

## ALICE IN WONDERLAND (JILL IN A BOX)

For solo piano

### PROGRAMME NOTES

When the Archive Department of the British Film Institute first decided to release the 1903 silent film of *Alice in Wonderland*, they approached Hiscocks to perform Eric Satie's *Jack in the Box* as a piano accompaniment. This score, however, turned out to be an arrangement by Milhaud of Satie's original orchestral score and was still under copyright. It was agreed that Hiscocks would create a new score quoting the Satie theme together with her own original material; hence the original title of her piano solo was *Jill in the Box* which she was required both to compose and perform within a four day period for the BFI release of the film in February 2010.

The film consisted of surviving footage assembled from the very first film adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Produced at the Hepworth studio in 1903, the film was directed by Cecil Hepworth and Percy Stow and employed the acting talents of the studio staff and family members: Hepworth played the part of the frog footman, his wife acted as both the White Rabbit and Queen, and May Clark, who ran errands and fulfilled some secretarial duties, took the role of Alice. Even the family dog, Blair, who was the star of *Rescued by Rover* (1905), made an appearance.

Timed to coincide with the release of Tim Burton's version of the Alice story, Wendy Hiscocks' music accompanied both a three minute and eight minute clip of the original 1903 film and was screened in the foyer of the National Film Theatre at London's South Bank throughout February and March of 2010. She has now performed the music live to screenings in the National Film Theatre at the South Bank, the British Library and in recitals.

The posting of this BFI archival material on Youtube created something of a sensation and was approaching a million hits by Christmas 2010; by November 2020, the BFI Youtube channel had recorded over two and a half million viewings. An agreement was negotiated between the BFI and Disney to include the archival film on a deluxe edition of *Alice in Wonderland* to accompany the Tim Burton film released in 2011. It also appeared on a BFI DVD *Alice* (1988) by the Czech director Jan Svankmajer.

Requests by audiences and musicians for a score have resulted in the preparation of this edition. It is difficult to notate all the subtle fluctuations of tempi that occur so naturally in a live performance to the film without overburdening the score but the markings included here are an essential starting point for performers, as is the attention that has been given to pedalling. The still from the film reproduced in this score has been given with the permission of the BFI.