BUILDING FICTION

EXIT THROUGH LOOKING-GLASS

by

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// FIG.1 *transition to wonderland*

BUILDING FICTION

EXIT THROUGH LOOKING-GLASS

“*Imagination is the only weapon
in the war against reality.*”

- Jules de Gaultier

ABSTRACT

architectural performance frames the human experience within and outlines each moment as a private story that can be retold verbally, pictorially and spatially. The delineation of a performance space is defined by both actors' portrayals and the audience's perception of the event. There exists an interplay between the performance and the structure, leading to the multi-sensory understanding of an architectural narrative.

This thesis looks to reinvigorate the Imperial Theatre (otherwise known as Barrymore's Music Hall, Ottawa) through a whimsical interpretation, inspired by Lewis Carroll's novel: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. A nonsensical narrative is created to lead both the actors and the audience on a journey through space, time, and scale. By focusing on the concepts of immersive theatre, this thesis will stage the unexpected as a series of abstract experiences.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS THANKS MOM

For my sister, Alessan,
and her overactive imagination.

For my friend, Jess,
who found Wonderland in Brooklyn.

For my mother,
who read me fairy tales.

For my father,
who taught me to never give up.

For my advisor, Yvan,
who kept me sane.

And for the rest of my family,
who always encouraged my own adventures.

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*‘Begin at the beginning,’ the King said gravely,
‘and go on till you come to the end: then stop.’¹*
”

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// FIG. 2 *alice explores the imp*

PROLOGUE

ALICE IN OTTAWA

ENTER ALICE STAGE RIGHT

*ALICE curiously looks at surroundings. Then takes
center stage.*

ALICE

If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense. Nothing would be what it is, because everything would be what it isn't. And contrary-wise; what is, it wouldn't be. And what it wouldn't be, it would. You see?²

EXIT THROUGH LOOKING-GLASS

INTRODUCTION

architectural performance frames the human experience within and outlines each moment as a private story. This narration shapes and simplifies events into a sequence that has the capacity to stimulate the mind. One's imagination can be integrated into a story that could be reaffirmed verbally, pictorially and spatially.

The delineation of a performance space is defined not only by the actors' portrayals but also by the audience's perception of the event. There exists an awareness of interplay between the performance and the structure that lends to the multi-sensory understanding of an architectural narrative.³

The Imperial Theatre was once a pinnacle of Ottawa's performance venues and regarded as the most beautiful theatre in Canada.⁴ In its hundred-year existence the building has taken on many forms, but it still remains true to its entertainment roots. When first constructed, the Imperial's powerful presence transformed the urban fabric of Centertown.⁵ It became a beacon, representative of the entertainment district. However, with the declining interest in large-scale picture palaces the Imperial, as well as other similar venues, suffered. Centertown soon after lost the magic it once held, and the Imperial began its new narrative.⁶

This thesis looks to reinvigorate the Imperial Theatre (otherwise known as Barrymore's Music Hall, Ottawa) through a whimsical interpretation, inspired by Lewis Carroll's novel: *Alice in Wonderland*. A nonsensical narrative is created to lead both the actors and the audience on an adventure through space and scale.

Much like the Imperial's history, Alice's adventure is shaped by both spontaneity and interruption. Vague thresholds are connected by Alice's fragmented moments, leaving the characters to wonder where they came from and where they are going.⁷ Ordinary explorers who stumble upon the Imperial Theatre are encouraged to withdraw from the mundane monotony of daily routine and to fully immerse themselves into something exceptionally unimaginable. By focusing on the concepts of immersive theatre, this thesis will stage the unexpected as a series of abstract experiences.

// FIG. 2.1 areal view of ottawa's center and downtown, barrymore's is highlighted

CENTERTOWN

AN OTTAWA BOROUGH SITE ANALYSIS

(Refer to Appendix A)

Centertown is a neighborhood of Ottawa that connects the eastern residential regions, with the northern central business district with governmental functions and the Byward Market. It is bound on the north by Ottawa River, on the South by the Queensway, the Rideau Canal to the east, and Bronson Avenue to the west.¹ This borough contains a broad blend of both residential and commercial areas, as well as Parliament Hill, making Centertown the largest government sector in Ottawa.²

The now primarily commercial Bank Street runs the length of Centertown, and was once seen as the main street for entertainment in the city (see Appendix A). From 1910 to 1950 Bank Street was the home to over twenty different theatres.³ Since the decline in picture palaces and performances venues, Centertown now hosts none. Fortunately, there are traces left of this Golden Age of cinema and theatre. Although the majority of the theatres built in this era have been demolished, the Imperial Theatre's façade is mostly intact and is still recognizable today.⁴

02//1

ONCE THERE WAS A THEATRE

The history of the Imperial Theatre is remembered through experiences and stories retold. Much like fairy tales or ancient mythology, different version of the truth have evolved into the accepted stories of today.⁵ These fragmented moments contribute to the Imperial's allure. As the building grew older, ownership changed more frequently, yet fewer records were kept.⁶ Patrons will remember the Imperial as one of its many incarnations. They remember the way they personally experienced it: going to the movies, seeing a live concert or walking past windows of naked women.

The stories we tell each other of the golden age of theatres, like the Imperial, contribute to Ottawa's folklore. They are ghost stories of the past remembered and passed on. history, while not aiming to immerse its patrons completely in it.

The rising problem with buildings like the Imperial is that the space no longer suits its needs. There is a battle between the need to adhere to the heritage guidelines by preserving the past, and creating a contemporary environment that satisfies the current trends of Centertown's nightlife.⁷

// FIG. 2.4 *The circle shows the area that would benefit most from the redevelopment of The Imperial. The model shows the height and scale of the surrounding neighborhood, used as a study so the proposed development fits within the urban fabric of Bank Street.*

// FIG. 2.5 *The Site Sight was designed as a chessboard. It is raised and organized into eight by eight alternating coloured squares. The players can move both horizontally and vertically around the site. The audience and actors interact like chess pieces, as the characters do in Through the Looking-Glass. This is an exploration through the space on the block that can be used as part of the redevelopment scheme.*

For the Imperial, nothing inside is precious anymore, and no one wants to restore what once was. The interior has become a cheap copy of the past, with deteriorating fixtures that are meant to mimic the Imperials original grandeur.⁸ The building should take on a new program that reflects the fragmented history, while not aiming to immerse its patrons completely in it.

The Imperial Theatre was once the crown of Ottawa's entertainment venues.⁹ Unfortunately, entertainment specialization became obsolete. In order to ensure the survival of the theatre in such a venue, adaptable spaces should be conceived. This will allow multiple types of performances to be explored within the space.

// FIG. 2.6 A section through the Imp's original 1914 auditorium. This piece is a part of the full model in fig 7.

// FIG. 3.1 photo of the Imp facade,
circa 1990

THEATRE BEAUTIFUL

THE IMPERIAL THEATRE:
HISTORICAL FRAGMENTS

“What is the use of a book,” thought Alice,
“without pictures or conversations¹?”

// FIG. 3.2 facade, circa 1936. Photograph taken from the corner of Bank Street and Gilmore Street.

IMPERIAL THEATRE 1914

CAST

<i>Fred Jameson</i>	<i>Reporter for the Ottawa Journal</i>
<i>Bill Harris</i>	<i>Reporter for the Ottawa Journal</i>
<i>Charlie Miller</i>	<i>Senior Editor of the Ottawa Journal</i>
<i>Jimmy Olson</i>	<i>Photographer for the Ottawa Journal</i>
<i>Harry Brouse</i>	<i>Owner of Imperial Theatre (1914 – 1924)</i>

“I told the kid to be here at seven,” complained Bill, looking, yet again, at his watch. He lifted his bowler and wiped the sweat from his brow. Even for late August, Ottawa was unusually warm. The night was made even warmer by the crowds of people coming from all over the city to the opening of Ottawa’s new picture-palace.²

“Bill, he said he’d be here, he’ll be here. Ciggy?” said Fred going through his pockets. He took out a pack of cigarettes from the inside of his jacket and handed one to his colleague before putting one in his own mouth. He patted down his pockets again. “Got a light?”

Bill looked down Bank Street as a black Model-T drove by and honked. The men waved. “Dammit, even Charlie’s on time! I gotta get this story in for tomorrow’s paper,” he said rummaging through his pockets for a matchbox. Bill lit Fred’s cigarette, then his own. “The Ottawa Journal doesn’t wait for late photographers.”

“Think you’re being too hard on him?” Fred smiled and tipped his hat at a group of classy women walking past – all were wearing rather large evening fascinators. The women giggled and waved at the reporters, then scampered away. “Take a look around, it’s the biggest night since the war started, and you’re letting it walk right past you.”

"Boys! Fine evening, isn't it," Charlie's booming voice was very distinct above the crowd. As a senior editor at the paper, Charlie Miller knew everyone in the business. Even though he does not write the stories anymore, he still liked to keep up appearances. His presence always made Bill feel uncomfortable. "They've started turning people away at the door. Only letting press in now.³ You boys better get in there before they started turning us away too!" Charlie let out a hardy laugh, slapped Bill on the back, and left to speak with the paper's lead advertisers.

Bill checked his pocket watch, and started pacing. "You're starting to make me anxious," laughed Fred. "I'll grab us some seats. See you inside." Bill watched Fred glide nonchalantly though the crowd until he was out of sight.

Even with the sun beginning to set, the humidity did not let up. Bill was hot, sweaty and annoyed. Shaking his head, he threw his cigarette into the street and let out a long sigh. "I'm going to get fired," he thought.

Bill tried to calm down. He turned to look up at the building. In an interview, the architect, Walter Herbert George, described the theatre as a 'beaux-arts design with classical influences.'⁴ The lead-glass, ornamental windows were glowing from the festivities inside. There was a pair of larger rectangular windows that flanked a third, arched window in the center of the façade. Each was decorated with a geometric pattern. Although ablaze with the opening night buzz, their real purpose was to bring sunlight into the lobby during daytime matinees.⁵

But it was the marquee that really grabbed your attention. There were two lion heads aside the central window; they bit into thick chains that held the overhanging canopy in place.⁶

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND. The bold, bright letters were hard to miss. This silent picture was just one of the specials being shown at tonight's opening. Although flickers were just starting to make their mark on Ottawa entertainment, most of the patrons showed up for the vaudeville acts.⁷ "That's where the real skill is," thought Bill.

"Wonderland eh? Something light for opening night. Hey, you sorta remind me of the caterpillar. With the hat, and the eyebrows." Finally, a voice Bill had been waiting all night to hear.

"Jimmy, you were supposed to be here over an hour ago! What did you do? Get lost? There's bloody spotlights shooting into the sky that people can see from Toronto!" Bill gestured to an electric sign that was 20ft high. "It's all lit up for you, right there in big letters: IMPERIAL. With a crown on top⁸, so you kids don't get it confused with any other theatres."

Jimmy was big for his age, about 15 years Bill's junior, and hadn't grown into his ears yet. There he was holding his Simplex 35mm camera, sporting a big smile on his face. He did not care what the job was, Jimmy just wanted to be involved.

"Sorry Mr. Harris, lost tract of time," explained Jimmy. "But I did take a picture from across the street this morning. Probably a good thing – look at this crowd! I couldn't even find you when

// FIG. 3.3 front page headline for August 29, 1914,
Ottawa Evening Journal

I got here. I thought you might have gone in without me."

"It's fine, kid," he answered as he wiped more sweat from his forehead. Bill got his notepad from inside his jacket and handed it to Jimmy. It was hard to be mad at someone who was just trying to help. "Jot down the things I tell you, and if you overhear anything good, write that down too. Maybe we'll get to know what people are really thinking if they don't know that a reporter's asking."

