award for Best Youth Production. During the Junior Theatre Festival 2022, Damian was in the pilot of *9 to 5 Jr.* (OzTheatrics, dir. Marty Johnson). Last year, he was part of the ensemble in *Shrek The Musical* (ECMT, dir. Erin James). Outside of musical theatre, Damian performs as a professional Drag Artist.



Mia Lupton

Caterpillar / Ensemble

Mia grew up in Perth and studied a Diploma of Music Theatre at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2022. While at WAAPA she featured in *The Drowsy Chaperone* (dir. Tyler Jacob Jones) where she was Dance Captain and played the role of Gangster 2. In 2023 Mia performed in ECMT's production of *A Chorus Line* (dir. Matthew Hyde).



Ellie Esdene McMahon

Alice Spencer

Alice By Heart will be Ellie's second production with ECMT, having played Teen Fiona last year in *Shrek The Musical* (dir. Erin James). She completed her Diploma of Musical Theatre at WAAPA where she played The Chaperone in *The Drowsy Chaperone* (dir. Tyler Jacob Jones). Her professional credits include the voice of Patches in *Project Haven* (Code351 Games), Chorus in *Candide* (State Opera South Australia), Half-time Dancer (AFL, dir. Nathan Mark Wright), Ensemble in *Fame* (Matt Ward Productions, dir. Tim Hill), and an extra in *The Inbetweeners 2* and *Ticket to Paradise*.



Ryan Murphy

Harold Pudding / Mad Hatter

Alice by Heart will be Ryan's second production at ECMT. He is a Brisbane/Gold Coast based performer who recently performed the role of Bobby Mills in ECMT's production of *A Chorus Line*. Ryan has also played the Spanish Equerry in the Australian Ballet's production of *Swan Lake*, been in the Chorus of *Candide* (State Opera South Australia), and was a supernumerary in GWB's *A Christmas Carol*. He is an avid Shakespearean actor having received a scholarship to Bell Shakespeare. Ryan also enjoys stage combat, accent work, and languages.



Josh Rocca

Young Alfred / Mock Turtle / Ensemble

Dodgy / Duchess / Mock Mock Mock Mock Turtle (cover)

Angus / Caterpillar (cover)

Josh is an Adelaide based performer with an extensive background in Trampoline Gymnastics. He is an International levelled gymnast and an accredited advanced Trampoline Coach. In 2021, Josh was awarded Trampoline Gymnastics Junior International Male Athlete of The Year. His professional credits include *Swan Lake* (Australian Ballet Company, dir. David Halberg) and *Candide* (State Opera South Australia, dir. Mitchell Butel). *Alice By Heart* will be Josh's second production with the Elder Conservatorium.



Phoebe Rodger

Caterpillar / Ensemble

This will be Phoebe's second production with ECMT. Recent credits include Chorus in *Candide* (State Opera South Australia, dir. Mitchell Butel), and Gingly cover/ensemble in *Shrek The Musical* (ECMT, dir. Erin James). Phoebe has travelled with Pelican Productions around the USA, performing in New York, DisneyWorld, and on a Carnival Magic cruise ship. In 2017, Phoebe was in the Australian premiere pilot production of *Newsies Jr* (iTheatrics, dir. Marty Johnson). This year, alongside peers within the ECMT Student Association (ECMTA), Phoebe wrote, directed, and produced an original cabaret show titled *Behind the Curtain*.



Billie-Rose Russell

Clarissa / Mock Mock Mock Turtle
Red Cross Nurse / Queen of Hearts (cover)

Billie-Rose is currently in her second year at the Elder Conservatorium of Music. Previous credits include Humpty Dumpty in *Shrek The Musical* (ECMT, dir. Erin James) and Kerrie in *Puberty Blues* (Deadset Theatre Company, dir. Zoe Muller and Tilly Butler). Notably, her most recent directing credit was *The SpongeBob Musical* (Adelaide Theatre Academy). In 2017 Billie-Rose founded her own youth theatre company, Cool Beans Theatre.



Madison Schubert

Ensemble / Swing
Clarissa / Mock Mock Mock Turtle (cover)

This will be Madison's second production with ECMT, after appearing last year as Ensemble/Lori second cover in *A Chorus Line* (dir. Matt Hyde). This year Madison had the privilege to sing in State Opera South Australia's *Candide* (dir. Mitchel Butell) and perform at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival in Micheal Griffiths' *Big Gay Sing* and *Trevor Jones's Piano Bar*. Madison has also performed for the Adelaide Strikers, AFL, and Ding Productions. A jazz trained vocalist and bassist, she has also sung alongside Salt and Pepper Big Band.



Ella Simpson

Clarissa / Mock Mock Mock Turtle / Alice Spencer (cover)

This will be Ella's second production as a part of ECMT, having previously appeared in the ensemble of *A Chorus Line* (dir. Matt Hyde). In 2016, she appeared in the Western Australian premiere of *A Little Princess* (Playlovers, dir. Lisa Johnson). Ella also performed in the Ga Ga chorus of *We Will Rock You* at His Majesty's Theatre in Perth in 2018 (Platinum Entertainment). Other notable roles include Flounder in *The Little Mermaid*, Pugsley in *The Addams Family*, and Annie in *Annie*, at the Regal Theatre (dir. Kathleen Cocks).



Bella Thomas

Tabatha / Cheshire Cat

Bella is currently in her second year studying at the Elder Conservatorium. Bella made her professional debut in the role of Matilda in *Matilda the Musical* at the Lyric Theatre (RSC, dir. Nik Ashton/Matthew Warchus). She was awarded a Helpmann Award as well as a Sydney Theatre Award for this. Other credits include Pepper in *Good Omens Workshop* (Squabballogic Production Co., dir. Jay James-Moody), Jojo in *Seussical* (Birdie Productions, dir. Meg Day) and Annabelle in the short film *Devoted* with Phillip Quast (Nick & Lincoln).



Jacinda Tsakalos

Assistant Dance Captain / Ensemble / Swing

Jacinda started dancing at the age of four, training in all disciplines at Barbara Jayne Dance Centre. At 12 years old, Jacinda made her professional debut as Louisa Von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* (Gordon Frost Organisation, dir. Jeremy Sams). She has worked professionally with Ding Productions providing entertainment for corporate clients and sporting events. Last year Jacinda covered the roles of Val Clark and Bebe Benzenheimer in *A Chorus Line* (ECMT, dir. Matthew Hyde). Off the stage, Jacinda shares her love of dance in choreographing and teaching young future performers.



Lara Wilson

Young Alice / Ensemble

Tabatha / Cheshire Cat (cover)

Alice By Heart will be Lara's second production with ECMT, having played Tinkerbell in *Shrek* (dir. Erin James) in 2023. She completed her Diploma of Musical Theatre in 2022 at the Queensland College of Dance. Lara is a trained puppeteer, having performed as Bingo in the Australian and United States national tours of *Bluey's Big Play: The Stage Show* (HVK Productions, dir. Rose Myers). Lara is also a passionate children's entertainer who often hosts and does suit work for *Bluey Live!*, recently seen at the Royal Adelaide Show in 2023 and 2024.