

FRIENDS OF THE



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
LIBRARIES

HOLIDAY PROGRAM

December 10, 1981

The Exhibit

"A Houston Christmas Carol"

from the collection of Susan and Byron Sewell

The Concert

featuring the University of Houston Collegium Musicum
Robert Lynn, Director

- Hodie Christus natus est Isak Posch
- Medieval English Carols
Nowell, Nowell: Dieu vous garde
Nowell, Nowell: The boar's head
- Cantate Domino Andre Campra
- Sonata in C Major, Op. 13, No. 5 Antonio Vivaldi
Un poco Vivace
Allegro ma non presto
- Suite of Dances Pierre Phalèse
Gaillarde: Mais pourquoi
Gaillarde
Almande Poussinghe-Saltarello
Schiarazula Marazula
- Selections from the Glogauer Liederbuch
Salve Virgo
Es leit ein Schloss
Der Entrepris
Ach Gott, wie sehr zwingt mich der Not
Es solt ein Man kein Môle farn

The Company

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Juanita Adams | Harpsichord |
| Katrina Austin | Baroque flute, recorder, krummhorn |
| Nancy Brouters | Soprano |
| Pat Cowen | Harpsichord |
| Susan Fletcher | Soprano |
| Carol Gale | Soprano |
| Elaine Gerdine | Harpsichord |
| Gary Hebert | Sackbut |
| Greg Hill | Krummhorn, recorder |
| Maryann O'Brien | Recorder |
| Betsy Parker | Bass Viola da Gamba |
| April Pels | Soprano |
| Steve Rochen | Violin, rebec |
| Susan Wickman | Recorder |



❖ A HOUSTON CHRISTMAS CARROLL ❖



1981

Cover:
"Thinking of Little Alice" by Charles Robinson from *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*.

Friends of the Libraries Annual Holiday Program

1982 will be the sesquicentennial of the birth of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, the English mathematics don and author known to millions of readers by his pseudonym of Lewis Carroll. Celebrations will be held in both America and in England throughout the coming year. The original seminal manuscript for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* will travel from the British Museum to New York for a major exhibition of Carroll's works. It will be a year of major Carrollian publications and activities by the various Lewis Carroll societies.

This year's Holiday Program for the Friends of the University of Houston Libraries includes an exhibition which is intended to provide a glimpse into the world of Carrolliana, and to demonstrate the broad diversity of Carroll's work and his almost universal influence and appeal. The items on display are selections on loan from a major private Carroll collection built over the past decade by Houstonians Susan and Byron Sewell.

The Sewell collection began in 1970 with the serendipitous purchase of an inexpensive reprint of Martin Gardner's *The Annotated Alice* here in a Houston bookstore just prior to the Sewells' departure to London for a year long assignment by his employer. This book stirred their interest in Lewis Carroll, leading them to interest in the possibility of collecting a few old editions of *Alice*. The more they acquired the more their interest in the subject grew.

Neither of the Sewells were book collectors when they became interested in Carroll, and their collection was initially built more upon enthusiasm than book collecting expertise. But that enthusiasm has resulted in the creation of a noteworthy collection, and is a demonstration that a major collection of an author who has been historically heavily collected can still be built without extravagant expense.



(untitled) by Willy Fogary from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

The Sewells are perhaps somewhat unorthodox in their approach to collecting, and they describe their method as omnivorous; they literally collect anything by or about Lewis Carroll. The result is a collection which vividly demonstrates both the diversity of Carroll's works, his multi-faceted personality, and his broad appeal. The collection includes not only many first editions of Carroll's works but also literally hundreds of examples of his influence in the popular culture, including cinema, theatre, music, toys, games, advertising, politics, science fiction, etc. The collection admirably demonstrates that many people have found Lewis Carroll to be a truly fascinating subject and an appropriate mirror to reflect their own personal worlds.

A true first edition of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, published in 1865, is one of the great rarities in book collecting, probably with fewer than 20 copies having survived, making its acquisition beyond the wildest dreams of all but a few of the world's wealthiest collectors. Similarly, many of Dodgson's privately printed pamphlets are rare in the extreme, with often only one or two known surviving copies. Such things are also well beyond the capabilities of most collectors. But what is well within the collecting capability of most collectors is truly enormous, and marvelous collections have been built within the past few decades as well as during the turn of the century. Often times what is more important than a huge bank account for collecting purposes is persistence, imagination, the support and help of other collectors, and to a large measure, luck.

For anyone considering collecting for the first time, the Sewells have a few pieces of advice which might be helpful to the novice. Find out if there are established literary societies for the author or subject you are interested in collecting, and join them. They are invaluable, not only for their publications but for the friendships of society members who can literally mean exponential growth in your collection through their advice, trading with them, and the sharing of their sources. Obtain copies of the published bibliographies on your subject of choice as early as possible so that you literally know what it is that you are looking for. Get acquainted with several reputable book dealers, not only for access to things through their shop for purchase, but for their help and advice. Try to narrow your field of interest as early as you can so that you can concentrate both your financial resources and your energies. Try to learn more about your subject than anyone else so that you will be able to recognize things for what they are, not for what you are told they are or for what they might be. Approach collecting with as much creativity as you can muster; many great acquisitions come from sources outside rare book stores or the sales rooms of great auction houses. And probably most important of all, approach collecting with enthusiasm and



"The Bellman" by Mervyn Peake from *The Hunting of the Snark*.

persistence. Don't let people discourage you by telling you that it is too late for you to collect this or that author or subject. The first advice the Sewells received from a reputable book dealer in England was that they were 50 years too late to start collecting Lewis Carroll. Their collection aptly demonstrates that the advice was wrong.

About the collectors: Susan Sewell is an attorney and Byron Sewell is an engineer. Byron has illustrated Lewis Carroll's classic nonsense poem *The Hunting of the Snark*, published by the Catalpa Press, London, 1974, and *Alitji in the Dreamtime*, a translation of *Alice* into Pitjantjatjara, the aboriginal language of southwest Australia, published by The University Adelaide, 1975. Byron edits *Lewis Carroll in the Popular Culture: A Continuing List* for the Lewis Carroll Society of North America. He also publishes numerous fanciful Carroll items in small limited editions through his whimsical Chicken Little's Press. For the past few years he has been working on a monumental bibliography with the working title of *Much of a Muchness/A Survey of the American Editions of Alice Published Since 1866*.

Lewis Carroll Societies: Those interested in the life and works of Lewis Carroll might consider membership in either the London based Lewis Carroll Society (enquiries to The Treasurer, 6 Alwyne Road, London, W7) or the New York based Lewis Carroll Society of North America (enquiries to The Secretary, 617 Rockford Rd., Silver Spring, Md. 20902).

FRIENDS OF THE



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
LIBRARIES

The Friends of the Libraries acknowledge with appreciation the generous grant from the McGovern Foundation, given in the name of Dr. and Mrs. John P. McGovern, which made the 1981 holiday program possible, and the tireless efforts of Byron Sewell whose assistance was invaluable.



"The Barrister" by Mervyn Peake from *The Hating of the Snark*.