



# DREAMING INDIA

DESCRIBED AS 'SENSATIONAL' AND 'RAVISHING AND ENCHANTING', TIM SUPPLE'S UNIQUE PRODUCTION OF *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* HAS BEEN BRINGING AUDIENCES TO THEIR FEET ACROSS INDIA AND THE UK.

IN MARCH THIS REMARKABLE PROJECT, FEATURING OVER TWENTY INDIAN AND SRI LANKAN ACTORS, DANCERS, MUSICIANS, ACROBATS AND MARTIAL ARTISTS PLAYS AT SYDNEY THEATRE, AFTER SEASONS AT THE PERTH AND ADELAIDE FESTIVALS. TIM SUPPLE SHEDS LIGHT ON HIS EXPERIENCES CREATING THIS BREATHTAKING PRODUCTION.

## How did the show come about? Why were you brought on to do the project?

In the Autumn of 2004 I was contacted by the British Council and asked if I wanted to come to India and make a show with Indian actors. I accepted the invitation and made my first trip in January 2005 when I visited Jaipur, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore. At the end of that first trip we decided that we would do *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and that we would cast it from India and Sri Lanka.

On the second trip I met hundreds of actors. It was a fantastic experience for me working with such an enormous range of performers from very different social backgrounds and very different performance backgrounds. I wanted at those auditions actors, dancers, musicians, choreographers; the biggest range as possible of performers. We then organised a third trip, a re-call of 60 people in Mumbai. At the end of that time I took away video and my own memories and could then choose the 22 that became the cast.

## Can you tell us about the audition process?

I remember going to Delhi and being taken to the ghetto where cast members Dharminder, Ram, and Lakhan live with their family. This place is a community of about 1000 families in a very poor part of Delhi. They are Rajasthani gypsy street performers so their arts are acrobatic, magician's, tricks of the body, and so on - fantastic performers. One of the most powerful memories was being driven there and getting out of a car

on a completely pot-holed street and being welcomed into this incredible performance in a tiny courtyard by guys on stilts and people blowing fire, fantastic drumming, a woman singing, and puppets dancing. The roof was completely covered in 3 rows of kids from around the area who had come to see the performers in the ghetto show off their talents. It was a seething, totally energised event and I remember feeling such a great, huge sense of theatre at its most raw and urgent. It's as if it had to be enjoyed, it had to be seen and it had to be done. It was wild, and in the end they stopped the show as they were worried about all the kids on the roof! That had a big effect on me, and Dharminder and Ram impressed me very much. Ram did some fantastic yoga contortions and rather wonderful stuff and I thought he was very interesting. Dharminder's skills are bending bits of metal around his neck and diving through fire!

## How did the audiences react to the show at The Complete Works Festival at the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-Upon-Avon? Did the success surprise you?

It was overwhelming. After India I told the cast not to expect standing ovations at Stratford as I had never seen one for a Shakespeare production. Musicals get standing ovations and often in the dance world, but it's just not done for Shakespeare. My gut feeling was that people would like it but we didn't expect it. Then, the first preview. A very traditional Stratford audience filed in and it was a really, really moving occasion for us and the audience too when

at the end they just stood and roared. These people who see Shakespeare all the time! The cast were in tears and it was a really big event for all of us. I wasn't just surprised, I was overwhelmed. That happened at every one of the 12 performances. Maybe the challenge for us is to not expect it as we got it 12 times in a row in Stratford!

## Why should people come to see the show?

People should come because it will give them an experience they won't have had before. It will give you everything you want from the theatre: an extremely good time, a rich and moving experience; it's exciting, it's a blooming good story and it's Shakespeare who we know and love. The production has such great heart and great skill that I have not seen one audience who have not been completely won over by this rich, warm, group of performers. Four dances and songs, what more could you want anyway - it's almost a musical!!!

FOR AN EXTENDED INTERVIEW WITH TIM SUPPLE PLEASE GO TO [SYDNEYTHEATRE.COM.AU](http://SYDNEYTHEATRE.COM.AU) AND FOLLOW THE LINKS TO THE PRODUCTION PAGE.

[A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM](#)  
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