Bill had already written a description of the outside of the theatre, which maybe glossed over once Jimmy's picture is put beside it. Photography was making the written words

obsolete in the same way that moving pictures were the current trend in the entertainment industry. "He got here this morning?" Bill thought. "The kid's too smart for his own good."

The two made their way through the crowd to the main entrance and stopped in front of three sets of heavy walnut, French-Style doors. "Jimmy, these doors were done by W.C Edwards and Company, the guys did the doors for the Chateau Laurier⁹," dictated Bill. "Write that down in case I forget."

As members of the press, they were able to pass by a mob of longing patrons. Thankfully most of the people had taken their seats, so Bill and Jimmy were able to get a good look at the

// FIG. 3.4 The lobby, circa 1930. Fabric panneling still intact.

// FIG. 3.5 The lobby, circa 1947, details begin getting stripped away fluorescent lights are added, windows on doors are boarded.

near empty lobby. It felt as though they were submerged in a tastefully rich and elegant décor. Everything was cream coloured, with gold ornamental accents.¹⁰ Although the lobby was small, the ceilings were high and illuminated in both natural and electrical lighting; most of which was hidden from sight.¹¹

"The lobby is ablaze with light, yet no lights are directly visible," said Bill pointing up to the ceiling. Jimmy was in complete awe. Once he realized Bill's comment was directed at him, he stopped gawking and frantically scribbled it down.

Bill and Jimmy moved through the main lobby into a smaller secondary space with marble stairs that led to the balcony and theatre boxes. Ornamental gold reliefs were everywhere: ceiling, doors, frames, and wall panels.¹² There was a sense of having walked into a jewelry box.

"Bill, where have you been?" Fred was standing by the large gold doors. He waved them towards him. "Good thing you found the kid. We have seats near the back with the rest of the press. Good ol' Chuck is sitting pretty in one of the boxes."

// FIG. 3.6 *The Imp stage, circa 1947. Original decor and fixtures.*

// FIG. 3.7 *The Imp auditorium, circa 1947*

"Now, Jimmy, write this down before I forget it," said Bill. " 'Nothing has been withheld to make the Imperial Theatre truly metropolitan in all its appointments, both the interior and exterior presenting so unusually attractive in appearance.' "¹³

"Did you find out how many it can hold," asked Bill, looking around at the vast audience.

"Five hundred here," said Fred gesturing to the lower level. "Another five hundred in the balcony, and two hundred in the boxes. That's twelve hundred¹⁴ total, Jim."

As the house lights dimmed, the reporters walked up the long red-carpeted aisle and took their seats. The evening started with a short performance by a vaudeville singer, Miss Gertrude Le Roy¹⁵, and a chorus line of showgirls and then it was the night's most anticipated moment. The auditorium was dark and the organist, Alban Moss¹⁶, began. The projection light from overhead illumined the screen with the title: *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*.

The audience was completely mesmerized by both the moving picture and the organ accompaniment. John Bunny kept them laughing from start to finish. Bill thought the picture *The Badger Hunt*, was incredible, he had never seen a badger being caught before. Two other comedies and a three part story of political intrigue followed.¹⁷

As Mr. Moss played the last notes of the evening, the audience was a roar of applause. The auditorium was filled with uplifting chatter; everyone seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed

themselves.

After the showing, Bill and Fred socialized with Charlie and other colleagues, while Jimmy spoke with one of the dancers he knew.

"Kid, you're too young to have those kind of friends," laughed Fred as the men started for the exit. As the ushers held the doors, they discussed the opening's attendance.

"How many did you say you had to turn away?" Jimmy asked.

"Bout five hundred¹⁸ , sir, " the usher answered. "Much bigger turnout than expected. Even Mr. Brouse was surprised."

"Harry Brouse? The owner?"

"Not many other important guys named 'Brouse' 'round here," scoffed the usher.

Jimmy waited for the last few stragglers to leave the lobby before taking a final photograph. They exited through the large oak doors, onto Bank Street. It was a clear, starry night. Finally the weather had cooled, and the crowds had dissipated.

"Thanks again, Mr. Harris. This was a wild opportunity." Jimmy waved goodbye to Bill and hurried off to develop the photographs. "Good kid," he thought.

Bill turned and looked up at the building. It really was one of the most beautiful things he had ever seen: Canada's Theatre Beautiful. He took the note pad out from inside his jacket, and jotted it down. 'Canada's Theatre Beautiful.'¹⁹ This is how The Imp was going to be remembered.

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 2016

CAST

Rebecca Sferlazza Thesis Student at Carleton University

She dials the number from memory.

"Hi, this is Rebecca Sferlazza. Again. I left a message last week, and two the week before. But in case you didn't get those messages: I'm a masters of architecture student at Carleton University. The focus of my thesis is Barrymore's, or what it used to be when it was the Imperial. I was wondering if you had any information about the old auditorium. If you could give me a call back, it would be greatly appreciated. You can reach me at this number. Thanks."

Click.

IMPERIAL THEATRE 1924

CAST

<i>A.H Coplan</i>	<i>Co-Owner of Imperial Theatre (1924 -1955)</i>
<i>Solomon Coplan</i>	<i>Co-Owner of Imperial Theatre (1924 -1955)</i>
<i>James Moxley</i>	<i>Imperial Theatre Manager</i>
<i>Donat Paquin</i>	<i>Leased the Imperial from Coplan Brothers</i>

“Is it in bad taste to drink to a dead man?” A.H Coplan asked as he finished his drink.

His brother, Solomon Coplan, poured his partner another whisky. “We’re celebrating, old boy! Circumstances aside, today we beat out Famous Players for the Imp.²⁰ If that’s not worth a few drinks, nothing is. Harry Brouse would understand.”

The men drank. They were seated at the back table of a small speak-easy off of Somerset Street.

“Now Sol, we need to talk about the changes we want to make,” urged A.H Coplan. He had been obsessed with the idea of owning a theatre

for years now and was passionate about his vision.

“In good time,” replied Solomon. “I know you have some big ideas to bring the Imp into this decade, so I’ll give you free rein for that. Let me handle the business end and you can add in all the novelties.²¹ You’ve auditioned that Alice girl and some others. And a five-piece orchestra, you said? To compliment the pipe organ?”

“A seven-piece,” corrected A.H. “Brouse spent almost 20,000 on that organ.²² It’s underutilized. But if we don’t get the phonograph then the whole operation is a waste. Also I want you to meet this fellow, James Moxley.²³ Heard of him?”

// **FIG. 3.8** *visualization of the Imperial as a picture palace, with Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1915) playing*

Solomon shook his head. "Works in the business?"

"He has ties to some major motion picture distributors," explained A.H. Coplan. "We can get some of the more current pictures. The audiences will love that."²⁴

"Wonderful! Sounds like we'll get along with him nicely. And we will get the phonograph. I told you I actually liked that idea." Solomon shook his empty glass. "Now if you'll excuse me, I have to go see a man about a dog. Cheers!"

// FIG. 3.9 Drawings of the Imperial, circa 1940

Scene from D. W. Griffith's production, "Drums Of Love," which opens today for run of one week at the Regent Theatre.

Allen Hardy, former star of the vaudeville and music box revues, is the villainous friend of Alverado in the photodrama which is a thrilling story of primitive passions among ultra-modern society folk sojourning at Biarritz, France.

STARTING IMPERIAL TODAY

RICHARD DIX
IN
"Easy Come, Easy Go"

Laughs in Big Doses. Easy to Take.
GIGGLES galore coming quickly. Hang on with both hands and watch this up-to-the-minute humor master change the world from blue to gold. He's an honest-to-goodness hunter for trouble but he has that optimistic twist that turns clouds to sunshine. He manages to crawl out of the tight places with a great deal more than he had when he crawled in. Richard Dix in a new masterpiece of sympathetic, human humor—and a rollicking romance, too.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

Another of those gorgeous historical technicolor treats
THE VIRGIN QUEEN
The story of Queen Elizabeth and the gallant Walter Raleigh in the days when "Good Queen Bess" ruled England with an iron hand.

What a comedy!
The sensational new comedy team in another laughing hit
Oliver Hardy and Stan Laurel
in
"The Finishing Touch"

// FIG. 3.10 Advertisement for the Imperial in the Ottawa Citizen

IMPERIAL THEATRE
1932

CAST

Mamma Morton Baptist mother of five

Alice Morton Age: 6 $\frac{3}{4}$

“This ain’t a church, it’s a theatre!” cried Alice.

“Well today, sweet pea, it’s a church,” said Mamma. “If Mr. A. H Coplan, is gonna give us a church, we’re gonna take the church.²⁵ It’s just ‘till ours gets built. Hurry along now, child. We need to get some seats together.”

There was a sign on the main doors that read:

SUNDAY SERVICE OF METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE
HELD IN MAIN AUDITORIUM

**BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL
2016**

CAST

*Rebecca Sferlazza Thesis Student at Carleton University***h**ello,

The last email I sent was December 27, but I had sent a few before Christmas. I have yet to hear back. I was wondering if you could put me in contact with someone who could take me around the building during the day, in order to photograph it for my thesis. Or if the owner has any copies of the building plans, that would be incredibly helpful.

I don't want to take up too much of your time, I just need a few minutes inside the building in order to understand the space when it is not being inhabited.

Thank you and Happy New Years,
Rebecca

Email Sent.

IMPERIAL THEATRE 1932

CAST

Sam Rothman *Owner of Imperial Furniture (1955 - 1970)*

Rick Blaine *Imperial Patron and childhood friend of Sam*

“Last month I was in here with the wife, eating popcorn, watchin’ that picture. What was it? With that Curtis fellow, Alice, is so damn fond of. Johnny Dark! And this month I’m buying a couch,” said Rick. “I really like what you’ve done with the place Sam. It’s just sad to see it all go.”

A shame really, thought Rick. He stood in the middle of what was the Imp’s lobby. The theatre had been split for ground floor retail and the balconies above housed the warehouse.²⁶ Ironically, it was in the old theater that Sam Rothman stored all the television sets.

“When the sign went up ‘Closed Until Further Notice’ I just assumed it would open up again as a theatre. I’m lucky that I went that last night. There have been a lot of good memories in here, Sam. We practically grew up in these walls, Alice too. Remember all those screenings we snuck into?”

“Old Mr. Brouse would get so mad at us,” laughed Sam. “Alice knew all the in’s and out’s of the place. First thing I did was close that back entrance.” He had taken over the building when pictures had gone out of style. Hard to compete when everyone has a personal tube sitting in their own living room.²⁷

// FIG. 3.11 *visualization of Imperial Furniture (1955-1970), featuring model Natalia Vodianova, who posed as Alice for a Vogue photo series in 2003.*

"There were so many of us ankle-biters running through here that they had to build us a snack bar. I think it kept us quiet," Rick smiled and looked around. "Thirty years of those Saturday 'Tough-Guy' double features. It was a right of passage. Every weekend you could guarantee all the boys in the neighborhood were here to spend the afternoon with Jesse James and the Durango Kid." ²⁸

"That had to be A.H Coplan's idea," said Sam. "The man knew his audience."

The two men stood amongst the furniture reminiscing about their childhood. They were reminded of all the vaudeville acts they had seen and the magic of their first talkie.

"Say, Rick, I could really use your help, on a project I've been thinking about. They left me the projector, and the screen is still set up. I want to have some small showings for friends²⁹," proposed Sam. "Interested?"

