



## Theatr Iolo and Transporter In India #WalesinKolkata





## We create theatre for young minds



Theatr Iolo is an award-winning theatre company, which has been at the forefront of theatre for children and young people for over thirty years. Babies, children, teenagers, families, pupils and teachers have enjoyed performances, workshops and productions from the company in all kinds of spaces across Wales, the UK and internationally.

We create quality experiences that are stimulating, surprising and special for children of all ages and backgrounds, to help them make sense of the world around them and discover their place in it.

We create and produce the best work for children and young people on a national, UK wide and international level, working with the best artists and writers, to ignite creativity and stir the imagination in both English and Welsh.

*“first class theatre... stripped bare of pretension. If only grown-up theatre were as good”* Western Mail

*“children’s theatre doesn’t come any better”* British Theatre Guide

Embarking on a new chapter under the artistic leadership of Lee Lyford we will be continuing to build on our reputation and have lots of exciting plans for the next three years and beyond.

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### Theatr Iolo in Kolkata

Theatr Iolo presented the Theatr Iolo and The Riverfront production of **Transporter**, which was written and performed by Catherine Dyson, Directed by Andy Smith with an original soundtrack by Lewis Gibson at the **Tata Steel Junior Kolkata Literary Meet** at the Victoria Memorial Hall in Kolkata. **Catherine Dyson** also delivered writing and performing workshops to young people at **ThinkArts Corner** and helped them to present the work they created at the Literary Meet.

In total there was engagement with at least 589 people – 200 young people at the schools performance, 79 at the public performance, 10 participants in the workshops and over 300 people in the audience at the presentation.

Transporter was part of Wales in Kolkata, a season of Welsh arts activity and collaboration that took place in Kolkata in January 2019. Supported by the British Council and Wales Arts International, Wales in Kolkata was a result of the relationships and networks formed by the 2017/18 #IndiaWales season, a major programme of artistic collaboration between Wales and India.

**This Theatr Iolo tour to India was made possible by ThinkArts, Tata Steel Junior Kolkata Literary Meet, British Council and Wales Arts International.**

## Transporter Performances in Kolkata

Theatr lolo and The Riverfront present

# TRANSPORTER

Written and performed by Catherine Dyson, Directed by Andy Smith with an original soundtrack by Lewis Gibson

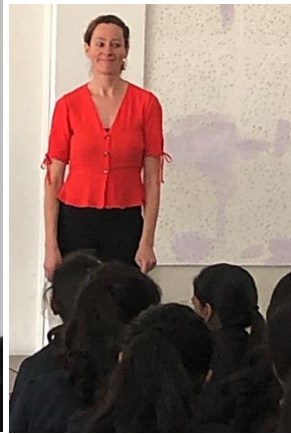


So, what's it like round here? The unheard, unbelievable true story of a girl called Maya; forever thirteen, forever on the move. Written and performed by Catherine Dyson, in collaboration with Andy Smith and Lewis Gibson. Funny, fearless and frightening, *Transporter* explores themes of identity, difference, conflict, and what it means to come or not come from somewhere.

