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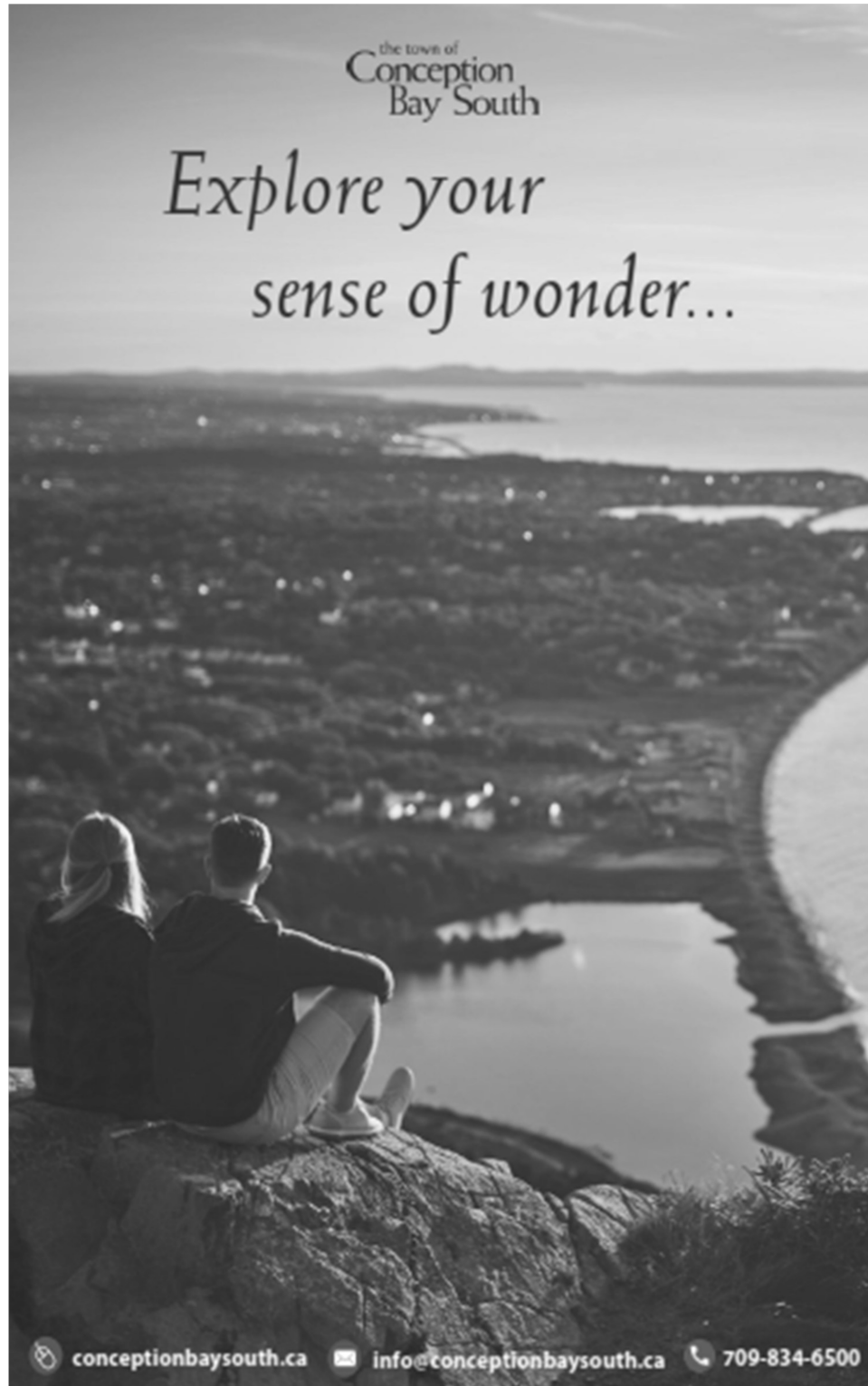
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What happens when an old woman, living in her humble home, is granted wishes from a magic fish? Join us this July as part of Soiree celebrations as we explore finding happiness where you are in this fable with puppets, songs and more!



Director's Note

"An autistic person falls down the rabbit hole the day they are born into the neurotypical world."

(www.kirstykendall.com/alice-in-wonderland-autism)

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll, was published in 1865. Some believe Carroll was autistic, long before autism was named. Today, 160 years later, now that the word exists, many autistics see Alice's story as the creative reflection of an autistic mind, while others recognize it as an outright allegory for autism. Check out kirstykendall.com or The Autistic Blogger (wordpress.com) for some interesting and provocative musings on this connection.

So, Leah McDonald and Peter Halley are not the only ones who saw the parallels between Wonderland and Autismland. They are, however, to my knowledge, the first to create a story and script based on the concept, with content largely coming from Leah's own experiences growing up in the autistic community.

I have learned a lot about autism in the process of bringing this play to the stage. More importantly, I have gotten to know some wonderful people in the autistic and neurodiverse community. They are active, creative, and hard-working. They are inspirational artists, athletes, and patient teachers to those of us in the neurotypical community who strive to understand the wonder-filled world of the autistic mind. I continue to learn.

Theatre CBS is delighted to be collaborating with Neurodynamic Theatrics to bring this play to its first school and first public audiences. May this be the beginning of a broader public educational initiative.

It has been my honour and privilege to direct these wonderful actors; child, youth and adult; neurodiverse and neurotypical alike. The creative journey has been enlightening and inspirational. I hope this play enhances your understanding of the neurodiverse world of autistic individuals, young and old. I hope even more that it contributes to a reduction (nay, elimination) of the incidences of bullying and mistreatment levelled against people in the autistic community; behaviour based on ignorance and misunderstanding.

