

## A Midsummer Night's Dream Review

By Elyce Lines

“Love does not see with the eyes, but with the mind”.

This quote is not only a line from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but it is also the play's plot in one sentence. A play about three couples, a group of fairies, a band of workmen-come-actors and three love potions got awry. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* explores love and all the degrees, and how it affects one's judgment, reason and mental state. Interpreted by Tim Supple, for Dash Arts, this production is a fusion of the Indian Bollywood culture and traditional Shakespeare.

The main aspects of Indian society that were noticeable in this version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were the traditional dance sequences, colourful costume choices, and the language spoken. Although an interesting cultural feature, the change of language mid-sentence caused confusion to many an audience member, myself included. Some of the more famous quotes from the play were spoken in one of the many Indian languages used, which some said had ruined the Shakespearean effect.

If you think you would be affected by the language change, all is not lost, as the play is a visual feast. With a bamboo structure lining the back wall, and sand covering the floor, the audience feels as though it is in India itself. On either side of the stage are the music pits, with an Indian man in each, playing traditional instruments, of which the sounds fill His Majesty's Theatre. The simple, yet effective, music reflects the Indian culture and adds to the vibrant atmosphere.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a comedy about love, although Tim Supple's version tends to focus more on the sexual, lustful side, unseen in previous traditional Shakespearean productions. The love between characters is not shown through words, but rather through physical acts, such as kissing, and rolling around on the sand, ripping off clothing. I would not recommend it for persons under the age of about 13, as some scenes could be considered quite raunchy.

Overall, the Dash Arts' performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was thoroughly entertaining, though confusing if you were not overly familiar with the play. It showed the key story lines of the play in an entertaining manner, as well as adding a unique spin. The heavy Bollywood influence was not only a great visual, but it also gave the audience another angle from which to look at Shakespeare. It could be said that this interpretation was more interesting than a strict English version, as the language changes and obvious cultural differences gave Shakespeare a fresh look. In conclusion, if you are bored and looking for a change from traditional Shakespeare, but want to keep the story, then this is the production for you.