

Press Release: November 10, 2020



# A Midsummer Night's Dream

AN ORIGINAL ADAPTATION

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ANITA MENON

## Journey Through a Wooded Fairyland Where the Powers of Magic, Mischief, and Love Rule

The beauty of Indian classical dance blends with the poetry of Shakespeare

1819 NW Everett Street  
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*Our mission—  
to educate, entertain  
and enrich the lives  
of young audiences*

**Managing Director**  
*Judy Kafoury*

**Artistic Director**  
*Sarah Jane Hardy*

**Associate Artistic Director**  
*John Ellingson*

**Donor & Patron  
Relations Director**  
*Nick Fenster*

**Education Director**  
*Leigh Mallonee*

Northwest Children's Theater's original adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* bridges the ancient Indian dance style of Bharatanatyam with English literature, presenting Shakespeare's timeless comedy in a way you've never seen before. Specifically developed for children and their families, this abridged version is presented in four 10-15 minute episodes, and is most enjoyed by ages eight and up.

NWCT once again collaborates with award-winning director and choreographer Anita Menon, who is no stranger to adapting this Shakespeare play. In 2012, Menon received a grant from the Regional Arts and Culture Council to produce *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Newmark Theatre. Her interpretation combined dance and musical styles not traditionally associated with the script, fusing classical Indian dance with ballet, tap, and hip hop, with music ranging from classical to Indian folk and Bollywood.

Menon invited NWCT's Artistic Director Sarah Jane Hardy to attend that show, and she was immediately inspired. "The production was magnificent," Hardy expressed. "It was fresh, authentic, and audacious. I knew right away that I wanted to work with the creative mind that conceived the idea, and the disciplined artist that made it come to life."

From that experience, Hardy and Menon forged the incredible artistic partnership that brought *The Jungle Book* (2015 & 2020), *Tenali: The Royal Trickster* (2019), and *Chitra: The Girl Prince* (2018) to the Mainstage. Like those shows, NWCT's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* showcases the power of Bharatanatyam, a traditional Indian dance form, to enhance storytelling.

Bharatanatyam originated as a way to tell the tales of Hindu myths, legends and spiritual philosophies. Like any classical art form, dancers spend years training to learn hand gestures and facial expressions that are used in concert with spectacular footwork to tell a specific story. Menon grew up studying this two-thousand-year-old art form in India. As the Founder and Artistic Director of Anjali School of Dance, she pursued inventive ways to showcase Bharatanatyam to diverse audiences, and adapted the ancient art form for the next generation of dancers through innovation and experimentation.

"Raising children of Indian heritage in America, I wanted to find a way to tell familiar stories while maintaining our traditional culture. So I started using Bharatanatyam dance vocabulary to tell stories like *The Little Red Riding Hood* and *The Wizard of Oz*," she says. Menon's creative vision was extremely well-received by the Indian-American community and audiences of all backgrounds.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* was created from the ground up as an online show and is designed to be enjoyed in the comfort of your own home. The set, backdrops (physical and digital), and beautifully ornate costumes feature rich, bright colors that pop on your screen. NWCT took extraordinary precautions to protect the performers, design team, and crew, filming each actor individually on the NWCT stage. Dozens of individual performances are seamlessly weaved together thanks to stellar video editing by Emma Sanders (editor and co-director of NWCT's *Seussical Online*, June 2020).

—Continued on Page Two

**Release Date**  
Nov. 10, 2020

**End Date**  
Dec. 6, 2020

**Media Contact**  
To set up interviews  
or discuss other  
possibilities for stories,  
please contact:

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—Continued from Page One

A ticket to the show unlocks all four episodes of this NWCT Online original for an entire household. Families have the option to watch all of the episodes in one sitting, or watch at their leisure. There's no limit to how many times ticket holders can watch each episode (through December 6).

A ticket also grants audiences access to exclusive BONUS content, hosted by Karthika Appiah (dancer in *The Jungle Book*, 2020) and Ajai Tripathi (Tenali in *Tenali: The Royal Trickster*). These videos include a deep dive into the story and interviews with the cast and creative teams you won't find anywhere else.

If you are missing the feeling of community that live theater provides, Watch Parties are also available. Instead of watching the show separately, the Watch Party audience "binge watches" all four episodes over Zoom together with select members of the cast, crew, and creative team. There will be many opportunities for the audience and cast to interact with each other, including a question and answer session at the end of the show.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is produced in part through the support of the Regional Arts and Culture Council; Kafoury McDougal: Lawyers for the People; the Oregon Arts Commission; the Oregon Cultural Trust; PDX Parent; Pacific Office Automation, and NWCT's donor families. Schools and classrooms can access the show at reduced pricing by contacting the NWCT Box Office. Closed captioning and audio description are also available.

**STREAMING NOV. 12 - DEC. 6, 2020**

**Watch Parties:**

**11/15 at 2pm & 11/21 at 5pm PST**

**11/21 at 6:30pm India time (5am PST)**

**Tickets start at \$20 per household for all  
four episodes + BONUS content**

**Most Enjoyed by Ages 8 & Up**

**TICKETS & INFORMATION**

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