

A Midsummer's Night Out

"Lord what fools these mortals be". This simple line is attributed to one of Shakespeare's most successful and popular plays in the modern era, "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*".

This particular adaptation, performed at His Royal Majesty's theatre in the heart of Perth was far from the traditional context so many have come to love. Instead, the director insisted upon a modern Indian style comedy, with a touch of Bollywood that cannot be left out of any Indian production.

The play was based upon four love riddled mortals, a group of playwrights and an entire clan of mischievous fairies.

The play didn't lend itself well to an Indian style production. It challenged the audience to question the identity of fairies through a change in the stereotypical costume.

This clashed with the complicated storyline, causing confusion amongst the audience. Titania, the fairy queen, played by Archana Ramaswamy wore similar costumes to the mortals Helena and Hermia. One would think a fairy queen would be more extravagantly dressed than mere mortals. Thankfully this didn't create any problems within the story line though as they never came into direct contact.

The standout performance was that of the fairies. They moved aggressively, causing a mix of madness and mayhem amongst the astounded audience. Their presence on stage was nothing short of amazing. The way they moved up the ladders and danced around the stage caused havoc throughout the audience. Their aggressive body language clashed with the kind fairies so many audience members have grown up with.

When these fairies appeared on stage, the lighting immediately dulled, to symbolize night and mystery. It put the audience in a state of unease. However once Oberon and Titania appeared (the fairy king and queen) the spotlight immediately focused on them. This was vital due to the fact that it symbolized leadership among the fairies and it aided in identifying exactly who the main characters were and the impact they had.

One of the hardest parts of the play to understand was the different languages. There were seven Indian based languages and English. If you were not paying attention to what they were saying in English then the entire play could have become a nightmare. However, the main lines of the play were spoken in English including the final, most important ones of all. The language barrier during the play created a dream like state. You didn't know exactly what was going on but as soon as English was spoken again relief took over.

This play, although at times hard to understand and connect with, overall achieved great success. The fairies were entertaining and exciting to watch, the storyline, although confusing in many parts was amazing, and the overall acting on the night was skillful and talented. It felt like a dream and as a Puck would say, "You have but slumbered here, while these visions did appear, so good night unto you all, give me your hands, if we be friends, and robin shall restore amends."