

Alice Tumbles Down The Rabbit Hole, Up the Silks in OCircus' *Alice in Wonderland*

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This Week Editor

Oberlin's aerialists, jugglers, and tumblers will take to Hales Gymnasium Friday, Dec. 2 and Saturday, Dec. 3 at 7 p.m., bringing audiences into the world of *Alice in Wonderland*.

This year, both Solarity and OCircus selected Wonderland as their theme.

"We thought this would be a really great theme because everyone already knows the story," Zoe Knannlein, second-year OCircus vice president, said. "It's inspired by the 1951 Disney animated version of *Alice in Wonderland* just because the classic has a lot of fun visuals ... ones that people are familiar with."

Knannlein said the group has had to get creative while coming up with costumes due to the unique challenges certain acts present.

"For aerial, you use your arms and knees to hang onto [the silks], so if it's not covered, you could get a silk burn or a rope burn," Knannlein said. "Aerialists have to have skin-tight costumes because if it's not skin tight, it could get caught in the apparatus, and that would be dangerous — or, at the very least, not graceful."

Evelyn Lazen, a fourth-year rope aerialist, will be playing the role of Alice.

"For Evelyn's costume, we bought a little blue dress," Knannlein said. "You can't really do rope in a dress, so they'll be taking off the skirt and doing [their rope act] and then putting back on the skirt as they make their way through the rest of the show."

Two silk performers play the twins Tweedledee and Tweedledum: Sydney Garvis, OC '18, and College first-year Aster Shen.

"They're keeping with the color scheme, matching yellow shirts and red leggings," Knannlein said. "They're going to have matching blue beanie propeller hats and blue bow ties. Color scheme is a lot of what we use, because a lot of the time, that's the only thing that we can work with."

While OCircus bought some new costumes for performers, it also pulled items from its closet to create characters and enhance the set.

"Some of our old costumes are very, very small, probably from when we had kids involved in the show, and they don't stretch at all," Knannlein said. "They're completely unwearable, so we're gonna cut them up and use them as leaves for trees for our set."

For the acrobatics act, OCircus turned to the costume closet to make DIY playing card costumes that wouldn't hamper performers.

"We were lucky to find a lot of red fabric in the costume closet, so we have white T-shirts that we sewed with diamonds or hearts and black leggings because you have to be able to stand on other people's hips and not have your foot slip," Knannlein said.

Some characters are coming to life through makeup, as costumes may not be able to tell the whole story.

"I'm gonna paint a big smile on my face," Knannlein, who will be playing the Cheshire Cat, said. "With circus, the makeup is super huge and exaggerated."

Knannlein pointed out another aerialist wearing a white shirt and leggings.

"Dorothy's the doorknob," Knannlein said. "It's a more interpretive costume based on vibes."

College second-year Dorothy Knutson said she'd mainly be using makeup to create her costume, embracing the avant-garde.

"Originally I was like, 'What? How do you have a keyhole costume?'" Knutson said. "I'm going to put a keyhole [on my chest] with face paint, and there is a key that Alice will stab me with."

The Queen of Hearts will be played by Jude Johnson-Shoucair, OC '21, an aerialist who had a grand vision for his costume.

"My initial dream was to do an aerial act where I was in a ballgown and then climbed out of the gown and up into the silks, but that was a bit ambitious," Johnson-Shoucair said. "So I talked to Zoe, and we found pantaloons and a corset and said, 'Let's do that.' [then,] I got oil face paint because a friend who does drag was like, 'Here, try this.'"



Asher Di Maggio performs yoyo. *Photo by Erin Koo*



OCircus juggler performs during dress rehearsal. *Photo by Erin Koo*



Sydney Garvis performs on rope. *Photo by Erin Koo*



Jude Johnson-Shoucair performs as the Queen of Hearts. *Photo by Erin Koo*



Dorothy Knutson performs on silks. *Photo by Erin Koo*



OCircus members perform in Hales Gymnasium. *Photo by Erin Koo*