

**FEATURE: The 'Mela' at Miller...**



If its spring, it must be Bollywood at Miller Outdoor theater and if its Bollywood, it must be Naach Houston!

In what has become the flavor of the season, Moksh Community Arts produced 'Houston's Got Bollywood' - Mela - the carnival of life at the prestigious and historic Miller Outdoor Theater on Saturday, April 2nd 2022.

For 5 consecutive years, Houston's Got Bollywood has been featured as the flagship Bollywood event at the Miller Outdoor Theater. Featuring choreography and performance by the fabulous dancers of Naach Houston, the mesmerizing Bollywood Dance Theater Company

based in Sugar Land, Tx, The show was conceived and directed by ace dance maestro Mr. Mahesh Mahubani. Mela, (The Carnival) depicted the celebration, using the metaphor of a carnival, drawing parallels with life experiences interpreted in four acts. The show was introduced by Board member Disha Thadani of Moksh Community Arts welcoming the audience to the show and noting that the 99th year of its existence, the Miller Outdoor Theater is a place to be revered and respected.

The show opened with a spectacular dance, music by Sami Yusuf- a grand orchestra piece created to sanctify the space on the stage, the prayer before the celebration, led by none other than director of the show, ace choreographer, Mahesh Mahubani in the lead. This was a pleasant surprise to all Naach Houston / Mahesh Mahubani fans as Mahesh is usually involved behind the



curtain - with choreography, production, sound and visual design, designing the lighting and stage set. The Overture featured dances on 'Baawre', 'Baansuri' and 'Malhari'. True to the feel of the carnival, it was colorful and vibrant with dancers in hoola hoops, light torches, fans & ribbons. Act One, aptly titled Welcome to the Carnival depicted the colors and joy expressed through dance & music akin to beginning of life, the beginnings of new relationships where strangers meet, where introductions happen, and life finds new friends. Choreographed imaginatively as performers introducing each other as they glided in and out of songs. The act showcased foot tapping songs like "Aaja Nachle", "Param Sundari",

"Mein to raste se jaa raha thaa" and "Seeti maar" interspersed with dancers interacting with each other as if they were meeting for the first time. Act two is the development of the introductions becoming relationships. Titled "Musical Chairs", exploring relationship between people, bringing to life the game of musical chairs, superbly choreographed, with a comical angle through its musicality, bringing smiles to the faces in the audience. The dances featured to peppy and playful songs like "UP Bihaar Lootne", and "Saaki Saaki" where the hook step defying gravity was performed by the young dances of Naach Houston. The evergreen "Sheela ki Jawaani" and "Chikni Chameli" brought the audience to

their feet as the boys set the stage ablaze with energetic performances on aila re aila and desi Boys. The first part culminated into sweet romantic friendships expressed through, songs Little little and Cutie Pie, truly CUTE. Act three titled, "Through the Looking Glass"- explores the possibilities, dreams and aspirations, of these people, a journey featured in Indian Contemporary Dance style. The sequence of the songs communicated the silence of their secret love, with the classic "Hothon pe aisi baat followed by the doubt and yearning for the loved one, in Naa jaa, interspersed by the boys expressing a state of not worrying and all will be well, in fikar not" surprised by the arrival of cupids that reunite the couples with

dreamy and romantic dance to "Raata Lambiyani" concluded with "Swalla Raaga". The final act signed off the End as a New Beginning as the Mela, aka the Carnival comes a full circle where relationships are developed and celebrated as a new journey. Now the strangers that met at the beginning of the show are friends - what better than the "Punjabi Mix" to celebrate this friendship followed by "Naacho Naacho", "Badri Ki Dulhania" and "Hawaa Hawaa" to wrap up the celebratory act. The 90 minutes had flown by in a magical trance, the time had come to a close. The curtain call was the cherry on the cake, a mesmerizing finale, a visual, treat featuring all the dancers in their groups and conjoined by the awesome cho-

reographers Afraaz Malick, Brinda Patel, Anita Vyas, Rajosri Dey, Anusha Visnani, Rithvik Edupuganti, Nidhi naveen, kanishka Deepak, Kashan Ali Qazi and Mahesh Mahubani. The show ended to abhi toh party shuru hui hai and Ohh la la celebrating 10 years of Naach Houston and 10 years since we performed it at the Miller Outdoor theatre. Photography was done by Navin Mediwala and sponsored by the Rungta Foundation. This show was sponsored in part by the City of Houston through the Miller Theatre Advisory Board. Naach Houston Summer Camp enrollments are now Open [www.naachhouston.com](http://www.naachhouston.com)