

Cast/creative team biogs:

<u>NAME (Character) - Performance Languages</u>	<u>Short Biography</u>
Ajay Kumar (Philostrate, Puck) – Hindi, English	Ajay started his theatre career in Patna in <i>Bidesiya</i> (1989), an acclaimed play by the group Nirman Kala Manch. After graduating in 2000 from the National School of Drama (NSD), New Delhi, he performed with their repertory company for two years. He has also worked under reputed directors like Naseeruddin Shah, Bansi Kaul, Roysten Abel, Anuradha Kapur and Ram Gopal Bajaj. He received training in 'Theatre Music' under B.V. Karanth, Sanjay Upadhyay and Bhaskar Chahrawarker. He has worked as a music director, singer and lyricist in over 30 plays, and teaches theatre music at the NSD. He also performs in films and television serials. Ajay is currently working on musical recitation of poetry and <i>Katha-gayan</i> - a traditional form in which a soloist acts as well as sings the narrative. He also translates scripts, including the Hindi sections in this production.
Archana Ramaswamy (Hippolyta, Titania) – Malayalam and English	Archana is a trained classical dancer with formative training in Bharatanatyam. However since 2003, she has been studying Odissi as well. As a dancer she has performed in India and abroad. Her theatre credits include Tamil and English productions with the groups Koothu-p-Pattarai, Chennai, Magic Lantern, Chennai and Ranan, Kolkata, among others. She has also participated in numerous Tamil films and television serials. Today she is settled in Mumbai, where she is a familiar face in the annual Prithvi Theatre Festival organizing team.
Ashwatthama JD (Peter Quince) – Hindi, English	JD's theatre involvement began during his high-school days with Safdar Hashmi's activist theatre group Jan Natya Manch in Kota. He studied theatre at Rajasthan University and Punjab University, and then specialized in acting at the National School of Drama, New Delhi. He founded the Hawari Theatre Family in his native Ajmer (2001), devoted to training young actors to participate in theatre with social relevance. Thus far, they have produced <i>Riders to the Sea</i> , <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> and <i>The Quare Fellow</i> , as well as some Hindi scripts and improvised plays. Over the last two years, JD has conducted theatre workshops with various sections of society, including prisoners, sex workers and their children, slum dwellers and students. His play <i>Ek Qatra Khoon</i> toured India and opened the 21 st International Fadjr Theatre Festival in Tehran, receiving the Festival Award for Excellence. The English version, <i>A Drop of Blood</i> , was presented in Toronto, where JD won the Dora Award for outstanding male actor. Recently, he worked in Germany in a play called <i>Explosion</i> , directed by Ingo Toben.
Chandan Roy Sanyal (Lysander) – Bengali, English	Chandan is a nomad of sorts. Bitten by the theatre bug in Delhi at the age of 19, he moved to Bhopal where he worked with Habib Tanvir's famed Naya Theatre. Returning to Delhi, he learnt the martial dance form of Chhau and helped form a college theatre troupe, Antara. In search of broader horizons he moved to Mumbai in 2002, supporting his theatre career with a job as a lecturer in mathematics. He has been a regular fixture since on the Mumbai stage, working extensively for Q Theatre Productions, and also acted in Alyque Padamsee's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> and <i>P. Dialogues</i> . In 2004, he formed Proscenium Theatre - dedicated to rejuvenating Hindi theatre in Mumbai, directing Vijay Tendulkar's <i>Sakharam Binder</i> and Mohan Rakesh's <i>Ashadh Ka Ek Din</i> . He has acted in cinema too, with roles in Ananth Mahadevan's <i>Staying Alive</i> and with Aamir Khan in Rakeysh Mehra's <i>Rang De Basanti</i> .

D. Padmakumar (Fairy) –
Malayalam, English

Better known as Pappan, he learnt Nadana Bhushanam from the Swathy Thirunal College of Music, Thiruvananthapuram and also trained in Bharatnatyam. He soon switched to Kerala's martial art form, Kalarippayat. Since then he has worked with some of the foremost performance companies in India, such as K. N. Panikkar's Sopanam, Daksha Sheth's Aarti Group of Performing Arts and Mallika Sarabhai's Darpana Academy. Over the years Pappan garnered numerous awards, including the Gramashree Award of Nooranad Panchayat, Kerala (2002). He is now with the Darpana Academy, Ahmedabad, where he performs and choreographs pieces based on contemporary movement.