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 2017

CAST

George Syriannis *Manager of Barrymore's Music Hall (2008 - present)*

Rebecca Sferlazza *Thesis Student at Carleton University*

Submit Message Request:

Hello Mr. Syriannis,

My name is Rebecca Sferlazza. I am Masters of Architecture student at Carleton University. My thesis is focused on Barrymore's. I've been looking at its history, primarily its time as a picture palace between 1914-1955. I apologize for messaging you on your personal Facebook account. I sent some emails through the booking gmail account, and have yet to hear back.

I was wondering if it would be possible to tour the building during the day, in order to photograph it for my thesis. Also, if you or the renovation architect have any plans of the building that would be incredibly helpful. I don't want to take up too much of your time, I just need a few minutes inside the building in order to understand the space when it is not being inhabited.

Thank you,
Rebecca Sferlazza

Message Request Denied.

// FIG. 3.12 Basement of Barrymore's, circa 2017. Original detailing on lower level of Imperial auditorium

// FIG. 3.13 Front windows of Barrymore's, circa 2017. Original windows have been boarded, now a coat check room

IMPERIAL FURNATURE

1959

CAST

Walter Herbert George *Architect*

a small woman clears her throat.

"Today the entertainment community mourns the death of beloved, and renowned Ottawa architect, Mr. Walter Herbert George. He will be forever remembered for the beautiful theatres and picture palaces he created on behalf of actors and audience alike. Even to the end, he considered the Imperial Theatre as his crowning achievement.³⁰ If you could, a standing ovation for Walt."

The room stood in applause until the house lights dimmed.

L'OPERA 1971

CAST

<i>Harold Levin</i>	<i>Owner of L'Opera (1970 - 1971)</i>
<i>Bob Werba</i>	<i>Owner Pandora's Box (1971 - 1978)</i>
<i>Pat Antonakos</i>	<i>Owner/Landlord of Imperial Theatre (1970 - 1989)</i>

“Maybe Ottawa’s just not ready for this kind of venue yet.”

“But they’re ready for a giant strip club?” Harold Levin was sad to sign over L’Opera. He had bought out Imperial Furniture, and changed it into a live music venue. For about a year he owned and operated Ottawa’s largest rock n’ roll palace.³¹ He had been so passionate about the project that he let it cloud his judgment – now Levin has to sell.

“We will be a upscale, classier burlesque venue,” laughed Bob Werba. “They’ve pretty much got raunchy strippers covered in Hull.”

The two men sat at a small table in the empty auditorium. It felt so much bigger to Harold as he

looked around. It had taken so much time to convert it back into an entertainment space after it had been a furniture store for fifteen years. The main floor was mostly comprised of small tables like this one. But the balcony was where the audience wanted to be because of the acoustics. The newly painted, psychedelic murals had become synonymous with the city’s music scene. A mere two weeks before, Canadian bands, such as Lighthouse,³² had performed to hundreds of people who appreciated counter-culture as much as Harold did.

Harold flipped through the contract one last time, and reluctantly signed his name on the last page. The two men shook hands. “Well, I wish you the best of luck Bob.”

PANDORA'S BOX 1975

CAST

<i>Pete Donovan</i>	<i>Junior at Brookfield High School</i>
<i>Brad Anderson</i>	<i>Junior at Brookfield High School</i>
<i>Darrell Baxter</i>	<i>Brad's cousin & bartender at Pandora's Box</i>
<i>Vinny Russo</i>	<i>Bouncer at Pandora's Box</i>
<i>Bobby Day</i>	<i>Real name, Winsome Hill. Performer at Pandora's Box</i>
<i>Charles Haines</i>	<i>Elizabethan Scholar and Carleton University Professor</i>

“There she is. Pandora! As I live and breathe. Isn't she beautiful, Pete!”

Brad had been fixated on getting inside Pandora's Box since the burlesque club was infamously mentioned in *Playboy*³¹. The venue's 'audacious crudity' gained worldwide recognition, especially amongst teenaged readers. Every under-aged boy in Ottawa wanted to experience first-hand the pages that they kept hidden under their mattresses. Pandora's Box, being 'Canada's first full-nudity strip club'³², represented a living centerfold.

"Tonight's the night," said Brad. Brad's cousin, Darrell, got a gig bartending and by association their dreams could turn into reality. "We're supposed to wait here for Darrell, and then he's going to bring us in the back way. He said the new bouncer, Vinny, is too straight to just let us in the front way."

The boys stood on the corner of Bank and Gilmour in awe. The building was lit up in red and pink, highlighting the nude dancer hanging out of each window³³. "Man, this is so choice," Pete thought, clutching his fake Manitoba ID. The original signage 'Imperial' was replaced with more windows which he felt were a much better look.

// FIG. 3.14 *Vintage Neville Smith poster depicting Pandora's bump n' grind era*

"That one window has three girls in it, Brad," he pointed out. "This is wild!"

In addition to the Playboy plug, Pandora's Box had been the subject of multiple law suits that made headlines. The local TV station, CJOH, went out to report on the opening. They had perhaps shown a bit more than people had bargained for on a prime time news spot.³⁴ A video of one of the dancers, stripping down to her birthday suit, aired over dinnertime and outraged every housewife in the greater Ottawa area.³⁵ But hey, you cannot buy that kind of publicity.

"Like what you see there, boys?" A woman in her twenties, wearing a large fur coat, red lipstick with high heels to match came up behind them. Darrell was with her.

"This is Winnie," introduced Darrell. "She's part of the show."

"I go by Bobby Day inside." Her sultry tone had us hanging onto every word. "Maybe

we can get better acquainted. Darrell can explain to you how the private rooms work." She kissed Pete on the cheek, and walked off.

"That was Bobby Day!" Brad could not contain his excitement. "The Bobby Day, from the newsreel?"³⁶ You just got kissed by Bobby Day."

There was a private room made of cigarette smoke and sparkles and they were VIP. Darrell had obviously made a good impression with the ladies, because once the boys entered a dancer named Alice came over with shots.

Through the dressing room, they climbed up a small winding staircase and emerged into the main theatre.³⁷ The space was even hazier with smoke. It was like nothing Brad and Pete had ever seen before. Tables were set up around the main stage, where a trio was performing wearing nothing but a few well placed tassels: the rest of their costumes were discarded into the audience. Each booth along the sides housed men receiving private dances. Watered down

**Pandora's
Box**

- CANADA'S BIGGEST
- & BEST
- LIVE NUDE SHOW
- COMPLETE STRIP
- CONTINUOUS SHOWS
- 6 PM TO MIDNIGHT
- PANDORA'S BOX
- IT'S BEEN IMITATED
- BUT NEVER DUPLICATED
- PANDORA'S BOX - WHERE
- YOU SEE EVERYTHING
- ADMITTANCE RESTRICTED TO
- PERSONS 18 YEARS & OVER
- WHY NOT ALSO VISIT
- PANDORA'S HEALTH STUDIO
- LOCATED ON THE PREMISES
- "THE ULTIMATE IN RELAXATION"
- BEAUTIFUL HOSTESSES
- SPECIALIZING IN PERSONAL
- BODY MASSAGE
- HOURS 11 AM TO 1 AM. 236-0921
- FREE PASS TO SEE OUR SHOW
- TO EVERY CUSTOMER
- 323 BANK STREET PROMENADE
- DOWNTOWN
- 236-3500

// FIG. 3.15 Advertizment for Pandora's Box

// FIG. 3.16 *Pandora's Box on a Saturday night*

drinks were served by waitresses who wore slightly more than the dancers. With the light focused on stage, one could barely make out the super trippy murals that covered the walls. The whole club reeked of tequila and bad choices, and they loved every second of it.

"See that man," said Darrel yelling over the music. "That's Charles Haines, a friend of the owner, Bob Werba. Heard from Winnie he's gonna be a key witness at next week's hearing.³⁸ Regular client of hers. He's big on the extras, if you know what I mean. The man's a professor at Carleton. He has a whole speech worked out about the 'art of burlesque.'³⁹ Anyone with that confidence gets a Singapore Sling on the house."

Darrell found seats by the bar in a section that had the highest traffic of dancers walking through – beautiful women continuously delivering free drinks. Brad claimed that refusing one would be in bad taste at such an establishment.

"Drink me,"⁴⁰ said Alice, as she handed a small bottle to each of them.

Pete woke up on Brad's couch with red lipstick all over his body and no money in his wallets. The night became a blurred memory. The next time Pete saw Bobby Day, she assured him that he had a great time.

**BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL
2017**

CAST

Rebecca Sferlazza *Thesis Student at Carleton University*

One Girl *Thesis Student and five-time Kosmic Attendee*

Another Girl *Thesis Student and Kosmic costume Queen*

“Does anyone have any pictures from Kosmic 2013?”

“Clear pictures?” said one girl.

“Yes.”

“Oh, then no.”

“Has anyone been inside the building sober?”

“No,” replied another.

“Does anyone know someone that works there?”

“Maybe? Wait, no. He moved,” said the first.

“I’m just going to stand outside, someone eventually has to go in. Does anyone want to come with me?”

“No,” laughed both.

// FIG. 3.17 *backstage of Barrymore's
at kosmic 2013*

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 1978

CAST

<i>Darrell Baxter</i>	<i>Bartender at Barrymore's Music Hall</i>
<i>Vinny Russo</i>	<i>Bouncer at Barrymore's Music Hall</i>
<i>Bob Werba</i>	<i>Owner Barrymore's Music Hall (1978-1979)</i>
<i>Winnie Hill</i>	<i>Performer at Pandora's Box, stage name Bobby Day</i>

As opening night was winding down Vinny ushered out the last of the drunk patrons, including Alice and her friends. He and Darrell were two of the few employees who actually made the transition between Pandora's Box and the newly opened discotheque.⁴¹

"Better turn-out than expected," said Darrell as he cleared off the bar. "Didn't think there was much of a disco scene in Ottawa."

"Man, I didn't either," Vinny turned on the house lights and took off his security jacket to help with the clean up. "How do you feel about the name change? I heard Alice talking about it on the way out."

"It ain't terrible," said Darrell. "Barrymore's Music Hall. It has a ritzy ring to it. Besides, Werba had to change it to something. We couldn't still be 'Pandora's' after getting busted for Winnie's private massage parlor and all the lawsuits that followed."⁴²

Darrell had become close with Bob Werba over the last few years of working for him. While helping out with the renovations he had asked Werba about the name. "Barrymore's? Why Barrymore's?"

"That famous Barrymore family," Werba had answered. "I'm going back to the building's old Hollywood roots, Darrell."⁴³

Bob Werba had grown up in New York City. Living close to the entertainment district, he spent a lot of time watching stage performances and feature films. In New York and Los Angeles, the Barrymore family was like royalty. For both stage and screen, they were involved in every aspect of the business from directing to acting⁴⁴.

"I always liked the name 'Barrymore'," he had said. "It adds some much needed class."

Throughout the renovations, a lot of changes were made to disassociate the venue from its previous venture as a strip club. The vibrant psychedelic murals were painted over in white, and all the gold ornamental trim was restored.⁴⁵ Larger tables and a kitchen were added, because under the new liquor law, an establishment legally had to serve food, as well.⁴⁶ At least

this meant some of the old waitresses could keep their jobs. They just needed new uniforms.

"Vinny, how do you like the new dance floor?"

"Honestly, Darrel, it's far out," said Vinny. "The coolest part of this whole place, and I like how all the blocks light up. It looks just like the one that Travolta danced on."

"That's because it is the one that Travolta danced on,"⁴⁷ laughed Darrell. "A piece of it at least. Werba didn't want to cut any corners. He knows a guy who worked on Saturday Night Fever."

Vinny was at a loss for words as he walked over to the new dance floor. Then finally he said, "You mean I'm standing where John Travolta stood. Seriously, far out."