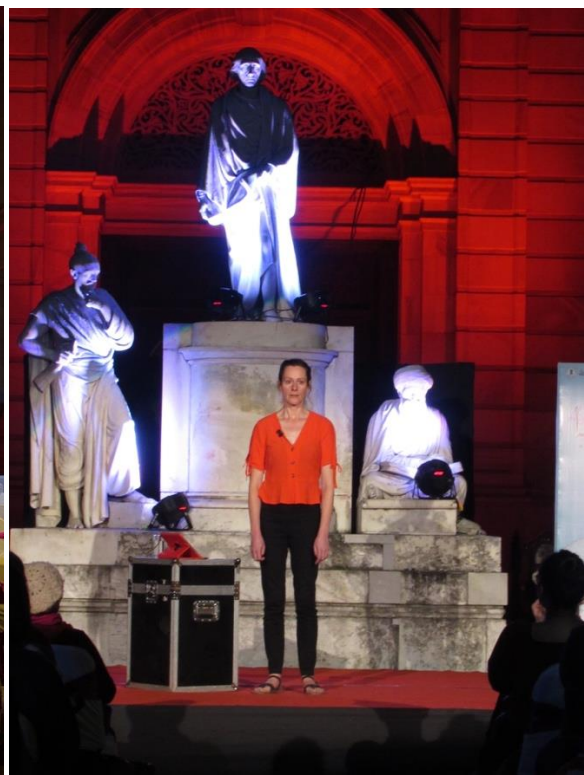
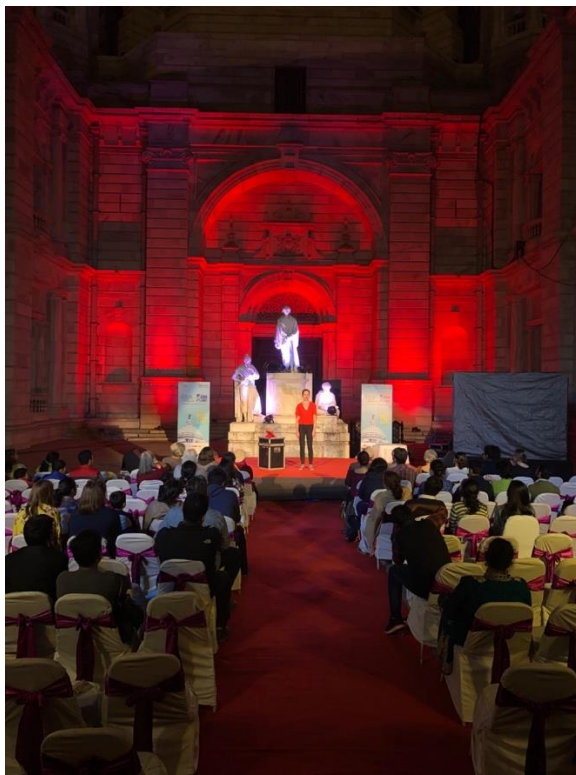
*Transporter* tells the story of Maya, a girl who is constantly on the move. We meet Maya as she stands on the threshold of a new house in an ordinary city. From this everyday moment an epic story is woven, spanning decades and continents. Maya – forever thirteen – is both ordinary and extraordinary; schoolgirl, time traveller, shaman. Tales of classroom conflicts, flights across deserts, ice cream dreams and thwarted revolutions weave together, and the local and the global, the personal and political collide.

Developed through Theatr lolo's artist development programme, Platform, *Transporter* was born out of conversations with young people from the city of Newport, South Wales. In a year that witnessed the Grenfell Tower fire, an unprecedented rise in homeless families in the UK, and entire populations on the move, together we considered the questions: What does home mean? Is there a safe place left on Earth? How do we navigate our way through a world that appears to be in ruins?

**Catherine Dyson** is a writer and performer. She is Associate Artist with RedCape Theatre with whom she writes and performs, most recently *Thunder Road*, which was first shown in the Calm Down Dear Festival at Camden People's Theatre and is currently touring the UK. Writing credits include *Be Brave and Leave For The Unknown* (RedCape, national tour), *We Don't Live Here Anymore* (South Street Arts and Pulse), *My Electric Soul* (Sherman Theatre) *The Red Hair* (Dirty Protest), *If We Were Fish*, (BBC Radio Wales), and *In Ruins*, a site specific performance performed by a group of school girls in Reading Abbey Ruins. As a performer and deviser, she has collaborated with companies and individuals such as Chris Goode, National Theatre Scotland and Uninvited Guests. Other current projects include a residency with National Theatre Wales in collaboration with a group of young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and a new play for RedCape Theatre about women and protest through time.



**Catherine performed Transporter at the Modern High School for Girls, 78 Syed Amir Ali Avenue, Kolkata, 700019 on Tuesday 22 January 2019 to just over 200 young people and teachers.**



**Catherine also performed Transporter at the Tata Steel Junior Kolkata Literary Meet on Wednesday 23 January 2019 to a public audience of 79 people in the Western Quadrangle of the Victoria Memorial Hall in the centre of Kolkata.**

Transporter Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwEhdd3uQfs&t=5s>

Transporter Press Images:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nuk5fkg66bf1yqw/AAB5udGJZR6AENRrpnFrNrN8a?dl=0>

## Workshops delivered by Catherine Dyson



### From Empty Space To Epic Story - Building a Solo Performance.

#### **What do we need to tell a story? How can we make something out of nothing?**

Writer/Performer Catherine Dyson delivered three 3-hour workshops at ThinkArts Corner. Catherine took 10 participants through a series of practical writing exercises exploring ideas of writing and presentation, content and form, as well as unique approaches to generating and presenting material. The exercises demonstrated how their own lives and memories can be used as a powerful source for drama, how 'instant stories' can be created by using language in unexpected ways, and how the form and shape of writing can reflect its content.

