ASHFIELD — At the edge of a field where cows once grazed, four actors parade around on stilts, encircled by comrades who beat drums, clap their hands, and sing. Judged by their clucking, the hens in a shed close by sound nonplussed.

Which is to say, it’s a typical afternoon at Double Edge Theatre.

The troupe spent 12 years in Allston before migrating here in 1994, using the 100 acres of this former dairy farm first as a rehearsal center before moving in full time. The
relative seclusion — the grounds are about a half-hour drive northwest from
Northampton, which may as well be New York City compared with this pastoral
landscape — prompted Double Edge to partner with local organizations and craftsmen,
which helps when it’s time to feed the cast or perform upkeep on the indoor/outdoor
sets.

Life on “the farm” (as it’s called) also allows for full flight of the company’s
multidisciplinary aesthetic. Under the leadership of founding artistic director Stacy
Klein, Double Edge integrates dance, circus, masque, puppetry, multimedia, live music,
and elements inspired by Argentine Carnival to create theatrical events that are densely
thematic, but, for audiences, vividly experiential. Show-cycles like “The Garden of
Intimacy and Desire” and “The Women’s Cycle” have explored themes suggested by
world literature, including “The Odyssey” and the work of Anton Chekhov. Last
summer’s centerpiece show, “Shahrazad, A Tale of Love and Magic,” took cues from the
stories collected in “Arabian Nights.”

The year-round training manifests in annual, site-specific shows (dubbed
“indoor/outdoor traveling spectacles”) where audience members follow the action
around the grounds and finally into a barn theater. Along this promenade, actors may
swim around in the South River or fly through the air on zip lines or bungee cords.
Stilts? Of course.

“I think the content of what we’re doing is unique in the field of theater in this country.
And being here is a hugely meaningful aspect to that,” says longtime collaborator and
featured actor Matthew Glassman, who along with Klein and Carlos Uriona share the
title of co-artistic director. They’re seated around a table in the cozy loft that serves as
Klein’s office.
“The lens pulls up and you see this group of people in a barn in a field surrounded by hundreds of acres of rural landscape,” Glassman continues, offering a cinematic description of the milieu. “And all of the life around it is so distinct from the way you’re normally seeing the work of a theater piece being created.”

Double Edge’s work is also seen in portable shows designed to go on tour. In the troupe’s first visit to Boston since 2006, it will bring “The Grand Parade” to the Paramount Center Mainstage for four days beginning Thursday, in a presentation by ArtsEmerson. In June, Klein and the show’s six actor-creators will take it abroad for two separate engagements in Norway.

This show was originally developed for a sold-out run at Washington, D.C.’s, Arena Stage in 2013. At the risk of offering a too-literal summary, it offers a historical view of
the preceding century with wars and other calamities depicted at stage level and a more wishful vision suggested in the action above.

“In the air is all of the possibilities of art,” Klein explains, “so there is a back and forth between what was positive and creative and we could hope for, and what we actually did and the things that we would hope not to continue to do.”

The look of the show is patterned after works of Modernist artist Marc Chagall. Masks fashioned by Beckie Kravetz emulate the hauntingly expressive animal heads seen in many of Chagall’s paintings. Brian Fairley’s projection and sound design also help tell the story. There is no spoken text, except that found in historical recordings.

Though key personnel take the lead with respect to fashioning various elements of all Double Edge’s productions, they are very much group efforts. Double Edge was committed to devised theater long before the approach became a de rigueur practice on the fringe. The work exhibits a strong international influence, but its leaders are quick to cite the importance of the surrounding community in quiet Ashfield.

Argentine-born Uriona, who is also an accomplished puppeteer, says it’s become a source of “local pride” when the troupe tours around the country and the world. (Among other stops, “Parade” has also been to Moscow.) Which makes it unfortunate that Double Edge can’t perform this particular show at home, as it’s designed for a stage as big as its entire indoor theater. While developing it, Klein directed from the doorway.

In a bit of unexpected foreshadowing, when Double Edge was still based in Allston, its first-ever tour took it to Western Massachusetts. Klein remembers being unimpressed upon her first visit to the area. But she and her cohorts feel very differently now.

Uriona says his 19 years working at the farm offered an opportunity he hadn’t found in his previous professional travels.
In this business “it is very difficult, and almost impossible, to work on focus. You’re going from one job to another, you’re getting gigs, you have different performances you’re doing as an actor. It’s very difficult to sort of rein it in,” he says. “Coming here was transformative for me. At first I thought it’s impossible to develop a theater in an area like this. I was proven wrong.”

THE GRAND PARADE

Performed by

Double Edge Theatre

Presented by ArtsEmerson

At: Paramount Center Mainstage, April 30-May 3

Tickets: $25-$65,

617-824-8400, www.artsemerson.org