// FIG. 3.18 Drawings of Barrymore's, circa 1990

// FIG. 3.19 *Wicked Wanda's Adult Emporium*, circa 2017.
Originally the Imperial lobby

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL
1982

CAST

Alice Rose *Heritage Council Member of the St George's Ward Division*
Ron Bailey *Commissioner of Community Development*

response:
File: CD-4305 Bank 232

Dear Alice Rose,

The subject building is in the second category (Heritage Interest) on the Heritage Reference list and it is not included within a proposed Heritage District. After an inspection of the building, it was noted that the interior as well as the exterior have been extensively altered. In light of that and although there are many original elements left inside, it is not thought that the building is worthy of a change in status⁴⁸.

R. Bailey,
Commissioner of Community Development

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 1985

CAST

<i>Kimberly Stone</i>	<i>Rock Music Enthusiast</i>
<i>Alice Lundy</i>	<i>Rock Music Enthusiast</i>
<i>Carl 'Sonny' Thompson</i>	<i>Ex-Con & Co-Manager of Barrymore's Music Hall (1979 – 1987)</i>
<i>Gord Rhodes</i>	<i>Son-in-Law of Sonny & Co-Manager of Barrymore's Music Hall (1979 – 1991)</i>

Kimberly and Alice waited in a long line at Barrymore's. The new manager, Carl 'Sonny' Thompson⁴⁹ and his son-in-law Gord Rhodes, had spent the last seven years transforming the music hall from a grimy disco club to one of the most sought after rock venues in the city.⁵⁰ Gord handled the music, while Sonny handled the business.

Sonny was one of the scariest people Kim had ever encountered. On their first meeting, Kimberly witnessed Sonny throwing the soon-to-be ex-manger down the main staircase and into the street.⁵¹ Without skipping a beat he turned to her, apologized, and poured her a drink.

"Do you know the act playing tonight?" asked Kim.

"A band called R.E.M⁵²," answered Alice. She was taller, so she was trying to peer over the crowd and see if they were close. "I've never heard any of their stuff, but my ex-boyfriend said they're going to be huge."

Although Kim was not a fan of Alice's ex, he did have great taste in music. He was the one that introduced them to Sonny and Barrymore's. It had a funny charm to it. Its clearly dated, but not enough to loose that perfect atmosphere for live music.⁵³

// FIG. 3.20 *visualization of Barrymore's as a live music venue, featuring model Natalia Vodianova, who posed as Alice for a Vogue photo series in 2003.*

"After missing Tina Turner two summers ago, I told myself I'd be coming to as many shows as possible,"⁵⁴ continued Alice. "Were you here when Bono played?"

"That was in '80 right? No, I missed that one too," answered Kimberly. "I can't believe how much U2 just blew up after that."

U2 was in Ottawa performing on the day after John Lennon's assassination. Rumor has it, that the band had done an unbelievably passionate tribute to the Beatles and it was that performance that launched U2 onto the Canadian music scene.⁵⁵

"I wish we'd been there," said Alice. "It's artists like these that put Ottawa on the map!"

// FIG. 3.21 *Kosmic 2017 set-up*

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 2017

CAST

Rebecca Sferlazza *Thesis Student at Carleton University*

Alice Hart *Kosmic Prism Lead Organizer*

hey Alice!

I heard you guys changed the Kosmic venue to Barrymore's! I know I'm not signed up to do any installations, but my thesis is actually on the building. When you guys go on site visits, would you mind if I tag along? I haven't been able to get a hold of anyone on their end, and I would love to get in the space.

Thanks,
Becca

Message Sent to Kosmic Prism

// FIG. 3.22 circa 1938

// FIG. 3.23 circa 2014

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 2017

CAST

Pat Antonakos *Owner/landlord of Barrymore's Music Hall (1970 – 1989)*

Gord Rhodes *Manager of Imperial Theatre (1979 – 1991)*

The landlord, Pat Antonakos, turned the lights off and exited through the main door on to Bank Street.⁵⁶ The dying lights from the arcade flashed. What used to be the main entrance of the old venue is now a crappy kiddy arcade.

"I'll be closing that up next," thought Pat. The manager Gord had already filed for bankruptcy.⁵⁷ "If a stage can't make it through a recession, there's no way an arcade can."

Pat was worried about the rest of the businesses on the strip. Barrymore's had been a landmark for decades, and with it closing down, the papers predicted a lot of other places would too.⁵⁸

He locked the door and posted a sign that read:

FOR LEASE⁵⁹

// FIG. 3.24 *deteriorating relief on facade
circa 2000*

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 1995

CAST

<i>Kimberly Stone</i>	<i>Rock Music Enthusiast</i>
<i>Alice Lundy</i>	<i>Rock Music Enthusiast</i>
<i>Eugene Haslam</i>	<i>Manager of Barrymore's Music Hall (1995 – 2008)</i>

“Alice it’s finally reopening,” said Kim into a payphone. She had been walking down Bank Street when she notice a sign posted by the door.

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL PRESENTS: RUSTED ROOT WHEN I WOKE TOUR⁶⁰

“Do you know anything about the new owner?” she continued.

“I wasn’t sure if they were going to open this month or next,” Alice was ecstatic. “The new owner’s name is Eugene Haslam. He’s the guy who owns Zaphod Beeblebrox, on Rideau and Friel⁶¹. Rumor is he wants to bring back Barrymore’s rock n’ roll glory, but still keep it open as a nightclub. He does themed nights at Zaphods, so I’m sure they’ll do that here too⁶².”

“Let’s go,” proposed Kim. “For old times sake.”

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 2009

CAST

<i>Darrell Baxter</i>	<i>Ex-bartender at Barrymore's Music Hall</i>
<i>Vinny Russo</i>	<i>Ex-bouncer at Barrymore's Music Hall</i>
<i>George Syriannis</i>	<i>Manager Barrymore's Music Hall (2008 - present)</i>
<i>Alice White</i>	<i>Bartender of Barrymore's Music Hall</i>

“The new manager is as sleazy as the bar is,” said Vinny. “I’ve never heard good thing spoken about George Syriannis. He’s only been in charge a year and has already made moves people don’t like. Cutting all the live music? The live music is what made Barrymore’s!”

“He claims that that’s what the kids want,” answered Darrell. “They want DJs to play music by boy bands from the nineties. My niece, Alice, works there now, he says these DJs actually have a following.⁶² I don’t understand.”

Darrell and Vinny tried to remember nights spent at Pandora’s Box, but those thirty year old memories were fading. The old windows that girls hung out from were boarded up, and the red lights were gone. Pieces of the building had actually fallen off, and no one really seemed to care. Barrymore’s had become a club people went to when the lines were too long at the other bars in the area. It was an alternative, never a destination.

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 2014

CAST

<i>Jeff Morrison</i>	<i>City Council Candidate</i>
<i>Christine Leadman</i>	<i>Former Municipal Councilor</i>
<i>Louis Antonakos</i>	<i>Son of Pat Antonakos, & owner/landlord (1989 - present)</i>
<i>George Syriannis</i>	<i>Manager Barrymore's Music Hall (2008 - present)</i>

“Barrymore’s is celebrating its 100 year anniversary in August,”⁶³ said Jeff Morrison, a city council candidate. “I’ve already started a petition to preserve what we have left of it.”⁶⁴ The owners haven’t done their part to keep up with the original heritage guidelines we gave them.”⁶⁵

Jeff Morrison was meeting with official Christine Leadman. Before being appointed as the director of the Bank Street Business Improvement Area, Christine was a big advocate for Barrymore’s restorations.

“I was going through some of the old documents in this file,” continued Jeff, passing a folder to Christine. “Barrymore’s is the oldest theatre left in Ottawa in its original post- World

War I state.”⁶⁶ I think we are doing a disservice to the city’s history by not trying to restore it. With the Canada 150 celebration in three years, I feel that this would a nice piece to add to the fabric of Centertown.”

Christine flipped through the files, and paused on the petition page.

“You’ve already received a hundred and sixty signatures?”⁶⁷ she sounded impressed.

“Listen,” said Christine. “Talk with both the owner, Louis Antonakos, he inherited it from his father, and the operator George Syriannis.”⁶⁸ They don’t get along, I think Syriannis is actually suing Antonakos. Anyways, I know they both want the building restored. Its just a matter of how.”

// FIG. 3.25 back room of Wicked Wanda's

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 2014

CAST

<i>Alice White</i>	<i>Ex-bartender at Barrymore's Music Hall</i>
<i>Wanda Cotie</i>	<i>Owner of Wicked Wanda's Adult Emporium</i>
<i>Louis Antonakos</i>	<i>Son of Pat Antonakos, & owner/landlord (1989 - present)</i>

In order to get around the strict heritage rules, the tenants have been building out from the original wall of the Imperial.⁶⁹ This created an intricate network of tunnels that connects all parts of the building together. If a person knew how to navigate, they could fit between the walls and travel from Barrymore's main auditorium, down to the Aloha Room, across to Wicked Wanda's Adult Emporium and into Burgers n' Fries.

Alice knew how to navigate these tunnels.

When they worked as bartenders at Barrymore's, Alice and two of her friends had discovered an old boarded up path and followed it through the walls. When they wound up in the back room of the burger shop they were ecstatic.

There was a main hallway, through the original dressing room, that connected each unit. Locks were added to each door to prevent people from coming and going as they pleased. But there were other, less conspicuous ways to get around. In the seventies, when the owner had first split the auditorium horizontally to accommodate the new dance floor and bigger retail spaces below, corners were cut to expedite the completion date, which created many of these paths. The deterioration of the building, in conjunction with the heritage concerns, ensured that these paths were a low-priority investment. Instead of considering the heritage features, new owners and tenants would build walls in front of the preexisting ones. This created a cavity

// FIG. 3.26 storage of heritage facets

between the walls large enough to walk through – walk through or live in.

After Alice had overstayed her welcome at a friend's place, she was desperate. People get creative when they are desperate.

"What do you mean she's in the wall!" shouted Wanda. "How did she get in the wall? You're telling me that she's been coming in and out of my store, and I'm just hearing about this now? I told you that leaving holes in the walls and floors was irresponsible."

It had been four days before Alice was discovered.

"And this giant rack of crap!" she pointed to shelves lined with damaged sculptural pieces that had fallen off the façade and the decorated theatre walls. "Louis you better find a real place for this before the city comes back."

Louis Antonakos was at a loss for words.

// FIG. 3.27 stairs lead from Wicked Wanda's back room into the original dress rooms. Estimated two levels below

// FIG. 3.28 back entrance

// FIG. 3.29 *kosmic 2017, dance floor*

BARRYMORE'S MUSIC HALL 2017

CAST

<i>George Syriannis</i>	<i>Manager Barrymore's Music Hall (2008 - present)</i>
<i>Rebecca Sferlazza</i>	<i>Thesis Student at Carleton University</i>
<i>Alice Hart</i>	<i>Kosmic Prism Lead Organizer</i>

“So you finally found a way to get in, eh?” George Syriannis had said smugly when Rebecca finally had the displeasure of meeting him. “I was maybe going to return one of your calls.”

The Kosmic team was granted access to the building about a week before the event in order to take pictures and measure parts of the space. Syriannis refused to provide them with plans for the building and had also set unrealistic requirements for the installations. Typically Kosmic events contain Nuit Blanche type art installations that completely transform the space, the bulk of which hang from the ceiling. Syriannis was adamant that nothing could be hung, and no large structures could be built or

take up floor space. This greatly limited the designers' creativity and then hopes for the transformation of the venue.

