



# PRESSURE DROP

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Immediate  
Theatre

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"IT WAS A GOOD REPRESENTATION OF THE STRUGGLES YOUNG PEOPLE GO THROUGH AND THE PRESSURES WE FACE TODAY." Student, The Urswick School

"I THOUGHT IT WAS AN EXCELLENT PRODUCTION AND IT TOUCHED ON MANY TOPICS THAT RELATE TO OUR STUDENTS."

Drama Teacher, Our Lady's Catholic High School

- 100% OF SCHOOL STAFF WOULD RECOMMEND THE PRODUCTION TO OTHER SCHOOLS.
- 96% OF 1017 STUDENTS EITHER ENJOYED OR REALLY ENJOYED THE PERFORMANCE

# THE PROJECT

## Aims:

- To engage the young people in the process of developing a play that reflects their experiences.
- To tour the play to secondary schools in Hackney, accompanied by workshops that allow students to explore the themes in more depth.

The project was generously funded by Global Giving and the Can I Walk in Your Shoes? campaign led by our patron, Idris Elba and developed in partnership with Rise Up East.

## Plot Summary:

The play follows siblings Mya and Daniel. Their father has recently left, their mother is always working, and they are left alone to cope with their emotions. Following a violent outburst Daniel is placed in the school exclusion room where he meets Michael, a regular to exclusion – an unlikely friendship is formed based on a common love of Anime, but Michael's desire to protect his new friend leads to very serious consequences. Mya has always been a star student, but when her boyfriend shares a naked picture of her online, her life is shattered. She turns to her friend Jayden for support, he is quick to blame her for the situation whilst struggling to hold his own mental health together. The complexity of all four characters' experiences reveals the interwoven challenges of growing up in adversity.

# DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Ideas were initially explored at a residential with young people who had experienced school exclusion. We then ran research workshops with youth organisations in the Rise Up East project area at Hackney Quest, Project 365, and also at The Crib. We ran three days of R&D with our Advanced Youth Theatre Group during the June half term exploring ideas and improvising scenes which formed the basis of the four characters in the play: Mya, Daniel, Jayden and Michael. The young people were consulted by the playwright Anna Bennett on the plot lines and language in the play to ensure authenticity and that they felt a sense of ownership over it. A first draft was shared with young people as part of our Summer Exposure project.

Each performance was accompanied by workshops led by a team of facilitators allowing smaller groups of students to explore the themes of the play. One of the actors attended every workshop, offering participants an opportunity to delve deeper into the complex issues by answering them questions as their character.

We worked with an excellent team of freelancers that consisted of experienced and early career actors and creatives. We were proud to be able to offer some of the actors their first professional credit, while also benefitting from the experience of artists who've worked with young people for many years.





# IMPACT

- 14 - Performances
- 1117 - Audience Members
- 10 - Schools Engaged
- 2 - Community Venues
- 17 - Workshops
- 343 - Young People Engaged in Workshops

## Pressure Drop toured from 31st October to 11th November:

The Urswick School,  
Cardinal Pole Catholic School,  
The City Academy,  
Waterside Academy,  
Our Lady's Catholic High School,  
Stoke Newington School,  
Stormont House School,  
The Boxing Academy,  
Clapton Girls' Academy,  
Mossbourne Community Academy.

## Evening performances at:

The Good Growth Hub  
Hackney Show Room

# A STATEMENT FROM THE WRITER AND DIRECTOR

“Working on Pressure Drop with Immediate Theatre has been brilliant. Having grown up in Hackney and worked with young people throughout my 14-year career in the youth sector I was very excited to develop a play in the borough, for the borough. Engaging with Hackney young people at the various youth spaces and working with Immediate facilitators to run the R&D sessions at Arcola brought up important themes and provided the seed from which the characters and narrative grew.” [Anna Bennett, Writer](#)

“We found a great mix of seasoned professionals and exciting, raw young talent - it was beautiful for this project to be able to maintain its high standard while also be a part of facilitating the journey for some very talented young working-class actors at the beginning of their careers. I was very proud of the company, the work they produced and the spirit with which they approached it.