The workshops built towards each participant writing a micro solo performance. They then worked with simple performance and devising techniques to bring each piece to life, showing how stories of unlimited scope can be created in an empty space, using only our voices and bodies.

Catherine hosted a couple of Skype sessions with the participants before heading out to India, so they could get to know each other a bit and make sure everyone could get the most out of the workshops. Catherine also set them a short exercise to start things off by asking them to write something about themselves. The final 10 young people who took part in both workshops and the final presentation wrote as follows;

1. **ROSHNI** - I won't say I don't write, I wrote quite a bit as a child, English was my favourite class and I loved the emphasis England's education had on creative writing. Wasn't for everyone but it certainly was for me. I lost the hang of it completely ever since I shifted to India. Adjusting to a new way of life, an educational system that required much more memorising of data and intense studying than I was used to, the pressures Indian (and most Asian) children face from society to get "good" grades and get into a "good" university to get a "good" job for your parents to have a "good" reputation and to secure a "good" salary and the "good" treatment of your parents when they're old. A rather vicious cycle, the villain in many real life stories.

I lost touch with most of my hobbies eventually in the process. Writing, sketching, singing. Now I can't sing at all, most of my story ideas and movie plots have faded away from my memory, and I can only draw one eye properly before messing the other one up. Though recently I've been trying to get back to having "a life". I've become a low-key drama film lover, I'm trying to learn new languages, photography. And I want to get back to writing, to make it more than an occasional thing, which is why I decided to sign up.

2. **TANISHA** - I consider myself to be immensely fortunate to have been given an opportunity as amazing as this. I am a theatre bug myself and have a lot of respect for the art form and am extremely passionate about it. As far as writing is concerned I really enjoy the thriller genre and write short

stories and narratives of my own experiences in school and also in my free time. I am a vocalist and I absolutely enjoy singing. I am also dedicated towards doing social work. I try to create social awareness in whatever way I can and help the less privileged as much as possible. I feel it is my responsibility to help those in need. The fact that I am getting an opportunity to learn from you and having a platform to explore my talents and have this experience is a privilege in itself. Thank you so much! Looking forward to meet you real soon!!

3. **ANTARA** - I like reading and singing and being silly and making connections with people. The first thing I notice about a person is their hands. I wonder at how complex and magical people are, even though some can be really horrible. Playing the guitar as dawn breaks is one of my favourite things to do.
4. **MEGHNA** - I am extremely fond of theatre and I love expressing myself on stage. I consider theatre to be a sort of escape from everyday life. I'm a bit of an introvert, so I find it easier to express myself when I'm in the shoes of another character. I am not an avid reader, but I do love writing. I haven't really shared my works with others, but I thought this workshop would be a great experience to share my writing with those who have interests similar to my own. My other hobbies include listening to music and playing instruments like the guitar and ukulele.
5. **SOMOSHREE** - I really love to read War Literature, because I feel they are written down from the poet's or author's heart. I mostly enjoy reading works of Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen and Rupert Brooke. I have read works of Lord Byron, Keats, Shelley, Browning and W. H. Auden, and I really really worship them as poets. I began writing poetry when I was eight, that was when I got to know that writing is a way of, well, survival!
6. **VASUNDHARA PAUL** - I have always been termed as an old soul among my friends and I always feel that I've been born in the wrong era. I am an aspiring writer; I love writing and reading, I adore the works of Paulo Coelho and some psychological thrillers. Being an introvert, it's hard for me to open up to people and share my thoughts vocally, so I resort to writing and literature which also serves as an escape route. A couple of incidents in my life has forced me to grow up and take responsibility from a young age and thus delving into fictional stories and good music helps me escape the harsh truth of reality.
7. **AMRITA** - I just started writing a few years back. Most of it includes my experiences, things that I feel others should know, things around me, about nature. I love reading and for me both reading and writing are like inlet and outlet. Although I'm somewhat introvert, I'm sure it doesn't stop me from expressing what I feel or really want to convey. I've not been in theater and I would love to try it. Also I'm keenly interested in psychology and human relations. I would be happy to further explore it , focus and bring to light things that need our attention.
8. **MEGHABALAKA** - I love abstract poetry. I like revelling in strangers and anything that makes me feel a lot. My favourite piece of art is Nighthawks by Edward Hopper. I am also looking for memories of a lifetime out of this workshop.
9. **POULOMI** - I'm very interested in human nature and the reasons behind why we do what we do, as well as the trend of absurdism in art and poetry. Two words to sum me up: a cynical romantic. I've been writing and ripping up that writing since I was eleven. A good metaphor or some food is bound to win me over.