Rebecca went with the Kosmic team and showed herself around while the other students negotiated with Syriannis. Although he gave her access to the basement and boiler room, he refused to answer most of her questions.

She had been in the space once before: during a Kosmic held there four years prior. The only thing she remembered about the venue was the amount of stairs. At least that memory was correct. The space was split into five different levels of mezzanines, each connected with two narrow stairs, one on each side. There were two

// FIG. 3.30 original 1914 proscenium arch,
image circa 2017

bars, one at the bottom by the dance floor, and one at the very top by the bathrooms.

Having mostly seen pictures taken of the auditorium in the 1940's Rebecca was underwhelmed. It was a large space, with high ceiling, but it was not the brilliant picture palace that could seat a thousand. Large pieces of paint and drywall had fallen off the walls exposing the building structure. The original acoustic panels, framed by crown moulding, were made of gold-leaf fabric. The frames still remained, but mirrors replaced the fabric panels. The majority of the decorative elements were broken or missing.

Behind a curtain on the stage, Rebecca could make out the top of the proscenium arch. When they added the dance floor in the seventies, this was where they cut the auditorium, about a meter below the arch. Meaning that beneath Barrymore's main space, there were at least three more stories. This was partially occupied by Wicked Wanda's and the other street-level commercial tenants, but also empty space of the old Imperial's basement and backstage.

// FIG. 31 *kosmic 2017, dance floor*

Barrymore's was packed on the night of Kosmic, as every architecture student piled in for the most anticipated party of the year. While everyone was high on the night's energy, all evening Syriannis stood by the bar with his arms crossed. But no amount of alcohol, coloured light or installations could hide the venue's miserable state.

Standing on the highest mezzanine, Rebecca looked out at the party. There was a girl standing at the end of the old Imp's balcony flashing the dance floor. She wondered if any of her friends below noticed. Alice and some other girls

were struggling to move up and down the stairs in their heels, while second year boys were trying to steal a bottle from behind the bar.

Most of the night's guests would remember the evening in fragments – flashes brought back to memory with the mention of a colour, a song or a person.

// FIG. 3.32 the pink box indicates the same wall pannel in each space

2017

// FIG. 3.33 Barrymore's, 2017

// FIG. 4.1 *Alice outgrew the
White Rabbit's house*

DRINK ME

PERCEPTION IN WONDERLAND

(Refer to Appendix B)

alice's *Adventures in Wonderland* (referred to as *Alice*) lends itself to architecture in different ways. Although Carroll created the *Alice* books for the entertainment over education, it has been the subject of study for multiple disciplines.¹ Through the perspective of Alice the dream-child, the concepts of logic and fantasy challenge our perception of space, scale and movement. These unique ideas have captivated adults and children alike, inspiring creative minds to approach art and architecture through surrealist interventions.

Alice is constantly changing sizes throughout the story, and is forced to interact with characters and spaces while being an impractical size. Her first experience in scale resulted in

being far too large to exit the door, then far too small to reach the key.² This theme perseveres throughout her journey. Throughout her explorations she is continuously challenged dimensionally. She becomes trapped inside the White Rabbit's house when she grows,³ but then has trouble seeing over a mushroom when she shrinks.⁴ It is seen as an exploration of the physical world, without fear of consequence.

Throughout Wonderland, Alice encounters cake and bottles each marked "eat me" and "drink me," respectively. These are often referred to as Wonderland edibles. Once she discovers that ingesting Wonderland edibles can alter her appearance, she begins to take control of her size.⁵

// FIG. 4.2 A representation of all the size changes that Alice undergoes throughout Wonderland.

“One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter.”⁶

It is the combination of both scale and time that impact on how Alice travels through a fragmented Wonderland. She often finds herself thinking “—if I’d only be the right size to do it. Oh dear!”⁷ As she searches for a resolution for altering her size, often the opportunity has been missed, and she has moved on to the next scene of the narrative. Her scale, as well as the scale of the world around her is never fixed, thereby creating a disorienting reality.

Typically, the most reliable and consistent sense of scale is a person’s own physical form; in this case, the size of a seven-year-old girl.⁸ Measurements, like feet and yards, are based on the proportions of the human body.⁹ If a person is ever changing, then so is her perception of

scale. A new dimension is added to a space by adjusting the scale. By altering the scale of an object or space, one’s emotive reaction and perceived value of it changes.¹⁰ It will spark a reaction in the user who will automatically try to adjust to previous knowledge and experience.

Although *Through the Looking-Glass* is less a story of scale, than it is about mirror images and alternative versions of everyday experiences, themes of reflection and reproduction are repeated, but are not consistent. Carroll has Alice walk towards the Looking-Glass house in order to get away from it.¹¹ She only experiences these types of adaptations to reality for one scene, instead of them being continued throughout the book. This allows the reader to understand that

// FIG. 4.3 *The Rabbit Hole, like the Looking-Glass, acts as transitional space between the mundane reality and the whimsicality of Wonderland. It is a threshold into the magic of *The Imperial*. Different elements that are recognizable from the story are integrated into the iconic scene. The frame sets the viewer apart from the viewed. The audiences haven't been called into the story yet. The frame is the transition; it freezes the story in one moment.*

the narrative is a satire and does not belong to the genre of science fiction in which constancy in the rules of the world is required.

The White Rabbit becomes a timekeeper and guide for Alice's journey. He appears and disappears, leaving Alice with a fragmented memory of the previous instance. When Alice encounters the White Rabbit, she immediately follows him from one instant in time to another.¹² Although this technique progresses the story, spatially it is impossible.

Time can be experienced as discontinuous moments. It is understood as framed views from one space into another that do not necessarily need to be physically connected within a building. Therefore, architecture that is representative of Wonderland is ambiguous, disorienting and filled with contradiction.

// FIG. 5.1 discription of the images
in multiple lines of text, perfect

STAGING ALICE

AN EXPLORATION IN SCALE

alice's *Adventures in Wonderland*, at its core, is a fragmented narrative of space and scale that has been integrated into pop culture over the last 150 years.¹ Taking the concepts of both *Alice in Wonderland* and the Imperial Theatre, the following pieces use ideas from both narratives combined with the ideas of performance. This section, integrated with text from *Then She Fell* (Appendix C), showcases early explorations of proposed themes in relation to an architectural experience.

Then She Fell, is a multi-sensory immersive performance inspired by the life and writings of Lewis Carroll. Led by directors, Zach Morris, Tom Pearson and Jeannie Willett, *Third Rail Projects* reinvents audience and actor interactions.

"The first thing I've got to do," said Alice to herself, as she wandered about in the wood, "is to grow my right size again; and the second thing is to find my way into that lovely garden. I think that will be the best plan."

It sounded an excellent plan, no doubt, and very neatly and simply arranged: the only difficulty was, that she had not the smallest idea how to set about it?...

// FIG. 5.2 Alice's narrative can be connected to that of *The Imperial*. The original windows of *The Imp* are the same as those in the White Rabbit's home. The collage explores new spaces and thresholds. Having Alice at different scales shows the potential of a change of space. The elements of theatre, like lights and seats, are recognizable, but also have been transformed into elements of the story. The stage lights become tea cups and the seating becomes hearts. Using the façade as the looking-glass, as an entrance into the story.

// FIG. 5.3

The playing card explores the duality of Alice, and her relationship with the Queen of Hearts. It proves a challenge, something that Alice has to overcome. As she follows the White Rabbit through wonderland, her journey ultimately takes her to the Queen of Hearts. This is when she is challenged to a game of nonsense that is set up for Alice to lose. In Alice's Adventures in Wonderland the cards represent the primary aspect of play, whereas the chessboard takes on this role in Through the Looking-Glass.

THEN SHE FELL ENTRANCE

After walking around the neighborhood, the girls finally locate the theatre which was housed in a small red-brick building with a pitched roof. The façade consisted of only five dark windows and an unmarked door. They walked up the stairs and knocked and a stern looking woman, who had her hair pulled back, opened the door. She wore a gray dress with a white apron and held a clip board.

"Have you arrived for the 7:30 visit?" she asked, without looking up from her clip board. She spoke in a chilling cool tone. "I need identification."

"Uh, yes, we're the ones from Canada." The girls got out their drivers' licenses to show the woman. "I sent an email about a month ago. I have some questions about this performance and the venue –"

"No questions," the woman interrupted. Her impersonal tone never wavering. "Jessica. Rebecca. This way please."

The woman led the girls through a narrow, dimly-lit hallway which had an alarming number of short sharp turns. At the end, they arrived at a green room with a large desk in the center. There was a man behind the desk who was dressed in

in a crisp, white lab coat. There were also about ten other individuals in the room. Some were walking around, but most were sitting on chairs along the walls.

Jessica was very confused and Rebecca told her that this would be an Alice in Wonderland play. So far, all that Jessica observed were creepy, unsmiling people who gave her orders to follow. No Alice. No Wonderland. No play.

The man offered the girls a small glass as they walked in. It smelled like cinnamon, but tasted like Port. As they drank he handed each of them a ring of old-fashioned keys and explained that throughout the night's events they would be encouraged to explore.

"We don't need two," said Jess, handing her set back to the man. "Becca's more responsible with things like keys."

"You may not always be with your friend," said the man, matching the woman's tone. "There will be boxes and cabinets with padlocks on them, these keys will open those locks. Feel free to explore this room, and when you are finished, take a seat."

Jessica looked at Rebecca, who seemed to find everything completely normal.

"Is it possible to ask you some questions?" asked Rebecca. "Do you know how old this building is, and what it was used for before your production company took it over?"

"As long as I can remember, it has been a hospital," the man answered, all the while staring with piercing eyes.

"What's going on?" asked Jessica as the girls sat down.

"They're supposed to be orderlies," explained Rebecca. "The entire building is the performance. We have already started. That's why they won't answer my questions. We can't bring in cameras or take notes, so I won't be able to sketch the sets. We're going to have to try to remember everything."

The first woman that we encountered returned, sat at the desk and assumed the role of a manager. She told the audience that we would be led on a journey and will be offered food and drinks. She stressed that we could not enter through closed door, but were welcome to touch anything else. As she started talking about Charles Dodgson a second orderly entered. The new woman began choosing people at random to follow her. Jess was chosen, but Rebecca was not. The look on Jess's face was one of both alarm and confusion.

"I'll be in right after you," assured Rebecca, but it would be two hours until they saw each other again.

// FIG. 5.4

This image focuses on the primary transition moment in *Through the Looking-Glass*. In Alice's *Adventure in Wonderland*, Alice finds herself moving through an ordinary object, and ends up in an extraordinary place. This composition represents the before and after. The pages featured express Alice in transitional threshold spaces. Alice enters from her mundane, normal life and ends up on stage. Enter Alice.

THEN SHE FELL RED ROSES

Jessica followed the orderly with her group of four back to the main entrance. The first woman's voice was carried through the house over a speaker. She continued talking about the life of Charles Dodgson, and his relationship with Alice Liddell. Everyone followed the woman downstairs into the basement and as Jessica started towards them, another orderly stopped her.

"Follow me." Her tone was flat.

Jess went up the stairs instead of down. The stairwell was just as narrow as the hallway had been. The voice from the speaker ended, and an eerie orchestral piece, as the 1980's synthesized music, was now being broadcast. She felt uneasy and claustrophobic. The dimly lit second floor was painted in various ugly shades of dull greens, greys and yellows. Jess squinted to get her bearing while her eyes adjusted. At the top of the stairs there was a table set up with a weird medical apparatus, two closed doors, and a hallway leading presumably to more close doors. Jess was right; she was led down the hallway, passing another three closed doors, and an orderly she did not recognize.