Educate yourself. Be an advocate. Be a friend.

Gord Billard

Understanding Wonderland

Written by Leah McDonald and Peter Halley

Starring ...

Leah McDonald, Camille Christian, Bridget Russell, Adam Davit, Tyler Collett, Josh Rodgers, Megan Martin, Zachary Rodgers and Jacqueline Cook.

Crew...

Director: Gord Billard
Producer: Andrea Peddle
Musical Director/ Score: Kyle McDavid
Stage Manager: Jaclyn Dimmer
Costumes: Christine Young, Lisa Pinhorn, Colleen Collett
Props: Jodie Goodyear
Sound: Graham Dillabough
Lights: Frank Maloney
Front of House: Brenda Hynes, Jennifer Hughes
Production Assistant/ Promotion: Susan Bonnell
School Liaison: Jacqueline Cook

Theatre CBS would like to express special thanks to:

Brian Billard
Michael Young
John Bonnell
Justin Peddle
Heather Pitcher and Chris Bartlett (St. Edward's School)
Maria Foley, Arts and Culture Centre
Phonse King - Kings Photography and More

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The Cast (In order of Appearance)



Leah McDonald - Alice

Leah, 27, is a gold medal rhythmic gymnast (Special Olympics CBS) and a voice/piano student (Peter Halley). Acting credits include *Shakespeare Shorts* (SBTS), *A Christmas Carol* (Theatre CBS) and *Playlode To Terra Nova* (Terry Nova Productions). Lately, she has added circus performer and foley artist to her extensive résumé! When not in rehearsal, she loves baking, watching live theatre, drawing, and being a children's ministry volunteer.



Camille Christian - Diana and Tweedle Dum

This is Camille's third show with Theatre CBS. She also appeared in *A Christmas Story* and *Miracle on 34th Street*. She is a Grade 6 student at St. George's and enjoys all things creative. You'll often find her drawing, painting, creating masks, and making bracelets for every occasion and every outfit.



Bridget Russell - Mom

Bridget's passion is theatre. Since she was a little girl, she's loved entertaining. From then on, she has performed in many productions and is delighted to be a part of *Understanding Wonderland* and even more excited to share the stage with her two boys. She is very proud to be a part of Theatre CBS.



Adam Davit—Oliver Rabbit, March Hare

Graduating with a Diploma of Digital Animation in June of 2021, Adam Davit is a proudly autistic artist efficient with an array of digital and traditional artistic mediums. His adventure into the world of performance art began in 2023, when he joined ASNL's in-house Circus Troupe: Ignite Circus. Since then, he has performed for Elaine Dobbin and opened for Shanneyganock. *Understanding Wonderland* is his first play. Just like the March Hare, he loves a good cup of Orange Pekoe with milk and honey!



Piff - Himself

Piff, 2, is excited to be acting for the first time. A social media personality (Facebook: NL Dragon Tales), he is Leah's Emotional Support Dragon. He helps to calm her when she feels overwhelmed, scared or anxious. Piff loves being outside, walking, and playing at playgrounds. He loves watching *Dragon Tales* and having storybooks read to him!



Tyler Collett - Tweedle Dee, the Mad Hatter and Five of Spades

Hailing from St. John's, Tyler (21) discovered performing with the Lauda choir (*Shalloway*.) Acting credits include *Sidewalk Dandelion* and *Spongebob the Musical* (Best Kind Productions) Tyler is also a tech guru who enjoys graphic design and exploring new technology. He swims with the Special Olympics and is a member of the Autism Society's Physical Art Troupe.



Josh Rodgers - Cheshire Cat, Dr. Caterpillar and Ace of Spades

Josh is 13 years old and loves acting. This is his fourth play with Theatre CBS and he looks up to his mom in every play he's been in. He can't wait to see where this acting journey will take him. He loves going on stage, looking at the crowd, seeing them have a good time enjoying the masterpieces we act in. He hopes you sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.



Megan Martin - Duchess

This is Megan's first show. She is eager to share her hard work and passion for theatre with the audience. Megan (29) is with Special Olympics Mount Pearl, she dances at Lynn Panting Dance, (ballet and modern) and attends the Vera Perlin Center when not rehearsing. She loves diamond art, live musicals, and spending time with friends and, with her pet rabbit, Ollie.



Zachary Rodgers - Queen's Guard

Zach is 8 years old and loves acting. This is his second time on stage. His first role, last year, was Randy in *A Christmas Story*. When he grows up, he wants to be an actor. When he watched his mom on stage, he wanted to be an actor because it looked fun. He likes playing the Queen's Guard.



Jacqueline Cook - Queen of Hearts

Jacqueline, a former music teacher in CBS, studied Educational Drama in England. She participated in several amateur productions in the UK. Following a long hiatus from the stage, Jacqueline became a founding member of Theatre CBS and has appeared in *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Hollow*, *Ageless*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Duckish*.

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A graphic for "THE SHORELINE" newspaper. It features a stylized curtain background. The logo says "THE SHORELINE" with "NEWFOUNDLAND'S LARGEST CIRCULATION NEWSPAPER" underneath. Below the logo, the contact information is: "sales@theshoreline.ca (709) 834-2169". At the bottom, it says: "Here's hoping you break a lot of legs this season."

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A large vertical advertisement for Downtown CBS Conception Bay South. The top half shows a photograph of a playground with the word "The FUN" written in large, white, stylized letters over it. The word "EXPERIENCE" is written in large, white, sans-serif letters at the very top. The bottom half has a teal background with the website "downtowncbs.com" in large white letters. Below that is a logo for "DOWNTOWN CONCEPTION BAY SOUTH" featuring a stylized landscape with a bird. At the bottom, it says "PROUD SUPPORTER OF THEATRE CBS".