



A Dream job

TRADITION dictates that deception, donkeys and drugs all get a run in Shakespeare's popular comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

But through English director Tim Supple's original vision, on top of the familiar elements, Perth International Arts Festival audiences will also experience Indian theatre, acrobatics and, as well as the bard's original prose, six sub-continental

languages. Following a trip to India in 2005, Supple was determined to draw his cast from Indian and Sri Lankan performance traditions.

"I found the mixture electric," he said.

"It was really exceptional to be in the same room together – the English-speaking, highly-educated actors from Mumbai performing with these kids from Delhi, or these boys from Chennai and highly skilled dancers from Kerala."

For Supple, *Dream* was an ideal vehicle to hold these disparate elements together.

"I was also looking for the piece of work that would best express or contain all the variety of performers that I was seeing and *Dream* seemed to welcome the great differences in performance styles."

He also put particular emphasis on making the various translations from English as true to the original prose as possible.

"It is 50 per cent of why the show works for the audience – even if you don't understand word for word what is being said on stage, it's done with rigour and rhythm."

Supple also wanted to use the strong physicality in many of the performers to flesh out the imaginative world of *Dream* where fairies perform aerial rituals and "lovers tear themselves to bits in the forest".

"It will give them a

hugely pleasurable encounter with performers that come from somewhere so different and do something so wonderful on stage that it will give you everything you want from the theatre: an extremely good time."

Supple has every right to feel confident about the Australian premiere with warm reviews and audiences greeting English performances.



A scene from Tim Supple's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.