The woman finally stopped in front of a door and opened it. The room looked like it used to be

a closet and could barely fit the chair and table inside but it was much brighter than the hall. There was a wash of red lighting to emphasize the red and white roses.

Sit in that chair," she pointed to a small stool in the corner.

Jess sat and the door closed behind her. The music continued but she would have preferred silence.

"I'm going to kill Rebecca," she thought.

Jess looked around and realized that all the roses were made out of white paper that had been painted red. The roses in the highest corner of the room were saturated with the most colour. As the trail of flowers led down towards a large pile of stems, the original white of the roses were more visible.

"Painting the roses red?" " Thought Jess. "That's a famous line, isn't it?"

The door suddenly opened and two characters entered in an already tight space. The first was a tall bearded man in a white collared shirt, a cream waistcoat and a large tie to match. He carried a cane with an ivory rabbit's head handle. The second was a shorter woman. Her

hair was tied back in a tight low bun and had a very stern expression on her face. She was wearing an early 1900's red and black floor-length dress, complete with bodice and tulip skirt. There was also an incredibly aggressive red folded collar.

"The White Rabbit and the Queen of Hearts," thought Jess.

The two characters began to argue, but fully expressed in dance. She was obviously upset about the roses and was acting very aggressively towards the White Rabbit. He seemed scared. The Queen pulled a knife out from behind her. Jessica gasped. Where did this knife come from? The Queen placed one of the white roses on the

table. With the other hand she quickly brought the knife down and decapitated the rose. She exited the space and Jessica was left alone with the White Rabbit. He stood looking at the sad stem and then tossed it into the pile on the floor.

"The eye contact is aggressive," she thought. "He literally looks like he's going to start crying."

The White Rabbit then picked up a white rose and handed it to her and smiled. He elegantly jumped onto the table and reached out to Jess. Confused, she handed him back the rose. He placed the flower back among the collection on the wall. He stepped down towards the door, turned and then indicated for her to follow as he exited.

// FIG. 5.5

This exploration exhibits not only a transformation of space, but also a scale shift. By showcasing the sectional relationship between the front of house, audience and the stage, each works together, not as individual components that are specifically defined. The lines between the viewer and the viewed are blurred. Using a fairy tale, like Alice in Wonderland, a narrative adventure is created that combines the audience and the actors in one space.

The original auditorium is used as a base for an exploration in scale. Four inserts are added, each with a variety of scale figures featured on them. The inserts laterally shift through the theatre. This exploration primarily focuses on the space remaining a constant, with the figures changing size. Moving forward with this concept, instead of the people adapting to the space, the space adapts to the people by shifting in multiple directions.

// FIG. 5.9 *Alice appears in multiple scales. She enters larger than life, through the façade's 'looking-glass'. As she enters she shrinks down, and looks up into the overwhelmingly tall space. She wants to move up and explore the space, so she uses a hot air balloon to do so. She is one person, who has the ability to explore fifty rooms.*

This scene contrasts Alice falling through the rabbit hole. Instead of emerging from a closed space and falling, Alice emerges from a closed space and can see where she wants to go. Although this experience is less disorienting than the rabbit hole, Alice's curiosity remains. She wants to follow the adventure up through the space.

THEN SHE FELL ALICE AND CHARLES

"Jess is going to kill me," thought Rebecca.

Rebecca went with her group of four back to the main entrance and then down a set of stairs. The woman's voice continued the narrative over the speaker of Dodgson's pseudonym, Lewis Carroll, and the transition between the two identities. They walked through a set of double doors, which were then abruptly shut behind them. It was only when the music began that Rebecca realized the woman had stopped talking.

Inside the room there was a girl, her white blouse was tucked into a light blue A-line skirt. She was sitting on a bench trying to piece together a torn up letter.

"Can I look at it?" wondered Rebecca. "They said I could touch things."

The other people in Rebecca's group felt as equally confused as Jess did earlier. Rebecca went over and tried to help Alice. The letter was signed 'C.L Dodgson'.

The basement door opened and a tall man

entered. He was dressed in an old fashioned black pant suit, tie and a long coat: Charles Dodgson. Alice got up from her bench and moved towards the man. The two characters interacting through movement. They used the basement stairs as their main set piece. They moved between the banister and the wall, keeping their bodies at a diagonal. Alice kept trying to engage with Dodgson who seemed loving towards her but then would suddenly break away as if to suppress his temptation. The scene ended with Alice running up the stairs, and Dodgson slowly closing the double doors leaving the audience were left in complete darkness.

A door behind them opened and there was glow of yellow light. A young woman with a bright smile and blond pixie cut emerged from the next room. She was wearing a white corset with a skirt made of feathers and tulle. The dainty white lace collar made her look like a fairy, but Rebecca believed her to be the White Queen. She ushered the three of them inside.

Rebecca looked around. 'Did we not start with four?'

THEN SHE FELL TEA PARTY

This was the largest room Rebecca had so far been in. There was a rectangular dinner table in the center with a white tablecloth. Rebecca sat with another girl at the back of the room. Chairs were set up beside a cabinet of teacups and there were two piles of kitchenware on the ground; one on each side of the table. One pile looked as though dozens of silver teapots were thrown together and the other was an equally large pile of teacups and saucers.

The White Rabbit and, presumably, the Mad Hatter entered. The Hatter, portrayed by a woman, wore a fitted, deep purple, cropped jacket with bell sleeves. Her top hat was carefully placed over her bushy black hair. The two performed around and on top of the table. They seemed to be in a feud and their dancing became more heated. They began using the table as a prop; sliding it back and forth at each other. The entrance of the White and Red Queens interrupted them. The White Queen propped the table against the wall and used the underside as a ladder. She collected cups and spoons from a shelf at the highest point in the room, and threw them down at the other three characters. When she came back down, they set the table for tea and invited us to join.

The other girl and I were seated with the White Queen between us. The doors opened and an orderly entered with two more guests. Jess was one of them. They were seated across the table from us separated by the Red Queen. A collection of objects, previously in piles on the floor, now made up the place settings. Rebecca was too far away from Jessica to say anything to her.

Meanwhile, the characters all began playing a game. In time, they picked up their teacups and saucers, placed them back on the table upside down, tapped the cup with their spoons, lifted the cup up to their ear, and rang the spoon inside the cup like a bell. Then they placed the cup back down, smiled at us and began again. Rebecca, Jessica and the other two guests tried joining in the game, but were unsuccessful.

Teacup. Saucer. Table. Spoon. Teacup. Smile –

“I want a clean cup!” said the Hatter.
“Everyone move to the right.”

The eight people got up, and moved to the next seat. They continued playing the game with their new teacup.

Teacup. Saucer. Table. Spoon. Teacup –

"I want a clean cup!" snapped the Hatter. Everyone got up and moved again.

Teacup. Saucer. Table. Spoon –

"I want a clean cup!" shouted the Hatter. The audience seemed startled but obediently moved. The characters begrudgingly did so as well.

Teacup. Saucer. Table –

"I WANT A CLEAN CUP!" screamed the Hatter. Everyone moved to the next seat.

Teacup. Saucer –

"NO!" yelled the White Rabbit.

He and the Hatter now sat at both ends of the very long table. The Rabbit stood up and threw a teacup at the Hatter's Hat and it shattered. The Hatter jumped on the table in

front of where Jessica sat, who flinched. The Hatter stepped across the place settings towards the Rabbit.

Then there was chaos. The characters were all throwing cup and saucers at each other. The banging on the table became much more aggressive and everyone was arguing. When the White Queen stood she silenced the characters and gestured to the tea. Simultaneously, the characters each pour a cup of tea to the audience member on the left.

An orderly appeared and selected Jessica and the other two girls. Jessica looked more engaged than she had when they first started and waved at her friend. They all exited the tea party, leaving Rebecca sipping on sweet tea with the White Queen.

// FIG. 5.10

// FIG. 5.11

THEN SHE FELL ALICE AND ALICE

Although she did like the staircase choreography, Jessica thought the interaction between Alice and Charles Dodgson was confusing. Her and the other three girls were now in complete darkness; the only sound was that of the music.

"Wasn't he twenty years older than her?" Jessica wondered. "Why are they condoning his obsession with a child?"

There was a bright light from behind them. Was there always a door there?

The White Queen brought Jessica and the other two girls into the next room. It had a warmer tone and felt lived-in. The room was made smaller by the furniture pieces inside. Cabinets, a dresser and small end tables were stacked one on top of the other, making up three of the four walls. The fourth wall had a large framed mirror which hung over a narrow table. The White Queen began climbing, until she was at the highest point in the room. It was the first time Jess had really looked up throughout the

show. From the ceiling hung over twenty different bird cages, all with opened doors and filled with feathers. The White Queen spun the cage closest to her. She jumped from her perch onto the center table, and hit three more bird cages. The ceiling was animated with movement and feathers. When the Queen reached the ground, she opened one of the cabinets, and took out a basket of grapes. She fed a grape to each of the audience members. And then passed around little bottles. Inside the bottle was an amber coloured spirit that tasted like lavender.

Alice entered. After interacting with the White Queen, Alice stood looking at herself in the mirror. The lighting suddenly changed and it was revealed as a two-way mirror. The Alice on this side of the glass was illuminated in pure white light, whereas the Alice looking back at her was lit up in red. Alice was fighting with her inner self through her movements. The Alice through the looking-glass eventually collapsed and the scene went dark.

// FIG. 5.12

“It would be so nice if something made sense for a change.”³

// FIG. 5.13

// FIG. 5.14 *Alice moving through installations that evoke scale changes*

THEN SHE FELL FINALE

Rebecca was seated alone at a table. The room was empty except for the table and a large upright frame that separated one end of the table from the other. In front of her was a small cup of tea and a sealed letter:

"It is a good night for ghosts. The Rabbit in the Moon is full and waiting to take souls to far shores as it crosses the sky.

I dreamt a dream that I was with you tonight. I awoke and my lips were numb from saying your name.

I dreamt that we were dreaming a dream together you and I, and we were trapped in a house, as big as a memory. Countless doors.

You were there. I could hear you laughing, but I only caught glimpses of you in the glass. Eventually I gave in and found myself Staring at myself, reflected. Looking at myself looking back at me. Both of us trying to decipher the face that was in front of us. My eyes seeing me in mine and countless.

I have retreated into twos because of you.

I wonder, where you look in the mirror, who stares you down at night?

But, it is late, and my mind is running away with itself.

Sleep well, wherever you are.

It is a good night for ghosts. And between us, we have a pocketful."

// FIG. 6.1 *Alice moving through installations that evoke scale changes*

DESIGN

PROPOSAL

places and spaces are made up of traces.
These traces are memories and thought.
All across town people race to the places,
Their faces a glow with the highest of praises.

In all the best cases, Alice retraces her paces,
And places herself in a world of her own.
She chases the graces to the furthest of space,
It ends in embraces, for Alice is no longer alone.

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where – " said Alice.

"Then it doesn't much matter which way you go," said the Cat.

" – so long as I get somewhere," Alice added in explanation.

*"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if only you walk long enough."*¹

By using the Imperial's original auditorium and stage as a threshold, multiple paths and narratives can be explored. The audience should feel disoriented while still intrigued as they move through the building and site. Predominant themes from the story – such as scale, space, movement, time, and perception – will become physical attributes of the proposal.

A person could stumble upon the Imperial and choose a path that leads to nothing. They would move in and out of a transitional space. But other people will be creating their own story. They will find themselves in a fairy tale. They move thorough a series of abstract experiences on an adventure through Wonderland.