10. **SOHAM** - I am a Cinephile by passion. I loved to watch all sorts of films (from Hitchcock to Godard). Since I do not have grasp on my literature, I tend to express myself through visual forms (eg. Comics, short films etc.). But I am still exploring myself and I would love to learn the art of expression through words.

### Final Presentation

After completing the three workshops and writing their own short story. Catherine helped them to prepare and present their work to an audience. This live presentation took place at the **Junior Kolkata Literary Meet**, at the Victoria Memorial Hall on Thursday 24 January 2019. There was a large school group and general public in the audience of over 300 people.





### Comments received by workshop participants

*I definitely enjoyed the workshops. I've attended a fair number of writing sessions, but Catherine gave us truly innovative exercises and helped us to look at and channel our creativity in different fresh ways. I learned that we should take confidence in what we write, but also never stop looking at how we can improve what we write.*

Poulomi, 18 years old

*I loved it. There were wonderful writing exercises and we really bonded like a team over the 9 hours we spent together. Ideas were definitely good and the way Catherine helped us to evolve these and make them better. I've learnt that it's not always about being perfect but being confident in whatever we've done so far. Its just that perspectives differ.*

Amrita, 16 years old

*Where do I start? This whole thing is so new to me and yet I've always wanted to write and poetry, but somehow I never could. This workshop has helped me to open up my imagination and taught me how to just reach out to my maximum potential and just write my heart out. Oh! And that "using restrictions to your own advantage", that is absolute golden advice and I'm going to implement that in every aspect of my life.*

Soham, 18 years old

*I learnt about helpful writing prompts that honestly will help me a lot in the future and I learnt a lot about a lot of other theatre related things, I did not know about. It was cool.*

Roshni, 16 years old

*I learnt that things seem scarier up until the moment you enter them, and that a performance does not need too much. I also learnt that there are a lot of beautiful people in the world.*

Meghabalaka, 16 years old

*Literature nowadays is almost akin to commerce, but with Catherine it was open for us to write what we wanted to. It was a unique feeling as she taught us how to write not what to write. We learnt different ways to create amazing pieces out of nowhere. I was sad when this ended today, as I never thought I would be so attached after just 9 hours together!*

Somoshree, 16 years old





A short video has been made cataloguing some of the participants comments can be seen on our Facebook page and Youtube channel.

Coverage achieved;

<https://wales.britishcouncil.org/en/about/press/welsh-theatre-language-and-literature-starring-kolkata-january>

<https://www.theatriolo.com/theatr-iolo-news/2019/1/7/news-to-whet-your-appetites-for-all-things-theatr-iolo-in-2019>

<https://www.walesartsreview.org/walesinkolkata-catherine-dyson/>

capara

"He would read from Shakespeare, Sherlock Holmes, Father Brown." At the same time his mother would organise the performance of little plays at home, which opened him to the possibilities of acting.

Later when Kapur went to train at the National School of Drama (NSD), he caught the eye of Ibrahim Alkazi, then NSD director and one of the most respected names in Indian theatre. Alkazi taught Kapur many important lessons, much of which had to do with books. Reading was recommended strongly. But not books on acting, Kapur recalled an incident fondly.

**Pankaj Kapur and (below) Supriya Pathak at Kolkata Literary Meet on Thursday.**  
Picture by Bishwarup Dutta



**Supriya Pathak**  
Picture by Bishwarup Dutta

"I had just passed the first year and was coming out of the library with three books. One of them was Stanislavski's *An Actor Prepares*. The book is on method acting, a text many actors swear by." Alkazi asked Kapur to return the book to the library. "Stanislavski wrote that book after 30 years of acting. You work yourself and form your own method of acting," Alkazi told Kapur.

To grow as an actor, Kapur turns to books. "True literature reflects the truth of that society," he said. It is not a coincidence perhaps that some of Kapur's best-loved films have been based on well-known works of literature, including Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool*, an adaptation of *Macbeth*. Coming up next is *Toba Tek Singh*, based on Saadat Hasan Manto's short story and directed by Ketan Mehta.

