

No 'Sleeping' through this

With a cast of 60, 'Anvita' reimagines 'Sleeping Beauty' through Indian classical dance.

By Rod Stafford Hagwood
STAFF WRITER

You've probably never seen a "Sleeping Beauty" like this one.

"Anvita" is an adaptation of the fairy tale in Indian classical dance. Choreographed by six local dance instructors and featuring a cast of 60 senior students, the show will take place Saturday and Sunday at the Miniaci Performing Arts Center on the Nova Southeastern University campus in Davie.

"This is the second year we've done this," says Smeeta Patel, chair of the educational and cultural programs for South Florida Hindu Temple, which is a co-sponsor (along with the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation). "Last year, it was only one night ... and we totally sold out. This year, we have more money. The Indian music is phenomenal. There are custom-made [in India] costumes for this production."

The extra money came from an increased grant from the Knight Foundation, awarded to Davie's Ranjana Warier and her Rhythms School of Dance to "create cross-cultural understanding using Indian classical dancing." Warier collaborated with five other Indian classical dance schools in South Florida to create original choreography.

"It's very different to use 'Sleeping Beauty,' a fairy tale," Warier says. "It's not traditional at all to dance to a theme like that. Indian classical dance is very technical, with lots of rules. It's very difficult to indulge people unless they have a really strong background in it. Usually, we lose them 10 minutes into it. We thought if it were a story that a lot of people already knew that we would attract a larger audience. [Indian classical dance] is really entertaining if you understand what is going on. But for most people, it is pretty obscure."

Warier explains that she also chose the famous folktale — via Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm — for the range of expression the choreographers and dancers could bring to it.

"There are mainly two features to Indian classical dance," she says. "One is pure dance, the footwork and rhythm. The second part is expression, facial and body expression. The story gives a lot of range for me to expand upon."

The other choreographers are Neha Shah with the Nrutyajali School of Dance; Harija



VISHWAH RAJKUMAR/COURTESY

A rehearsal from last year with some of the cast scheduled to perform this year in "Anvita," which runs August 31 and September 1 at the Miniaci Performing Arts Center at Nova University in Davie.

Sivakumar with the Vane School of Dance; Aparna Matange with the Nritya Surabhi School of Dance; Priya Nagaraj with the Narthana Dance Academy; and Anandi Srinivasa with the Navarasa Dance Academy.

"We all get along very well," Warier says. "Each school has a totally different style, and somehow we blend."

Anvita

When: 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

Where: Rose and Alfred Miniaci Performing Arts Center, 3100 Ray Ferrero Jr. Blvd., Davie
Cost: \$40, \$30, \$20 (free for children younger than 3)

Contact: 954-462-0222 or MiniaciPAC.com

Calendar

Professional

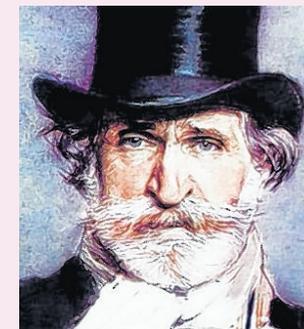
Blow Me Play about fashionista Isabella Blow, through Sun. Mad Cat Theatre, Miami Theater Center, 9816 NE 2nd Ave., Miami Shores. 305-751-9550, 866-811-4111, MadCatTheatre.org. 8 pm Fri.-Sun. \$15, \$30.

Shorts Gone Wild City Theatre & Island City Stage, through Sun. Empire Stage, 1140 NE Flagler Dr., Ft. Lauderdale. 954-519-2533. 8 pm Fri., Sat.; 5 pm Sun. \$30.

Moon Over Buffalo Comedy, opens Fri. Broward Stage Door Theatre, 8036 W. Sample Rd., Coral Springs. 954-344-7765, stagedoortheatre.com. 8 pm Fri., Sat.; 2 pm Wed., Sat., Sun. \$16, \$38.

Waist Watchers the Musical Musical comedy w/parody lyrics to well-known songs, through Sun. Plaza Theatre, 262 S. Ocean Blvd., Manalapan. 561-588-1820, theplazatheatre.net. 7:30 pm Fri., Sat.; 2 pm Sat. \$45.

BEST BET



COURTESY

Celebrate Verdi

Miami Lyric Opera, the little company that could, presents a tribute to the biggest name in opera. A wide-ranging group of nine soloists join the troupe to honor composer Giuseppe Verdi with excerpts from "Rigoletto," "Otello," "Un Ballo in Maschera," "Don Carlo," "Nabucco" and "La Traviata." In addition to the soloists, the program includes a full orchestra and chorus. The performance will close with an audience sing-along to "Va, Pensiero," the famous chorus from the third act of "Nabucco" that was sung spontaneously by bystanders at Verdi's funeral.

Where: Colony Theater, 1040 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach

When: 8 p.m. Saturday
Tickets: \$25-\$35; 305-674-1040 or Ticketmaster