// FIG. 6.2

*There is no map, there is no key,
Only wonder on this journey.
Please join us now and trust in me,
To quench your curiosity.*

// FIG. 6.3 *"The Caterpillar and Alice looked at each other for some time in silence."²
Butterfly bedrooms have no roofs.*

// FIG. 6.4 "Flamingos and mustard both bite."³

The two main theatre venues juxtapose the smaller, theatrical moments of play. These acceptations are not the destination. They act as intermediate settings designed for the audience to stumbled upon them. Their scale allows for intimate connections between the viewer and the viewed. Both the audience and actors are forced to interact in an unconventional setting, allowing for a more immersive performance.

These individual scenes are both interchangeable and fleeting (*perhaps a fleet of balloons*). They can occur anywhere on the site, at any time. Time as a concept and an object is expressed through experiences of discontinuous moments. It is understood as framed views from one space into another that do not need to be physically connected within a building. It would be as though someone were to walk through a dream or memory. This ambiguity is what fills these spaces with beautiful contradictions.

// FIG. 6.5

Imagine a life sized slide puzzle. As each piece is shifted, previously unknown opportunities emerge. The image becomes distorted and fragments of what was remembered slowly slip away. Now imagine walking though this puzzle. Nothing is forever, and no plan can predict the destination. At first it might seem alarming. Disorienting. A backwards glance to the beaten path, which becomes unrecognizable. The only way to go is forward. Forward through the ever-changing landscape into an unfamiliar space. Unfamiliar, but wonderful.

// FIG. 6.6 "How would you like to live in a
Looking-glass House?"⁴
Transition through the site.

// FIG. 6.7 *"The adventures first, explanations take such a dreadful time."*⁵ Movie projections displayed as floors.

// FIG. 6.8 Kim and Paul are having a pre-show drink in the Imperial lobby. The staff demonstrates how climbing strings can be more efficient stairs.

// FIG. 6.9 Understudy, Timmy the Turtle, secretly hopes Harold the Heron falls during the dress rehearsal. Break-a-Leg Harry! A section through the black box auditorium.

// FIG. 6.10 *"The little fishes of the sea,
They sent and answer back to
me."⁶ Bill the Lizard as a hat.
Mirrors act as a rabbit hole.*

// FIG. 6.11 "Oh dear, what nonsense I'm talking!"⁷
Greenhouse box of wildflowers.

// FIG. 6.12 *The house lights dim over Liza as tonight's performance comes to an end in the main Imperial auditorium*

// FIG. 6.13 A section through the main auditorium.
Jane the Zebra warms up her vocals for
her vaudeville debut.

// FIG. 6.14 "You must be mad," said the Cat, "or you wouldn't have come here."⁸ Bette Davis Eyes.

// FIG. 6.15 "At least there's no room to grow up anymore here."⁹
I think he's headed to the projection room above the
auditorium.¹⁰

// FIG. 6.16 "But what happens when you come to the begining again?" Alice ventured to ask. "Suppose we chnage the subject," the March Hare interrupted, yawning.¹¹

// FIG. 6.17

Interior of the black box theatre. Both natural and artificial lights are meant to mimic a starry night. Scaffolding is moved around to accommodate seating and stage. The audience enters through the narrow stairwell and onto platforms. It's pretty high, so don't look down! Debbie wishes everyone a Good Morning.

// FIG. 6.18 Main theatre level. Entrance from Bank Street into the Imperial.

// FIG. 6.19 Upper theatre level. Balcony of theatre, as well as mezzanine over entrance. Black box scaffolding can be accessed from every level.

The Imperial Theatre's auditorium is restored to a smaller, more adaptable version of his previous self (*Fig. 6.12*). A larger lobby was created as an event space and as a threshold into the other theatrical moments within the site. The traditional stage venue is connected to a black box theatre through a very narrow stairwell (*Fig. 6.16*). This stairwell is supposed to mimic the lifestyle of previous Imperial tenant, Alice White (*see page 64*). These two auditoriums they act as the central performance spaces.

// FIG. 6.20 *Basement Level. Spiral stair from basement to back stage. Access to multiple points on narrow stair*

// FIG. 6.21 *"Why are you painting those roses red?"*¹²
Garden greenhouse tea room.

// FIG. 6.22 *"In most gardens," the Tiger-lily said, "they make the beds too soft - so that the flowers are always asleep."*¹³
Crawling through the rafters, back stage at the show.

// FIG. 6.23 "Alice opened the door and found that it led into a small passage, not much larger than a rat-hole: she knelt down and looked along the passage into the loveliest garden you ever saw." ¹⁴

// FIG. 6.24 *Now you see me...* This garden room acts like a large magic box. The slanted mirrored window, which encases crooked stairs, reflects the garden below. Judy loves the glass floor, she says she likes being high above the chimney tops... Now you don't.

// FIG. 7.1 *The Finale*

EPILOGUE

THE END

*"So she sat on, with closed eyes, and half believed herself in Wonderland, though she knew she had but to open them again, and all would change to dull reality. She dreamed of little Alice herself, and once again the tiny hands were clasped upon her knee, and the bright eager eyes were looking up into hers—she could hear the very tones of her voice, and see that queer little toss of her head to keep back the wandering hair that would always get into her eyes—and still as she listened, or seemed to listen, the whole place around her became alive with the strange happening of her little sister's dream."*¹

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EPILOUGE

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

all images by author unless otherwise noted

PROLOGUE

FIG.0.1 - Hot Air Balloon Model: Alice Falls Up

FIG.1.1 - The Imperial circa 1947, edited by author

CENTERTOWN

FIG.2.1 - Aerial, Bing Maps, edited by author

<https://www.bing.com/maps/aerial>

FIG.2.2 - Site Map, Bing Maps, edited by author

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FIG.2.3 - Metropolitan Site Map

FIG.2.4 - Site Model

FIG.2.5 - Site Model as 3D Chess Board

FIG.2.6 - 1914 Auditorium Model

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FIG.3.3 - *Ottawa Evening Journal*, August 29, 1914.

FIG.3.4 - <http://wheelehouse.blogspot.ca/2013/03/the-imperial-theatre.html>

FIG.3.5 - Ibid.

FIG.3.6 - Ibid.

FIG.3.7 - Ibid.

FIG.3.8 - edited by author

FIG.3.9 - <http://wheelehouse.blogspot.ca/2013/03/the-imperial-theatre.html>

FIG.3.10 - Ibid.

FIG.3.11 - edited by author

FIG.3.12 - Photo by author

FIG.3.13 - Photo by author

FIG.3.14 - <http://ottawacitizen.com/entertainment/local-arts/vintage-posters-of-neville-smith-from-bump-n-grind-to-public-works>

FIG.3.15 - Alain Miguelez, *A Theatre Near You*, 119.

FIG.3.16 - edited by author

FIG.3.17 - Photo by author

FIG.3.18 - <http://wheelehouse.blogspot.ca/2013/03/the-imperial-theatre.html>

FIG.3.19 - Photo by author

FIG.3.20 - visualization of Barrymore's as concert venue

FIG.3.21 - Photo by author

FIG.3.22 - Photo by author

FIG.3.23 - Photo by author

FIG.3.24 - Photo by author

FIG.3.25 - Photo by author

FIG.3.26 - Photo by author

FIG.3.27 - Photo by author

FIG.3.28 - Photo by author

FIG.3.29 - Cosmic Photographer

FIG.3.30 - Photo by author

FIG.3.32 - edited by author

FIG.3.33 - edited by author

DRINK ME

FIG.4.1 - still from *Walt Disney's Alice in Wonderland*, 1951.

FIG.4.2 - Size Chart, mapped from *Alice in Wonderland*

FIG.4.3 - Rabbit Hole model, first exploration of scale

STAGING ALICE

FIG.5.1 - Stage Triptych Collage

FIG.5.2 - Facade Triptych Collage

FIG.5.3 - Card Triptych Collage

FIG.5.4 - Stage Triptych Collage

FIG.5.5 - Slide Concept Model

FIG.5.6 - Slide Concept Model

FIG.5.7 - Slide Concept Model

FIG.5.8 - Slide Concept Model

FIG.5.9 - Hot Air Balloon Concept Model

FIG.5.10 - Hot Air Balloon Concept Model

FIG.5.11 - Hot Air Balloon Concept Model

FIG.5.12 - Hot Air Balloon Concept Model

FIG.5.13 - Hot Air Balloon Concept Model

FIG.5.14 - Edited by Author, *Vogue* 2003.

DESIGN

FIG.6.1 - Alice in Architecture

FIG.6.2 - Site Plan

FIG.6.3 - Balloon Exploration 01 - Sky Room

FIG.6.4 - Balloon Exploration 02 - Worms Eye

FIG.6.5 - Sliding Site Plan

FIG.6.6 - Balloon Exploration 03 - Looking Glass

FIG.6.7 - Balloon Exploration 04 - Movie Room

FIG.6.8 - Main Entrance Render

FIG.6.9 - Section through both theatres

FIG.6.10 - Balloon Exploration 05 - Rabbit Hole

FIG.6.11 - Balloon Exploration 06 - Glass Box

FIG.6.12 - Main Auditorium Render

FIG.6.13 - Section through auditorium

FIG.6.14 - Balloon Exploration 07 - Mix of Boxes

FIG.6.15 - Balloon Exploration 08 - Projection Room

FIG.6.16 - Balloon Exploration 09 - Wall Stairwell

FIG.6.17 - Black Box Theatre Render

FIG.6.18 - Main Level Plan

FIG.6.19 - Upper Level Plan

FIG.6.20 - Basement Level Plan

FIG.6.21 - Balloon Exploration 10 - Green House

FIG.6.22 - Balloon Exploration 11 - Rafters

FIG.6.23 - Balloon Exploration 12 - Magic Box Garden

FIG.6.24 - Magic Box Garden Render

EPILOGUE

FIG.7.1 - Photo by author

APPENDIX

RISE AND DECLINE OF OTTAWA'S PICTURE PALACES

By the first decade of the twentieth century, like all other North American cities, nickelodeon theatres began appearing in the Ottawa and Hull regions. Originally only opening for a few months, the increased popularization of these venues justified the construction of more permanent cinemas .

During the 1910's large picture palaces were built along Ottawa main streets. These venues were initially designed with a stage for vaudeville performers, as well as an orchestra pit . Early silent pictures would have been shown with a live musical accompaniment. This decade was the beginning of a new age of entertainment, providing Ottawa with the most lasting cinematic landmarks such as the Centre, the Regent, and the Imperial theatres . The roaring twenties marked the apex of theatre building in the city, when owners were building expensive and lavish picture palaces. The Capitol Theatre was built at this time, surpassing the Imperial as the largest theatre in Ottawa. This boom was followed closely by the arrival of talking pictures and the great depression. Smaller nickelodeon houses could not afford to compete with the grander downtown venues that played talkies, so they began to close.

Through the 1930's and 1940's a trend of mid-sized theatre constructions began, such as the Mayfair and the Elgin . These neighborhood theatres would appeal to families that lived further from the city center, but had made movie-going a tradition. Eventually smaller theatres were bought out by larger franchises like the Odeon . Throughout the 1940's, movie theatres in Ottawa thrived, as moving pictures remained the most common form of entertainment.

Unfortunately, the popularization of television caused four major waves of theatre closures in the city . The mid-1950's marked the first. Larger palaces like the Imperial and the Remy, who had both opened in 1914, closed their doors. Although the mass marketing of television was critical, theaters like these in Centertown also owe their decline to a widespread suburban migration . By the 1970's, developers were drawn to the valuable plots of downtown land that theatres currently occupied. Theatres like the Capitol and the Regent were torn down to make expansions for office buildings. When large movie chains like Famous Players and Cineplex launched their new "movie complexes" in the 1980's, one-screen theaters began closing.

