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**Alice in Wonderland Comes to Life for May Long Weekend at Black Creek Pioneer Village**  
Interactive Family-Friendly Theatre with Toronto's Largest *Mad Hatter Tea Party*

Toronto: April 21, 2010 ... *Alice in Wonderland* comes to life from May 22-24 at Black Creek Pioneer Village during a special long weekend of activities inspired by the beloved children's books. *The Mad Hatter Tea Party*, a new stage production by Toronto's Quicken Theatre Company, will headline the three-day event which will also feature games, including a chance to play badminton with Tweedledum and Tweedledee, activities such as Cheshire Cat Crafts and plenty of refreshments. It all adds up to a great day out for GTA families, and a healthy, engaging experience for children.

"Happy children make for happy parents," said Geri Smith, Project Manager at Black Creek Pioneer Village. "*Alice in Wonderland* is a great way for families to discover a place where children can be involved and learn, while having a lot of fun."

*The Mad Hatter Tea Party* is a 30-minute interactive performance directed by Kate Fenton. The production features a runway projecting 20 feet from the main stage into the audience area, which is magically transformed to become the main table at the tea party. Members of the audience join the cast at the table during the play, some even assuming the roles of characters in the story.

"The Mad Hatter and his guests are stuck in an endlessly repeating tea party and Alice holds the key to saving them," said Kate Fenton, co-artistic director of The Quicken Theatre. "Willing audience members are invited to play the roles of Alice and the Queen of Hearts to help break the spell."

Along with the action, the production engages the audience at other levels as well. "The Mad Hatter Tea Party includes a lot of clever wordplay, which is fun for children, and adults," said Fenton. "Theater has the power to bring the language alive and make it more accessible in a very entertaining way."

Allen MacInnis, Artistic Director of the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, (formerly the Young People's Theatre), agrees. "Children deserve to be seen and to be heard, and theatre provides a wonderful vehicle for that," said MacInnis. "Art helps children to make sense of the world and connect with others. Live theatre, especially in the fun and interactive form of this *Alice in Wonderland* piece, is a very effective way to bring that to children."

The interactive experience extends from the performance area out to the Village green where The Queen of Hearts' Field of Games will offer visitors a chance to play with life-sized characters from the story in a round of badminton, croquet or other activities. A *Through the Looking Glass* maze created by set designer Nancy Prochuk of Theatre Aquarius is another highlight.

As always, visitors can enjoy the picturesque beauty of Black Creek Pioneer Village with its many restored homes and workshops, along with the farm animals and heritage gardens. The *Alice in Wonderland* theme continues through the Village with additions such as Alice's Playroom, Cheshire Cat crafts, Dodo races and more. Visits to the Historic Brewery and Restaurant offer a great way to rest the feet and nourish the body with an authentic "Tea for Two," or a delicious, locally-sourced meal, accompanied by a cold pint of Black Creek Ale for the adults.

"It's hard to imagine a better place in Toronto for bringing *Alice in Wonderland* to life," said Marty Brent, General Manager of Black Creek Pioneer Village. "This is a lovely way to pique children's natural curiosity about their surroundings and the way people lived a long time ago."

The *Mad Hatter Tea Party* was created by Kate Fenton, Ginette Mohr, Daniella Forjè, Laura McLean and Stephen LaFrenie and is directed by Kate Fenton. Performances take place daily at 12:00 noon, 1:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

The *Alice in Wonderland* event at Black Creek Pioneer Village runs from Saturday, May 22 through Monday, May 24, (Victoria Day), from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. The theatre performance and activities are included with admission: \$15 for adults; \$14 for teens and seniors; \$11 for children, (age 5 – 14); free for children 4 and under, and free for members. Memberships are available at the admissions desk. Parking is \$6.

Black Creek Pioneer Village is located at 1000 Murray Ross Parkway, Toronto (one block east of Jane St., south off Steeles Avenue, right next to York University). Visit [www.blackcreek.ca/whatson](http://www.blackcreek.ca/whatson) for more information.

### **About The Quickening Theatre**

The Quickening Theatre is a professional theatre company founded by Kate Fenton, Adam Seybold and Ginette Mohr in 2005. The company is focused on creating imaginative, thought-provoking, original theatre characterized by "precision, simplicity, silence and truth." Past works by the company have included *Straight as a Line* and *Fish Face*, which performed at the Fringe Festival in 2009 and was select as *NOW Magazine's* Fringe Critics Pick for Outstanding New Play, Outstanding Production, Outstanding Performance and Outstanding Design. For more information, visit <https://sites.google.com/site/thequickeningsite/>.

### **About Black Creek Pioneer Village**

Black Creek Pioneer Village is Toronto's premier outdoor living history museum. Visitors can explore heritage homes and buildings restored to re-create an 1860s Ontario village. Historic interpreters in period dress demonstrate how villagers lived, worked and played. The Village hosts learning programs and special events that highlight local heritage and culture. The tranquil setting, rural landscapes, heritage gardens and period farm animal breeds make Black Creek Pioneer Village the perfect place to break out of the modern world and journey into the past. Located in north Toronto, Black Creek Pioneer Village is owned and operated by Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA). For more information please visit [www.blackcreek.ca](http://www.blackcreek.ca).

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