



DANCE
Shiamak Davar Dance Company
Bend it like Bollywood

National Theatre
20 September 2008
Running time: 120 minutes
Reviewer: Jordan Beth Vincent, The Age

With all the hip shaking, costume changes and sequins requisite of any good Bollywood production, Bend it like Bollywood brings the charisma and excess of Indian cinema to life onstage at the National Theatre. With dances from well-known Bollywood choreographer Shiamak Davar, the show presents a fusion of hip hop, jazz and Indian Classical dance to the upbeat strains of the Bollywood hit machine.

More than just the music and the choreography are recognisable—the show is also a platform for some familiar faces from the silver screen.

In this case, the screen is not just silver, but an explosion of brilliant oranges, pinks and yellows, plus the gleaming reflections of thousands of spangles, glittered shawls and sequins. Costumes, backdrops and Davar's choreography have all been shipped direct from India to Melbourne for the production, which celebrates the magic of one of the biggest movie industries in the world.

The program features a retrospective of bygone Bollywood eras, including a surprise 'appearance' from the Indian Elvis of the 1960's, Shammi Kapoor, played by Vihang Nikhalje. Dressed in a white polyester suit, Nikhalje shimmies, shakes and struts his stuff across the stage, much to the delight of those audience members old enough to remember the days when Kapoor was king.

The show also includes an extravagant Bollywood wedding medley, a celebration of the sexy divas who grace the cinema screen, and a cute number by the Shiamak Show Kids, a group of children aged eight to twelve, who showcase their budding Bollywood dance skills.

With vibrant costumes, catchy music, and dancing in the aisles, this show makes toe-tapping an involuntary response. There is no denying the fun of Bend it like Bollywood, or the delight that can come from letting go and experimenting with a little Bollywood-style shimmy in your seat.