D. Prakash (Musician:
percussion, wind)

Prakash inherits his performer's instinct directly from his father and grandfather who were accomplished theatre folk in their own right. His father instructed him in the mrandangam when he was a child, and since then he has mastered percussion, using multiple folk instruments. For the last eight years he has contributed to Government of India projects as an actor and composer for numerous street plays; creating awareness about the AIDS, environment and Education For All. Recently he worked with the Meena Swaminathan Research Foundation, where he composed and performed with a eunuch theatre troupe. He has also worked with Anita Ratnam's Arangam Trust. Currently he works in Chennai with the famous Tamil company Koothu-p-Pattarai as a percussionist.

Devissaro (Music Director)

Dev is a musician, composer and photographer of Australian origin, living in India for the last 25 years. Trained in Australia as a classical pianist, he later studied Dhruvad vocal music for six years in Delhi, as well as Hindustani classical Bansuri (flute) and Pakhawaj (drums). Since 1986, Devissaro has been Co-Artistic Director of the Daksha Sheth Dance Company, creating experimental dance productions such as *Chhaya*, *Yagna*, *Search for My Tongue*, *Sarpagati*, *Bhukham* and *Postcards from God*. Devissaro is also founder-director and composer of the world music group Asima - a vocal and percussion ensemble which combines harmonic elements of Western music with a wide range of Indian traditions including Vedic chanting, Hindustani and Carnatic classical. Devissaro also works as a freelance composer writing music for stage, film, television and commercials.

Dharminder Pawar (Fairy) –
Hindi

Dharminder belongs to a traditional acrobat family from Pune, the popular Bajaniya Nat street entertainers. He was born and brought up in a slum in Delhi and learnt acrobatics from his father. He started his career at an early age as an itinerant acrobat, travelling across India with his parents. He performed in Spain, too, as part of *Jiyo Beggars' Opera Revisited* (2005), a Sarthi production. Recently he has worked in the theatre under Roysten Abel and Rajeev Sethi as well as in Vishal Bharadwaj's film, *The Blue Umbrella*.

Faezeh Jalali (Fairy) –
English

After taking her first steps on stage under the guidance of Pearl Padamsee while still in school, Faezeh went to the US for a theatre education. She returned in 2004 with a Bachelor's Degree in Theatre (Acting and Directing) from Beloit College, and an MFA in Theatre (Performance) from the Clarence Brown Professional Actor Training Programme at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and is now active in the Mumbai theatre circuit. Some productions she has done include *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek* (The Industrial Theatre Co.), *Three Sisters* (Clarence Brown Theatre Prod.), *Arms and the Man* (Tennessee Stage Co.) among others. She has a strong physical theatre and dance background, and since this production has also developed an immense love for rope and cloth climbing.

J. Jayakumar (Egeus,
Fairy) – English, Tamil

JK began his theatre career in 1984. Since then he has acted in and directed plays, films and television shows. He has played the lead in productions of Moliere's *Don Juan*, Camus' *Caligula*, Max Frisch's *Andorra*, W. E. Schafer's *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Five Seconds* and Shakespeare's *Richard III*. He has received training in the Tamil folk dances Devarattam and Paraiattam, Theru-k-koothu (traditional Tamil theatre), Thanjavur Kuthuvarisai, Kaniyan Koothu, the martial arts of Silambam (Tamil), Thang-Ta (Manipuri) and Tai-Chi. Taught in actor-training methodologies developed at Koothu-p-Pattarai, Western theatre, mime, clowning, gymnastics, acrobatics and yoga, he passes this knowledge down to future generations by conducting workshops for theatre groups, colleges and schools in Chennai. At present he is actively involved with the theatre group Magic Lantern, Chennai.

