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## previews

### Alice In The Walled Garden

#### Brockwell Park

★★★★★

AS THE setting for an outdoor play, the Walled Garden in Brockwell Park is an inspired venue.

It has atmosphere in bundles – shady corners, beautiful leafy surroundings and

a tranquil air of serenity away from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the park.

So of course it's the perfect stage for Sixteen Feet Productions' adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice In Wonderland*, which has returned to its original home for the third year running.

Unlike so much "children's theatre", *Alice In The Walled Garden* is as spellbinding for adults as it is for kids, sparkling with a magical zeal that is evident in everything from the haunting original music by Guy Holden (including

renditions of Carroll classics *Father William* and *The Lobster Quadrille*) to the cigar-smoking Cheshire Cat (Kelsey Brookfield). The wildly undulating Blue Caterpillar, played by the fantastically versatile Derek Elroy, and a truly mad hatter, played by Nick Underwood, are also memorable.

Carroll's surreal story is played out in a series of eight scenes that take place around the garden. Of course, there's a fantastic Mad Hatter's Tea Party that's a definite high point. The Mock Turtle's

Story is another fantastic scene that sees everyone, performers and audience, huddled cosily under an arbor. The kids are genuinely transfixed as they squeeze up close to the actors – so close, in fact, that they are almost part of the scene.

There are so many elements that make this production such a triumph – not least the beautiful surroundings, the close involvement of the audience throughout and the top-notch cast, who possess a set of excellent credentials

ranging from RSC experience to impressive film and TV credits.

All in all, this is a splendidly engaging adaptation of a much-loved kids classic in one of our loveliest South London parks. Go see it – you won't be disappointed.

Zoe Walker

● **Alice In The Walled Garden is in Brockwell Park until August 15. Visit [www.sixteenfeet.co.uk](http://www.sixteenfeet.co.uk) or call 07958 448 690 for information and bookings.**