

# Double Edge Theatre Review - 6 Feet Apart, All Together

By Nan Parati

Here, in this time of no “Now”, where you don’t remember whether it’s Wednesday or Saturday, a day of rest or the start of the new week, where all that you knew is blowing out to sea enveloped in a mist of wonder, hope and loss, Double Edge Theatre has produced a flow of magic that replicates the epoch exactly, and yet, makes it sweetly full of wonder and nostalgia, as they emphasize all of the potential in a world that changes every day.

On tour when the pandemic hit in early spring, the company thought (as so many of us did,) that surely we’d all be back on our feet by show time, this summer. And then, slowly, as they lost friends to the illness, as schools and businesses closed, and the illness numbers soared, they recognized that this summer would be like no other. And with that, they went to work.

Traditionally, Double Edge Theatre opens its annual doors to a host of students and immersion artists who help create the world of the theatre on the farm. This year, due to social distancing in a space that generally spills joyous bands of actors and workers, they had to limit the numbers of participants to a third of their usual group, and craft a show that could flourish with what and who they had to work with.

And, they had to figure out how to do a live show when live shows around the globe have been closed since late winter.

They did it!

The advantage Double Edge has over most other live theaters in the world is that 95 percent of every summer-show they do takes place in the great outdoors of their South Ashfield farm, with the audience following behind the actors from scene to scene. So that, they already had down. They

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divided their audience up into three groups (the audience that, due to social distancing is only a third of its usual size on any given night) and each group sees the whole show, but at times staggered from those of the other groups. Group A headed off down one path, Groups B and C down two others. We all saw the same show, just in different scene order – which, how they did that is kind of amazing and confounding, as the actors are in so many different scenes, (seemingly, simultaneously!) But, with Double Edge all things are possible, so I just stopped wondering about the logistics of it all and enjoyed what was unfolding before me. We all had to wear masks, but the show was so engaging I only just now remembered to include that detail here. (Bring your favorite mask!)

With such a show, a through-line narrative would be difficult, so that what they came up for this year was an event woven of moments and scenes from previous spectacles, as well as a bounty of new stuff, all with one common theme: Everything is possible. That the world is changing ever, that we are all much larger than the boundaries of our births and deaths, that none of us can be trapped into earthly circumstances and, goodness knows what will happen next. It’s an evening of lyrical escape as well as ethereal music, poetry and movement. It’s funny, it’s philosophical, it’s musical, it’s deep, it’s light and it’s Double Edge. There’s even a goat, who I didn’t remember from any previous shows, but it turns out she made her debut in Shahrazad back in 2013.

Double Edge’s production staff worked with Ashfield’s Emergency Management Director and the Department of Health to establish rules of safe audience-having, and then went above and beyond their recommendations in order to ensure that everyone attending is as safe as they can possibly be.

With pieces adapted from Homer's "Odyssey," Allende's "Eva Luna," "A Thousand and One Nights," Schulz's "Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass," Cervantes' "Don Quixote," Jodorowsky's "Where the Bird Sings Best," and Leonora Carrington's "The Hearing Trumpet & the Stone Door," fans of Double Edge's spectacles of the last eighteen years will delight at the memories. (I think I recognized the puppet of me that appeared in their history of the town a few summers ago.)

More than anything else, it is a night out under the stars with gloriously lifting music and dance performances, soliloquies (one in a boat on the sparkling pond to music,) with acrobatics, inspiring choreography, and Milena riding a horse that you *know* is a person in a costume on stilts, but is so well done that you miss part of the performance to

admire how well Double Edge does everything they touch.

The bad news is that the run is sold out. The good news is that there is a waiting list for every night, and they are constantly figuring out how to add more audience members to the groups.

And, when you get home from the show you will sleep very well, and very peacefully for the first time in a long, unsettling time.

*6 Feet Apart, All Together runs Wednesdays through Sundays at 8pm through July 31<sup>st</sup>, and at 7:30 from August 1st through August 9<sup>th</sup>, with matinees on Saturdays at 1. There are waitlists, so people are welcome to join by signing up online or emailing [tickets@doubleedgetheatre.org](mailto:tickets@doubleedgetheatre.org).*