Jitu Shastri (Snug) – Hindi,
English

A graduate of the National School of Drama (NSD), New Delhi Jitu has been working in the theatre for the last 30 years. His stints with the Rangamandal Repertory Company in Bhopal and the NSD Repertory in New Delhi have allowed him to work with directors like Ebrahim Alkazi, B.V. Karanth, Vijaya Mehta, Barry John, Peter Brook, Ratan Thiyam, Neelam Mansingh, Rajendra Gupta, K. Panikkar, Anuradha Kapoor, Rustom Barucha and many others. In cinema, he worked in Shekhar Kapur's *Bandit Queen* and Ketan Mehta's *Maya Memsaab*. He currently resides in Mumbai.

Joy Fernandes (Bottom) –
English, Marathi and Hindi

A graduate in chemistry and a post graduate English Literature, Joy recently founded Attic Salt Theatre - a group that specialises in the serious business of comedy. He has acted for directors like Naseeruddin Shah, Vikram Kapadia, Rajat Kapoor and others in Mumbai. Shakespeare has a special place in his heart and he has performed in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice* and a Hindi version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He has attended workshops on mime, movement and children's theatre under experts from France, Japan and India. He is also a regular on television, in feature films and ad films.

Joyraj Bhattacharya
(Francis Flute) – Bengali,
English, Hindi.

A child actor for the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) performing street theatre, Joy worked in school plays and amateur groups in his Kolkatta neighbourhood. After a theatre training course under Shyamanand Jalan at Padatik, Kolkata and workshops with Richard Schettner, Satyadev Dubey and Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai, he joined the leading Bengali group Chetana in 1998. He acted in their repertory productions directed by Arun Mukhopadhyay – *Marich Sambad*, *Jagannath* and *M*. He also trained in several folk and martial art forms. In 2000, he performed in Suman Mukhopadhyay's widely acclaimed *Tista Parer Brittanto*, followed by the lead role in Mukhopadhyay's *Samay-Asamayer Brittanto* (2002). In 2005, he acted the young protagonist of Mukhopadhyay's film *Herbert* (based on Nabarun Bhattacharya's Sahitya Akademi Award winning novel) and in a dance-theatre production, *Versedance*.

Kaushik Dutta (Musician:
guitar, strings, percussion)

Kaushik has been involved with music for over 30 years as performer, composer, sound designer and studio engineer. An accomplished multi-instrumentalist, he has designed sound for ELAN (European Live Arts Network, 2003), scored music for the Special Olympics and songs that were recently sung by 400 children at the *Festival of Joy* in Bangalore (2005). He has composed for theatre, ad films and documentaries and ran a recording studio for 25 years. Outside of music, his main passion remains documentary filmmaking. He has made documentaries on Ganga Sagar, street urchins and numerous social service activities in his native West Bengal.

Kavita Puri Arora (Stage Manager)

Kavita loves words - spoken words, written words, dramatised words, filmed words and Scrabble words. Kavita has spent her life working in various communication mediums – radio, film, print, television and most recently book-publishing. However she has always kept in touch with the theatre, working as production manager, stage manager, designer and actor in numerous productions with the likes of Lillete Dubey, Vivek Mansukhani, Parnab Mukherjee, Kavita Nagpal and Roysten Abel. She has directed plays for Drama Queen Theatre, which is dedicated to the enjoyment of drama of all sorts.

M. Palani (Fairy, Rope work instructor) – Tamil.

Palani has spent his entire performing life either dancing to a rhythm or defying gravity, mostly with Chennai based theatre troupe Koothu-pattarai. After training under his grandfather in the Tamil folk form Therukoothu, Palani went on to learn Thappattam (traditional community dance), Silambam (stick fighting), Kalarippayat (Kerala martial art), Acrosanas (acrobatic yoga), Tai-ci-quan (Chinese martial art), Thudumbu (Mettupalayam drumming), Bharatnatyam and other physical theatre styles. He is also an accomplished mask maker and has worked with groups like Anita Ratnam's Arangam Trust and Narendra Kumar's Anusham Dance Company.

