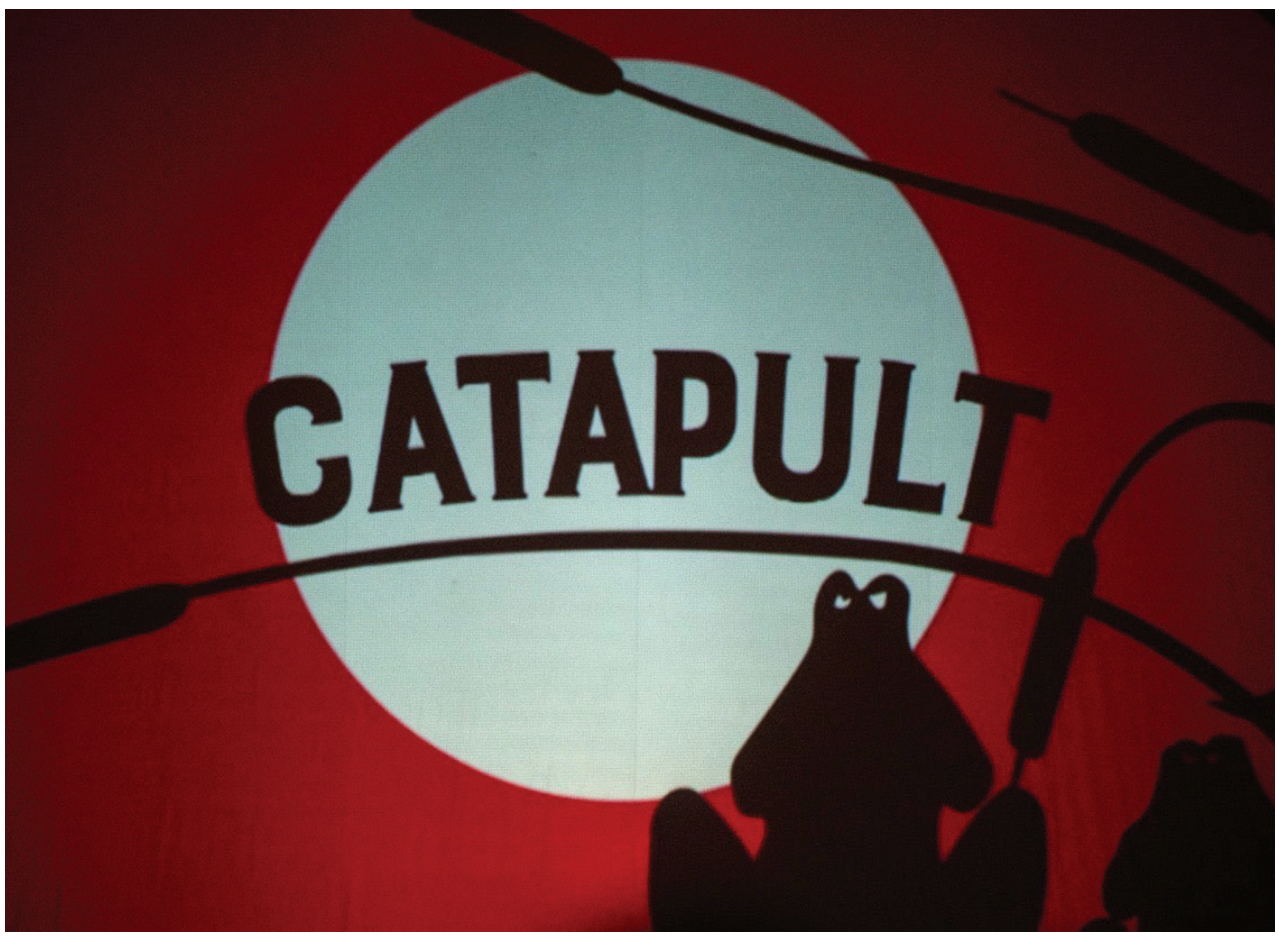
LIFE

CATAPULT'S 'MAGIC SHADOWS' SPELLBINDS JORGENSEN CENTER

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Catapult production arrives at UConn's Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts for their show on Sunday, Nov. 15, 2026. The show included professional puppeteers creating many different shapes and stories using only their bodies and music.

