



CHITRA

THE GIRL PRINCE

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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

Education Director
Leigh Mallonee

Release Date

January 12, 2018

End Date

February 25, 2018

Media Contact

To set up interviews
or discuss other
possibilities for stories,
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NWCT is thrilled to introduce a new collaboration with **Anita Menon**, who co-directed 2015's smash hit, Indian-dance infused adaptation of *The Jungle Book*. Featuring epic martial arts sequences and a wide range of dance styles, *Chitra: The Girl Prince* tells the story of a warrior princess who struggles to stay true to herself while balancing her responsibility to her people with the call of true love.

Chitra's story began long before her first appearance at NWCT. In fact, the legend of Chitrangadha, first appeared around the fourth century BCE as part of the Mahabharata, an epic myth from ancient India. In 1892, the story of *Chitra* was adapted to the stage by Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore's dance-drama of *Chitrangadha* was met with great success, and *Chitra* became a much-beloved character across India and the world. After the success of their previous collaboration, directors **Sarah Jane Hardy** and **Anita Menon** were eager to find another project that fused the worlds of western theater and Indian dance. Inspired by Tagore's progressive spirit, and NWCT's tradition of re-inventing classic tales, the two decided to take on the story of *Chitra*.

Collaboration between artists, cultures, movement, and methods of storytelling, made this telling of *Chitra* possible. After several years of working closely with India-based playwright **Avantika Shankar** and an incredible team of theater artists, musicians, and dancers from both India and Portland's Bengali-American community, *Chitra: The Girl Prince* is ready for the stage.

"When I first saw the poster, I was blown away," comments **Alisha Menon**, who will take on *Chitra's* lead role. "First of all, I never thought I'd see myself cast as a title character of a main-stage show here at Northwest Children's Theater. Second, as an Indian-American, I never thought I

would be a part of a story rooted in my heritage. *Chitra* feels like the colliding of two worlds."

Chitra features a wide range of talent from Portland's Bengali-American Community, including internationally acclaimed singer **Mita Kundu**, dancer/performer **Sudipta Majumdar**, and percussionist **Bhaskar Ganguly**. The show also features choreography by **Krishna Ganguly** and authentic Rabindra Tagore music arranged and orchestrated by **Gora Gupta**. Both Ganguly and Gupta are prominent artists in Kolkata, India.

Chitra is not only a collaboration between people, but between forms of movement as well. The production features a range of dance styles, including Chhau, Bharatanatyam Rabindra Nritya, Bollywood, and Dandiya. In addition, this production makes heavy use of martial arts, courtesy of award-winning fight choreographer **Kristen Mun**.

"The fights for *Chitra* will have a few different styles because my training and background is a mix of different styles and cultures," says Mun. "Along with the research that we dug into for *Chitra*, the simple list is Aikido, Chhau, Japanese bo staff, Irish spear, French and Italian sword play, and a variety of MMA techniques sprinkled throughout to give it flair."

While *Chitra's* story may be ancient in its origins, it addresses themes society continues to struggle with today; gender roles, duty to family and to country, and the never ending road to self-discovery and acceptance.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to bring the story of *Chitra* to NWCT's stage," says Anita Menon. "Given that both Sarah Jane and I have told stories of strong girls as role models in our own worlds of work, this story clearly resonated with both of us. It may be a five thousand year old story but still relevant today as ever. We hope young girls and boys will come watch this production and be inspired."

Press Release: January 12, 2018



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All four productions in the 25th Season will include NWCT's new Sensory Friendly Performances. Featuring shorter run-times, no intermission, reduced or removed lighting and sound cues, and the constant presence of house lights, these performances are specially designed for children on the autism spectrum or with other sensory sensitivities. NWCT's 2017-18 Season offers four Sensory Friendly Performances free of charge. Sign-interpreted and Audio-described performances will be offered for all productions as well.

Chitra: The Girl Prince is produced through a generous grant from the Oregon Cultural Trust. NWCT's 2017-18 Season is supported in part through the support of the Collins Foundation, Regional Arts and Culture Council and Work for Art, Kafoury & McDougal, Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt, World of Smiles Dentistry, the Oregon Arts Commission, and NWCT Donor Circle Members. More than 3,000 school children will attend this production through one of six student matinee performances.

SHOWS Noon & 4pm

FEB 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25

FEB 17 at Noon: ASL Interpreted Show
FEB 17 at 4pm: Audio Described Show
FEB 18 at 4pm: Sensory Friendly Show

TICKETS & INFORMATION

503-222-2190 • NWCTS.ORG
SEASON SUBSCRIBER DISCOUNTS!

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