To prevent empty auditoriums, Cineplex dramatically reduced the screen size allowing multiple theatres to be housed under one roof, often associated with shopping malls. Although the number of individual theatres declined, the number of silver screens in Ottawa drastically increased at this time.

The final wave of theatre closures occurred in the late 1990's. Shopping mall cinemas were now criticized for their poor quality. Movie chains were developing new 12-, 16-, and 24- screen big-box cinemas . These extreme movie complexes were meant to bring back the spectacle of the picture palaces. Audiences were now receiving a full entertainment experience, complete with an arcade and Starbucks. The only drawback: in Ottawa there were only two located in suburban areas . Patrons would have to commute to see movie, and the intimacy of the "neighborhood theatre" was lost. In contrast, larger cities such as Toronto, would have multiple movie complexes in each surrounding suburb . This remains the typical trend for cinemas in 2017, with recent upgrades such as reserved seats or paying an additional fee for a "VIP" experience .

Members of generation X – looking to reminisce – have encouraged the resurgence of smaller picture houses, and is the reason theatres, like the Mayfair, remain open . This allows for newer generation to discover the magic of old venues. The millennial obsession with nostalgia keeps these theatres trendy, and running. Other picture places, like the Imperial Theatre, fortunately still standing remain uncelebrated by city's history. They are a silhouette of their past – a beautiful reminder of a time brighter than the marquee.

APPENDIX

ALICE, LEWIS AND WONDERLAND

TELL ME A STORY

Fairy tales are not just fables that we recount to children anymore. They have evolved into a conceptual understanding of reality, laced with magic and surreal wonder .

In a time when the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen were the reigning voices of children's fables, Lewis Carroll created a novel phenomenon that reflected the turn of the century. *Alice* is a shape-shifting tale that changed children's literature not only in the Victorian era, but also for generations to come . Carroll understood a child's need for "news of fairyland," and not for historically accepted tales of morality, which were commonplace at that time. Authors quickly realized the marketability for fantasy stories of this genre . Without Wonderland , Neverland or Oz would never have existed, since *Alice* was credited with influencing other modern fairy tale classics, such as *Peter Pan* and *The Wizard of Oz* .

Typically, Victorian children's' stories were employed as tools for teaching young children morals and consequences, and not solely for entertainment. The *Alice* books are unapologetically nonsensical and mock these long-standing traditional stories of morality.

Carroll opposed the traditional approach to a narrative arc by turning it on its head. Carroll describes *Alice's* adventure as a series of fragmented experiences, which could be told out of order, leading to one culminating event at the end of the tale. This ingenuity both disorients and engages the reader.

THE MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Charles Ludwig Dodgson, (pseudonym Lewis Carroll), was born January 27, 1832 in Daresbury, England. As the eldest son of eleven children, he was a designated caregiver and he constantly kept his siblings entertained. He would create satirical magazines for them, showcasing his early works of word play and poetry . Preliminary versions of characters from his later books, like Tweedledee and Tweedledum, were featured in these creative works of literature.

Although he loved writing and creating narratives, he was gifted at mathematics. For this reason, his father, a clergyman and mathematician, wanted Dodgson to follow in his footsteps. Dodgson was sent to boarding school where, although his teachers praised his intellect and abilities, his peers bullied him because of his stammer. This was the only period in his life where he did not look back fondly . At eighteen,

in 1850, Dodgson was enrolled as a mathematics student at Christ Church College, Oxford. After merely two years of study, he was awarded a fellowship, in addition to his first-class degree, and became a permanent member of the faculty.

In 1951, Dodgson visited the Great Exhibition and he became intently interested in modern inventions, with photography being his favourite. The Crystal Palace fascinated and enchanted him so much that he claimed, "It looks like a sort of fairyland."

While working at Christ Church, Dodgson was contributing written works for a magazine called *The Train* under multiple pen names. His editor, Edmund Yates, asked him to pick a more permanent pseudonym. This was the birth of Lewis Carroll. Using photography and writing as an outlet, he was diverted to interesting and uniquely, creative directions.

In 1856, Henry Liddell had become the Dean of Christ Church. After taking photographs for the family, their relationship grew stronger and it provided an opportunity for Lewis Carroll to become very close with the Liddells, especially with his three daughters, Lorina, Edith and Alice. On July 4, 1862, Carroll and his friend, Robinson Duckworth, accompanied the three Liddell

children out for a boat ride. It was then, on that 'golden afternoon', that Alice insisted that Carroll tell them a story. On this particular, momentous outing the creation of *Wonderland* originated.

"In a desperate attempt to strike out some new line of fairy-lore, I had sent my heroine right down a rabbit-hole to begin with, without the least idea what was to happen afterwards."

- Lewis Carroll

Alice urged Carroll to write the story down, so that she would be able to read it again. Encouraged by this interest, Carroll created a hand-written manuscript for *Alice*, with his own illustrations, entitled *Alice's Adventures under Ground* and he presented it to her on Christmas of the following year. Upon its completion, novelist Henry Kinsley praised Carroll and suggested the story for publication. Carroll, who had a mild form of obsessive-compulsive disorder, took a year to improve and expand upon the story until it developed into the widely known, current version, and renamed it *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. In 1872, Carroll revisited *Wonderland* and wrote the sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*.

ALICE CELEBRATES HER 150TH UNBIRTHDAY

The imagery of *Alice* pervades pop-culture and becomes part of an everyday lexicon. It evokes the memories of a cherished book, ensuring their permanence and historical legacy. The Oxford English dictionary defines the term “down the rabbit-hole” as a nonsensical or bizarre situation or environment, typically one from which it is hard to remove oneself. This commonly-known phrase originated directly from Lewis Carroll’s novel, when Alice fell down a rabbit-hole into a “strange dream-like world.” It is the most universally referenced concept of Carroll’s works. In fact, Alice rivals Shakespeare and the Bible as the most quoted work of literature in history.

There has always been a fascination with envisioning Alice jumping off the page - whether it was in one’s imagination, the movie screen, or live theatre. Readers and audience alike want to be immersed in Wonderland as they follow her with captivated attention and wander on her fantastical journey.

In 1886, Henry Savile Clarke’s *Alice in Wonderland: A Dream-Play for Children* became the first stage adaptation of *Alice*. Clark worked

closely with Carroll in order to bring both his fascinating words and John Tenniel’s creative illustrations to life. Since then, hundreds have followed this pursuit of captivating audiences through the use of Carroll’s imaginary, including the world tour of the contemporary ballet *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (2011-present), and the immersive theatre production *Then She Fell* (2012-present) in New York, that has been a critical success.

Film producers were not immune to the charm of Carroll’s masterpiece. By 1915, there had already been three different silent pictures about *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*. This fascination with *Alice* on the silver screen was just the beginning. By *Alice’s* sesquicentennial anniversary in 2015, there had been over forty television and movie adaptations produced, including the renowned Walt Disney’s 1951 cartoon version, as well as the company’s two subsequent live-action features.

The counterculture of the 1960’s amplified the captivation with *Alice*, securing its permanent place in the narrative of today’s generation. People related their own drug use with Walt Disney’s *Alice in Wonderland* (1951); initiating rumours that Lewis Carroll was high on

hallucinogens while writing the manuscript. Jefferson Airplane's 1967 song, *White Rabbit*, launched Alice into the world of psychedelics and continues to hold a place on Rolling Stones, 2011 list of the top 500 songs of all time .

The *Alice* books remain relatable primarily because of the character of Alice herself. She represents to the readers the embodiment of individuals who are journeying through their own lives and questioning things that they do not believe or understand. Alice's world is fantastical and therefore open to personal interpretations and characterizations. Wonderland represents an imaginary, extraordinary spectacle that is so exceedingly vivid that the readers have faith that they could indeed navigate this realm just as easily as the White Rabbit. Carroll's imaginative world encompasses the wonders of childhood that are transferred to the journey of adolescence and adulthood.

ALICE MEETS 'ALICE'

Lewis Carroll immortalized his 'child friend' Alice Liddell by naming his heroine after her . Liddell was described as having a very determined and strong personality, often bossing around her siblings, and was very

self-assured. These formidable traits are demonstrated in the character of Alice. She is both impatient and polite, bold and timid, mimicking the original muse . The character, Alice, is one of the great self-possessed and determined female literary characters of 19th century literature. As the first female lead of children's literature, her uniqueness and steadfast character makes an argument for her being the most memorable and one that encouraged readers to imagine a different type of hero.

"The Alice stories are about a different kind of heroism. They offer a triumph of wit over brawn... in which the leading character is not a muscular warrior or mysterious god but an ordinary little girl." (Douglas-Fairhurst, 23.)

Alice challenges the 'adult figures' around her, yet she is self-confident and untroubled by the bizarre circumstances in which she finds herself. She navigates through the 'curiouser and curiouser' Wonderland with a fearless, inquisitive and exerting inexhaustible common sense in the face of the ridiculous . Her composure is often compared to the character of Jane Eyre, who was also from this period. She becomes the contrasting 'straight man' in a world of nonsense

Alice conducts odd internal dialogues with herself, constantly asking and answering her own questions. She became the first character in children's literature that possessed the trait of "interiority." While she follows the White Rabbit through Wonderland and interacts with unique and vivid characters, Alice's personal monologue allows the readers an insight into her distinctive personality.

Alice was never meant to be fashionable, or have the cult following she does. She was just meant to be eternally herself .

APPENDIX **C**

THIRD RAIL PROJECTS AN IMMERSIVE PERFORMANCE OF ALICE

Third Rail Projects is a New York based theatre company renown for their site-specific, immersive and experimental performances. Led by directors, Zach Morris, Tom Pearson and Jeannie Willett, Third Rail Projects is committed to re-inventing audience and actor interactions through contemporary dance and theatre.

Then She Fell, is a multi-sensory immersive performance dreamscape inspired by the life and writings of Lewis Carroll. The asylum setting maintained the overall atmosphere of uneasiness and disorientation. By utilizing a series of room in a century old house, the actors are able to guide the audience throughout, while maintaining an intimate engagement . Audience members are led in small groups of four, but during the performance people are removed to experience a different part of the story alone before retuning to the group.

By housing only fifteen audience members per performance, Then She Falls has created an intricate web of both audience and actors ensuring that each person experiences the show's entirety. This heavily relies on timing, and disillusion.

Each room is designed to play a role in both the characters' reality, and the wonderland of

their minds. These fragmented moments can be seen as stand alone pieces, or as a part of the greater show. By creating scenes like this, audience members can experience the performance in any order, and still understand the plot.

At the start of the show, each audience member is given a set of skeleton keys and is encouraged to explore every room they are brought into. Often locked boxes or cabinets would contain written documents that would further explain this portion of the story, or provide background information to the characters.

Throughout the show, the actors ask you to participate. Actors constantly hand the viewers props to hold or ask them to scribe letters on their behalf. To enhance certain scenes, fruit would be fed to the audiences and different types of teas and sprits would be offered.

Certain scenes were more spatial than others. The audience was often looking through windows at characters interacting. But once the lighting changed, the windows were exposed as two-way mirrors, and the viewer was looking back at their own reflection. The use of mirrors and frames helped explore the themes of duality

and reality, while still keeping the audience's curiosity engaged.

The actors were constantly interacting with set pieces in unconventional ways. By climbing on furniture and millwork, the actors could move vertically and occupy a wider range of space in the small room.

Once the show had concluded, and each individual audience member had experienced every scene, they are each seated independent of one another. They are given a small cup of tea and a final letter to read. The actors lead the audience back to the initial room, and then exit.

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