N. Tiken Singh: (Musician, Wind, Strings, Percussion).

Tiken is a music composer, choreographer, ethno-musicologist and director of Progressive Artiste Laboratory (PAL) in Imphal. He is also an accomplished instructor of Manipuri Dance. He has composed music for ballets, dance dramas, films, documentaries, and has even performed in UK based productions like *The Jungle Book* (1994-95) and *Haroun and the Sea Stories* (1998). A multi-instrumentalist, Tiken is as at home with the Violin, Trumpet and Saxophone as he is with traditional Manipuri instruments. As director of PAL, he has ensured that the legacy of classical Manipuri music and dance is passed down to future generations.

P. R. Jijoy (Theseus, Oberon) – Malayalam, English

Jijoy's interest in theatre has always been very physical. Basic training in Kalarippayat (Kerala martial art), karate, mime and Kathakali testifies to this. He has worked with many international artists such as Maya Tongbergh, Finland and Eugenia Kanapugo, Mexico and is also trained in Carnatic classical music. He has performed in a number of plays, films and radio dramas in his native Thrissur (Kerala). A graduate of the School of Drama, Calicut University, Jijoy is now doing his M. Phil. in Performing Arts from Pondicherry University, on the theatrical elements in the rituals of Sri Kuttichathan Madom, a religious cult in central Kerala.

Prasanna Mahagamage (Demetrius) – Sinhala, English

Prasanna has been actively involved in Sri Lankan theatre since 1997 as part of *Mother Courage*, *Macbeth*, *Blood Wedding* and numerous children's theatre productions. His participation in the Lanka Children's and Youth Theatre Organization, Colombo, headed by Somalatha Subasinghe, has taken him to festivals in France and South Korea. He has also done television and film work, notably the award-winning *Scent of a Lotus Pond* directed by Satyajit Maitipe. Prasanna has attended numerous workshops conducted by the faculty of the National School of Drama, New Delhi, including D. R. Ankur. At present he resides in Colombo.

Quasar Thakore Padamsee (Assistant Director)

Quasar began his theatre career as an actor. Soon, better sense prevailed, and he moved away from the arc lights to the "shadow" side of the theatre. Since 1999, he has directed and produced over 20 plays with the Mumbai based theatre company Q Theatre Productions; including *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, *All My Sons*, *The Urban Burden*, *Minorities* and many others about contemporary social concerns. He also works as lighting designer, stage manager, conducts workshops and is a passionate crusader for the survival of theatre in the public consciousness. When not in the rehearsal room, he can be found on the nearest cricket ground.

Ram Pawar (Boy) – Hindi

The youngest member of the company, Ram is nine years old and is an incredibly supple and agile acrobat. He is from the same Bajaniya Nat family as his brother, Dharminder. Like him he was also trained by their parents and has performed all over India and even in Holland. His theatre work, so far, includes plays with Roysten Abel.

Shanaya Rafaat (Helena) – English

Shanaya began pursuing her acting dream while chasing down a Bachelor's Degree in English Literature from Mumbai University. Now a regular with The Industrial Theatre Co. (ITCO), she has acted in their productions of *Hayavadana*, *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* and *The Maids* among others. She is also a three-time winner of the Thespo Theatre Festival's Best Actress Award for *Beyond Therapy* (2001), *The Shadow Box* (2002) and *First Edition* (2004). Over the last three years she has been acting prolifically in Mumbai with ITCO, Actor's Guild, Q Theatre Productions, On Cue, Poor Box Productions and 28 Productions. Shanaya has been training in classical piano for the last ten years and was about to send her applications to drama school, when she got absorbed into *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Shankar Arora (Production Manager)

Shankar gave up the corporate grind to concentrate on a life in the arts. After an active presence on the college theatre circuit, he moved on to work as assistant director, director and stage manager on numerous productions in New Delhi. The highlight being when he got to work backstage with Shared Experience Theatre, London's *Jane Eyre* India Tour. A short span at the British Council New Delhi's Arts Division, allowed him to interact with numerous British theatre productions including *Medea*, *Shylock* and *Hannah & Hanna*. Shankar, along with his wife, Kavita, has recently formed *Drama Queen Theatre*, a theatre group that works out of New Delhi.