PHOTO BY PARKER PRYOR, CONTRIBUTOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Catapult put on an enchanting performance of "Magic Shadows" at the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on Sunday, Nov. 15.

Catapult is a shadow-illusion company based in Connecticut. It was formed in 2009 by its director Adam Battelstein.

Catapult has toured in numerous countries, such as Taiwan, China, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Sweden. In 2013, they were on "America's Got Talent," a reality show where performers compete for a $1 million dollar cash prize.

"That appearance initiated and ignited their international reputation," Bart Roccoberton Jr., the area head of the University of Connecticut's Puppet Arts Program, said.

"Catapult dancers are some of the best in the world; literally stars of the stage and screen," Battelstein wrote on Catapult's website. "Even though you may not have heard of them, they currently dance on Broadway, at the Met, on stages and film festivals around the world."

Jacalyn Stella, a seventh-semester communications major, said that the performance style was new to her.

"It was nothing that I've ever seen before," Stella said.

The show began with "Four Seasons," an amazing performance that took the audience through all four seasons in 15 minutes.

"Four Seasons" began with spring, with a background consisting of green leaves. While relaxing classical music played, the dancers did graceful twirls and leaps. They also formed spring elements, like flowers and frogs. To conclude the spring section, the dancers huddled together to display the shape of a butterfly.

Switching into summer, the background changed to a sunrise while the music became dramatic. The dancers formed palm trees, sandcastles, coral reefs, whales, dolphins and many other summer symbols.

In the fall section, the music returned to classical while the sunrise background turned into orange leaves. The dancers began the section by creating the shape of a tree with falling leaves. Afterwards, they morphed into fall flowers and Thanksgiving dishes. The dancers also portrayed someone eating an apple to its core.

Winter, the final part of "Four Seasons," had a snowy background and slow classical music. The dancers did magnificent twirls, created Christmas trees and performed a sledding imitation.

Catapult then switched gears with "Berlin Wall." Beginning by walking around the stage as guards, the dancers simulated many historical events related to the Berlin Wall, including both building it and tearing it down.

After "Berlin Wall" was "Milestones," a heartwarming performance about growing up. In the beginning, a girl built sandcastles on a beach. She eventually reached adulthood and graduated from high school. Not long after, she was married and had a child. The performance ended with a meeting between the girl's child and parents.

Next was "Spy," which received much applause. While suspense and pop music filled the air, the dancers illustrated a captivating narrative consisting of a wanted woman. When a spy tried to capture her in her home, she escaped and robbed a bank with her colleague. Afterwards, she broke someone free from prison. When she returned home, she was shot dead by the spy.

The fifth performance was "Angel." Throughout it, upbeat music played while a few dancers did gorgeous twirls and other dance moves. In the background, giant figures mocked their moves while leaving behind colorful trails, with colors ranging from red to pink and blue.

After "Angel" was "Bullies," which began with a girl being bullied in school. She eventually ran away and went on an adventure with her friend. In the adventure, the girl was exposed to new environments, including forests and the sea. When she and her friend returned home, the girl became more assertive towards bullies.

Next was "Balls of Fun," where groovy music played while the dancers put on a riveting scene full of enticing moves.

After "Balls of Fun" was "Go West," which painted a gloried image of 19th century United States and westward expansion. In the performance, the dancers illustrated saloons, deserts and other historic components of the western United States. They also transformed into a family traveling in a wagon.

Catapult returned to the ocean with "Mermaid." In the short yet outstanding performance, a dancer did serene ballet moves, acting like a mermaid. Laid-back electric music played to further enforce the performance's mermaid themes.

Next was "Traveller's Tale," another riveting performance consisting of a mother who traveled with her two children around the world. They visited numerous countries, such as France, Egypt and China.

"Magic Shadows" ended with "Encore," a recap of the previous numbers. For the act, all the dancers got together and showcased highlights from the show, including the butterfly from "Four Seasons" and the saloon from "Go West."

Stella said her favorite part of the show "was the encore when the dancers recreated all of their favorite little creations." She also said she loved the show in general.

"It was definitely very unique and innovative," Stella said.



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