Kapur does not follow any particular technique, other than the application of his "love and passion for my work". And he considers the script his Bible and reads it

towards stories to generalise the incident, when gender became a part of public discourse. "We discovered that working women constituted less than a third of women in the country. At the same time Bollywood

Bollywood," Mallika felt. Jhumka that now there is a vocabulary to recognise sexism and discrimination. Picture by Bishwarup Dutta

## Stage set for stories

**CHANDREYEE GHOSE**

- A tale of a blue sari and its wearer's battle for empowerment
- A lonely old man's dreams of reuniting with his dead wife
- A necklace that supports a girl even after its giver's death

**Victoria Memorial:** Ten young storytellers wove magic through their myriad tales and showing them the way was Welsh performance artist and writer Catherine Dyson.

The students had attended a month-long workshop with Dyson in the run-up to the Tata Steel Junior Kolkata Literary Meet, in association with The Telegraph and the Victoria Memorial Hall and curated by ThinkArts.

All 10 students performed at the Victoria Memorial on Thursday, a day after Dyson presented her 45-minute piece *Transporter* — created with Theatr Iolo and The Riverfront — on the same stage.

*Transporter* told the story of 13-year-old Maya who was always on the move with her mother Debbie. Taking cue from their guru over Skype, the students learnt to emote and tell their tales with minimal hand gestures and mannerisms. They were taught to create stories out of nothing.

When their turn came, the students presented slices of life that touched on personal experiences, emotional state and ideologies.

"I encouraged them to use their memories and experiences. Then we spent sessions cutting out the excess and retaining the core situation. Three live sessions later, they were ready to tell their stories with minimal acting," Dyson said.

Neither Dyson nor her students wanted to limit themselves to situations they were not part of. "I obsess about war. I have also written poems about issues. I empathise with its victims. I wanted my story to be about war though I was not part of one," said Somsoshree Palit, a Class XI Student of Modern High School for Girls.

Antara Dasgupta of The Akshar School told the tale of a cynical boy who discovers his sense of wonder when he comes across a wooden box. "The Skype sessions were short but intense," the Class X student said.

Dyson was happy with the range of stories that had evolved in the process. "We have been exploring fundamental theatre tactics of creating something out of nothing. I am glad the kids remained committed to the purpose," she added.

**Catherine Dyson performs *Transporter* on Wednesday.**  
Picture by Bishwarup Dutta



**Yann Martel at the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet on Thursday.**  
Picture by Bishwarup Dutta

## Writer a traveller at heart

**CHANDREYEE GHOSE**

**Victoria Memorial:** A Canadian writer sent the country's then prime minister, Stephen Harper (2006-2015), 102 books, along with letters urging him to read, over four years.

The letters went on to make yet another book — 101 Letters to a Prime Minister.

Yann Martel, the author of *Life of Pi*, engaged his audience with stories from his life at the Tata Steel Junior Kolkata Literary Meet, in association with The Telegraph and the Victoria Memorial Hall and curated by ThinkArts, on Thursday.

"If you don't read and travel how do you get information? Books introduce you to a new world and open your mind. Travel is also like reading..." said the Man Booker Prize winner as he peppered the conversation with anecdotes from his travels in India.

"India stimulated and dazzled me...Everything intrigued me. The country also helped me regain the balance between logic and religion. Not all acts of faith are bad. Some transform lives too," said the author recalling his back-packing days in Delhi, Mumbai and other places.

The audience mostly comprised schoolchildren, for whom Martel had some advice. "Read anything and everything. Read the classics, read the trash and those in between. Find out what makes a book worthy or bad. Write for the sake of writing. If you want to be readable and publishable know the rules. When you are good enough you can break them."

