

PRESS RELEASE

Northwest Children's Theater and School Presents

Snow White

May 6-29, 2011

**NORTHWEST
CHILDRENS
THEATER and
SCHOOL**

NW Neighborhood
Cultural Center
1819 NW Everett Street
Suite 216
Portland, OR 97209-2189

phone: 503-222-4480
fax: 503-222-4130
www.nwcts.org

*Our mission—to educate,
entertain and enrich the lives
of young audiences*

Managing Director
Judy Kafoury

Artistic Director
Sarah Jane Hardy

Education Director
Carolyn Newsom

Volunteer Director
Diane Carlsen

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Release Date

April 21, 2011

Kill Date

May 30, 2011

Media Contact

To set up interviews
or discuss other
possibilities for feature
stories, please contact:

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Sucha Production, Inc.

503-528-1370

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From the creative team that brought audiences last season's multiple award-winning steampunk *Pinocchio*, it's *Snow White*, an original musical adaptation inspired by the art and storytelling of Japanese anime!

When a jealous queen is threatened by a young princess, a dark magic is cast to reclaim the title "fairest of all." But *Snow White* is one royal-in-training who won't give up without a fight! Loyal friends join in a battle against an evil plot, potions and a poison apple in this epic retelling of the classic tale.

Snow White finds herself the fairest in the land, and must seek out the Seven Great Spirits to defeat the vain queen who would have them all destroyed. Step-sister Rose Red takes sides with the Queen, and battles *Snow White* until she finds out the truth behind her own cursed scar. A love-stricken huntsman takes aim, a poisoned apple is delivered, and *Snow White* musters her courage to unleash the power of the mythical Spirit Dragon, vanquishing the curse to save them all!

This exciting adaptation re-imagines the classic tale as a heroine's journey, featuring live drums and thrilling martial arts fight sequences! Everything from the heart-pounding score to soaring sets is 'drawn' straight from the popular artistic storytelling of anime. A stylized world of heightened reality, larger-than-life characters and explosions of ethereal color collide in homage to one of the most emulated popular postmodern art and storytelling movements in recent decades.

What is 'anime'?

The roots of Japanese animation, or 'anime' began when Japanese filmmakers were inspired by innovations from the Disney animation studios, namely the success of the 1937 feature film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Japanese animators began creating their own films, adapting and simplifying techniques to produce their own work on a large scale. A surge in popularity of manga, a comic-book form of short novel, made anime more mainstream, including noted anime legend Hayao Miyazaki capturing "Best Animated Film" Academy Award for *Spirited Away* in 2003. The art

form is emulated by artists the world over, and its emotional style is particularly popular with teen artists exploring their visual voices.

Bringing Anime to the Stage

Anime is a visual medium that uses an emphasized visual style. The production design of this show borrows iconography and traditional elements of this art form. Exaggerated colors and physical characteristics are used, and exclamatory, dramatic speech, non-linear plots support the high physical and emotional stakes characteristic of anime storylines. Startling appearances of fantastical characters, like talking animals and spirits, provide catalysts for the story's launch and major plot revelations.

In anime, variation to proportion is a big part of the storytelling, and physical extremes and characteristics are at play in this production. Human characters appear in a rainbow of wigs with expressive, exaggerated eyes. Characters are represented with exaggerated physical features such as elongated arms as wings, creating a dramatic silhouettes and sweeping gestures. There are also direct influences from anime and manga in the set design, with vivid painted panels framing the action. Stylized physicalization is used to represent atmosphere, character or circumstances. A strong, fluid blend of martial arts and dance inform everything from character poses to tableau to fight sequences, and include a fixed iconography that's used as shorthand for audiences to recognize archetypes. The musical composition is a synthesis of cross-cultural influences, from solemn pipe flutes to crashing Taiko-style drumming and great walls of orchestration reminiscent of today's popular video game scores.

The time-honored elements of the Grimm Brother's original story are in place. *Snow White* is the heroine, and her sister Rose Red is cursed with a disfiguring scar. The vain Queen seeks to save her place as 'fairest in the land', with repeated reassurance from a mirror who can only speak the truth, and an unwitting huntsman is employed to carry out an evil plot. The traditional story takes a turn as seven dwarves are represented as Seven

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Spirits; including Shinigami, the spirit of death. The other six include Kaku, a silent cactus seeking comfort (in spite of pokey needles), a sleepy but unpredictable Cat, the warrior Red Bird, the free-spirited Wolf, a slow, wise Turtle, and the Great Dragon Spirit as the mystical power uniting them all. Epic battles are waged in the fight for good and truth, and the story ends by illuminating the power of change in perception and philosophy.

Though influenced by a Japanese art form, this retelling of *Snow White* is not exclusively a Japanese story. Kaku (Cactus) and Shinigami are two characters with Japanese names, and there is reference to Buddhism and karmic points. The original fairy tale has Germanic roots, so as in anime, there is eastern and western inspiration; neither place nor nationality is stated, allowing for discovery through common links in the story, characters and cultural comparisons that speak to audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

This production is funded in part by The Collins Foundation, The Herbert A. Templeton Foundation, The James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, The Regional Arts and Culture Council and Work for Art, Schwabe, Williamson and Wyatt, The Portland Tribune, KINK FM, and the generous support of the NWCT Board of Directors. Over 7,000 patrons (including 3,000 school children and their teachers) will join *Snow White* in her adventures over 16 public performances and eight student matinees.

PHOTO CREDIT: ©2011 Lucas Welsh

High-resolution photos available at:
<http://nwcts.org/content/press-photos>

1
(Rose Red) Lea Zawada in NWCT's *Snow White*.

2, 3, 4, 467, 511
(Snow White) Natalie Hovee
in NWCT's *Snow White*.

407, 446,
(Rose Red) Lea Zawada and (Snow White)
Natalie Hovee in NWCT's *Snow White*

THE CAST

Snow White

Rose Red

Queen

Mirror

Huntsman

Shinigami

Kaku (Cactus)

Turtle

Cat

Red Bird

Wolf

Natalie Hovee

Lea Zawada

Deirdre Atkinson

Kevin-Michael Moore

Conner Reed

John Ellingson

Elizabeth Gibbs

Erik James

Kerry Ryan

Reed Sturtevant

Lucas Welsh

ENSEMBLE

Emily Bryan, Marlowe Dobbe, Kyle Heiner,
Grover Hollway, Bryan Kinder, Madison Wray

THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Playwright

Director/Choreographer

Composer/Sound Designer

Set Design

Costume Design

Light Design

Props Design

Scenic Artist

Milo Mowery

Sarah Jane Hardy

Rody Ortega

Jeff Seats

Mary Rochon

Jeff Forbes

kollodi

John Ellingson

WHEN

May 6-29, 2011

Fri 7pm • Sat. 2 & 6pm • Sun. 2pm

WHERE

NW Neighborhood Cultural Center
1819 NW Everett Street, Portland

TICKETS

503-222-4480 or NWCTS.ORG

AGE RANGE

Most enjoyed by ages 6 and up

PRICES

\$18-22 adults

\$13-18 youth (14 & under)

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