Sumant Jayakrishnan (Set and Costume Designer)

Sumant is a scenographer, designer, installation artist and theatre person based in New Delhi. Trained in visual communication at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, he also studied theatre design and scenic techniques at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, London on a Charles Wallace Award. In 1995, the Embassy of France in India awarded him a performing arts grant to train in puppetry, lighting design and theatre in France. A recipient of the Sanskriti Award in 2001, he received a Fulbright Arts Fellowship as a visiting scholar to New York University in 2002. His work spans the entire spectrum of design today, from contemporary theatre and dance to exhibition, fashion, art direction for film and international events.

T. Gopalakrishnan (Robin Starveling) – Malayalam, English

Known in the Kerala theatre circuit as 'Thrissur Gopalji', he graduated with a Bachelor of Theatre Arts from the School of Drama, Calicut University. He has directed and acted in amateur and theatre for twelve years. The many awards he has won include a Junior Fellowship from the Department of Culture as well as a Special Jury Award for Acting in the All-Kerala Professional Drama Competition conducted by the Government of Kerala (2002) and several as best director and best comedian in state-level competitions.

Tapan Das (Fairy) - Bengali

Tapan is a typical rural theatre practitioner – he earns his living selling fish in the local market and also works as Assistant Director for the Alternative Living Theatre (Probir Guha's acclaimed Third-Theatre group, outside Kolkatta), with whom he has been performing for sixteen years. Accomplished in psycho-physical theatre, he is a specialist in various martial art forms from all over India and abroad, and has worked with theatre personalities like Bansi Kaul, Ashok Mukhopadhyay and Sunil Pokhre. He has also worked in Shyamanand Jalan's film *Pantomime*.

Toral Shah (Stage Manager).

Toral never intended to join the theatre. What began as a way of helping out friends has developed into a passion for theatre production. As part of Q Theatre Productions (QTP), she has been producer, stage manager and art director on a number of plays including *All My Sons*, *The Birthday Party*, *Kindertransport* among others. She is also one of the driving forces of Thespo - a theatre festival run in Bangalore and Mumbai, aimed at recognising and promoting plays done by youth groups. She was also the Assistant Director on the BBC radio play of Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*. In 2005, she worked on a play at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and also a dance based show in Australia. Toral vehemently opposes getting on to stage, unless it is to place or clear a prop.

Umesh Jagtap (Tom Snout) – Marathi

After obtaining a Master's Degree in drama from Centre for Performing Arts (Pune University) under Satish Alekar, Umesh has been performing on the Marathi stage for the last six years. During this time, he has worked with renowned directors like Chetan Datar, Sambhaji Bhosale, Dilip Bhosale and many others. Hailing from Tuljapur in Maharashtra but now residing in Mumbai, he has been working extensively with Chetan Datar's experimental Marathi theatre troupe Awishkar. His most recent role was as Saddam Hussein in Datar's *Iraq* in 2005.

Yuki Elias (Hermia) – English

Yuki began her acting career at the age of 15. Working with Rehaan Engineer, Atul Kumar and Quasar Thakore Padamsee, she went on to help found Q Theatre Productions. Since 1996, she has acted in Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*, Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana* and Michael Frayn's *Noises Off*, among other productions, in Mumbai. In 2003 she made the journey to France, where she recently graduated from the reputed International School of Theatre Jacques Lecoq. Aside from acting, her other passion is the Bansuri (bamboo flute) - which she has been actively pursuing for almost 10 years.

Zuleikha Chaudhari (Lighting Designer)

After graduating from Bennington College (USA) in 1995 with a major in Theatre Directing and Lighting Design, Zuleikha returned to India and worked on numerous productions in both capacities. In 1999, she received the Rotary Club Youth Excellence Award for Theatre and in 2001, the Charles Wallace India Trust Award. She has worked as a lighting designer for such esteemed directors as Anuradha Kapur, Neelam Mansingh Chowdhary, Roysten Abel, Rajat Kapoor, Atul Kumar, Rehaan Engineer, Aditi Mangaldas, Tripurari Sharma and Barry John.