**Catherine Dyson and the 10 students who performed at the Victoria Memorial on Thursday.**  
Picture by Bishwarup Dutta



Burraba  
Gariaha  
Kanchra

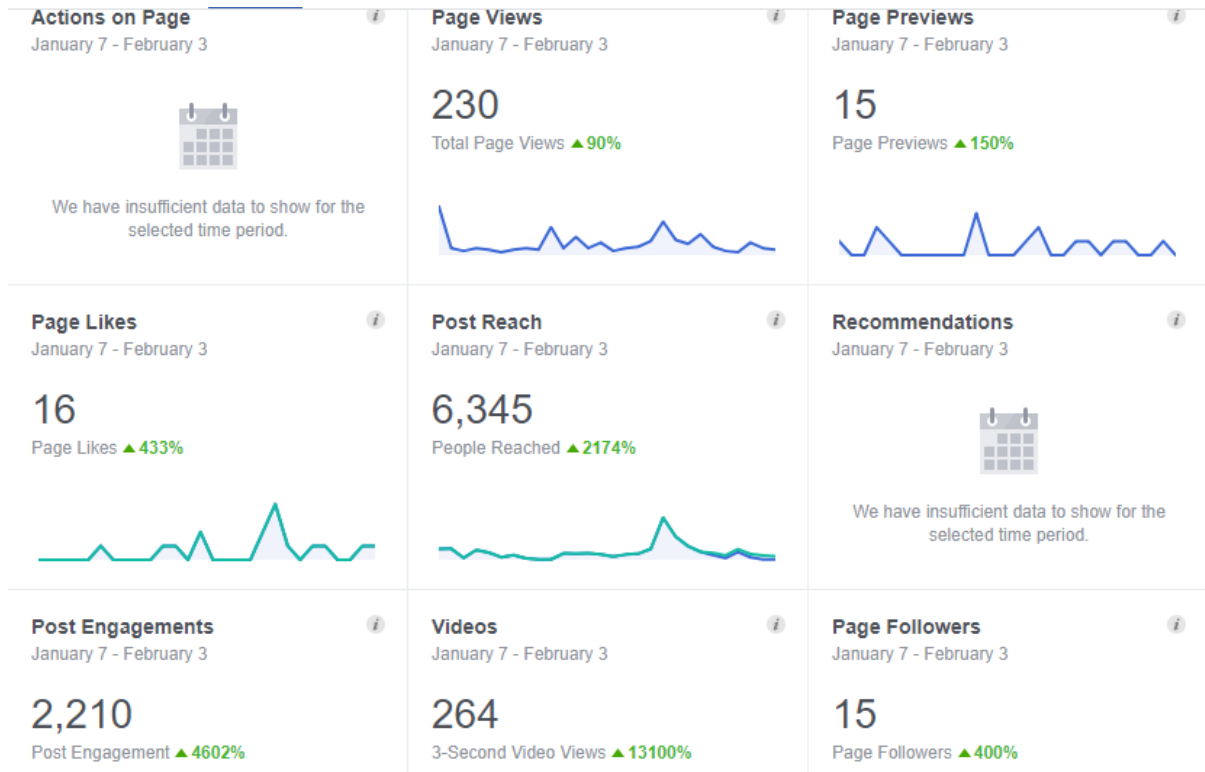
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## Social Media coverage achieved

**Facebook:** 1903 people like our Theatr Iolo Facebook page and had the following reach during the last month;



During the month there were 11 posts in total written about the Kolkata project, which altogether had a reach of 3682 people with 72 likes. We also added 36 photos into a Kolkata photo album.

**Twitter** - we have 4022 followers in total. We achieved 12,000 impressions and 78 likes over the 6 day period, which was 2K impressions and 6 retweets on average a day. The most popular tweet during the project was the following;

**Tweet activity** ✕

**Theatr Iolo** @theatriolo  
Our last day in Kolkata is out in the sunshine, with the talented young people performing their short stories that they wrote in Catherine Dyson's workshops. @thinkartsindia @BCouncil\_Wales @WAIcymruWales @BritishCouncil #WalesinKolkata  
pic.twitter.com/GXyLDkdgSF

Impressions	2,549
Total engagements	55
Likes	14
Media engagements	13
Profile clicks	10
Detail expands	7
Retweets	6
Link clicks	2
Hashtag clicks	2
Replies	1

**Reach a bigger audience**  
Get more engagements by promoting this Tweet!

Get started

**Instagram** – We have 996 followers in total with the most popular age group being 25-44 and 64% women. There were 6 specific India posts and altogether achieved 74 likes, 1398 reach and 2006 impressions.

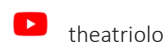
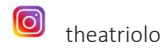
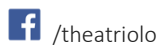


## Theatr lolo, what's next...

To find out more about what is next for Theatr lolo, check out our website [www.theatriolo.com](http://www.theatriolo.com) and join our e-list to keep in touch and find out more about our upcoming projects and productions.



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Theatr lolo receives an annual revenue grant from the Arts Council of Wales to support our main body of work and National Lottery funding for additional projects. We are a registered charity and we depend on the support of individuals, companies, trusts and foundations and public subsidy to continue to present the best of theatre to children, young people and adults.