The experience of making this show with Immediate was joyful, thorough and impactful, and I hope we get the opportunity to work together again so that we can bring this kind of work - that is so sorely lacking - out to more audiences.” [Adam Karim, Director](#)

# FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

**100%** OF STUDENTS AGREED THAT THEATRE IS A GOOD WAY TO PRESENT THESE ISSUES AND THEMES:

**96%** OF 1017 STUDENTS EITHER ENJOYED OR REALLY ENJOYED THE PERFORMANCE

**87%** OF STUDENTS AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED THAT THE WORKSHOPS ALLOWED THEM TO EXPLORE THE THEMES AND ISSUES IN THE PLAY.

**35%** OF STUDENTS SAID THEY'D LIKE TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET FURTHER SUPPORT AROUND THESE ISSUES.



"IT WAS A GOOD REPRESENTATION OF THE STRUGGLES YOUNG PEOPLE GO THROUGH AND THE PRESSURES WE FACE TODAY."

"VERY FUNNY AND I LOVED THAT IT WAS TALKING ABOUT SERIOUS SITUATIONS THAT OCCUR IN OUR AREA, HACKNEY."

"IT WAS REALLY DETAILED AS TO HOW LIFE IS FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN LONDON."

"IT WAS VERY REAL AND RELATABLE. SPEAKS ABOUT SERIOUS TOPICS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE NORMALISED."

"IT REALLY MOVED ME. IT FELT LIKE I WAS THERE WITH THEM."

"IT WAS AMAZING, AND I LOVED THE QUICK SHIFT IN TIME AND PLACE TO ADAPT TO EMOTIONS. IT REALLY INSPIRED ME FOR MY CURRENT PLAY FOR GCSE TO BE ABLE TO REMAIN IN CHARACTER."



# 100% OF STUDENTS AGREED THAT THEATRE IS A GOOD WAY TO PRESENT THESE ISSUES AND THEMES:

"IT GIVES THESE ISSUES A SENSE OF REALITY AND WE CAN SEE THE EMOTIONAL EFFECTS THEY CAN HAVE ON PEOPLE."

"IT WILL MAKE PEOPLE MORE AWARE OF THESE ISSUES AND WAYS THEY SHOULD BE DEALT WITH. IT ALSO LETS PEOPLE SEE ALL PERSPECTIVES."

"MANY PEOPLE GO TO THE THEATRE TO ENJOY THEMSELVES, BUT THEY CAN LEARN AT THE SAME TIME TOO, ABOUT ISSUES PEOPLE FACE AND HOW TO REDUCE THESE ISSUES."

"IT LETS PEOPLE STEP INTO THE SHOES OF THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THESE PROBLEMS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE WITHIN SOCIETY TODAY."

"IT CONVEYS THE MESSAGE IN A CLEAR AND RELATABLE WAY AND INCLUDES PLACES WE RECOGNISE."

90% OUT OF 353 STUDENTS EITHER ENJOYED OR REALLY ENJOYED THE WORKSHOPS.

"A NON-JUDGEMENTAL SPACE AND A FUN ENVIRONMENT TO SHARE OPINIONS."

"I ENJOYED THE DEBATES AND THE DIFFERING OPINIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND HOW THEY LOOK AT ISSUES."

"IT WAS INTERACTIVE ENOUGH TO ALLOW US OUR OPINIONS BUT ALSO THINK FROM OTHER PERSPECTIVES."

"IT WAS VERY INSPIRATIONAL, AND I LIKE WHEN WE GOT TO TALK TO THE ACTOR."

"I FOUND IT VERY FUN, AND IT HELPED ME UNDERSTAND ACTING AND THE PLAY."

"VERY ENJOYABLE AND OPEN-MINDED CONVERSATION AND ACTIVITIES."

"I HAD FUN WRITING ABOUT WHAT ADVICE WE COULD HAVE GIVEN THE CHARACTER."





# WHAT WILL YOU TAKE AWAY FROM THE WORKSHOPS?

- 87% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the workshops allowed them to explore the themes and issues in the play.
- 35% of students said they'd like to find out how to get further support around these issues.

"ALWAYS STAND UP FOR WHAT YOU THINK IS RIGHT."

"BEING ABLE TO SHARE MY OPINION CONFIDENTLY."

"TO TRY AND OPEN UP WITH PROBLEMS THAT YOU HAVE TO PEOPLE YOU TRUST."

"BEING ABLE TO ADDRESS CERTAIN ISSUES BRAVELY AND NOT FEELING AFRAID TO DEBATE."

"DEVELOPING NEW DRAMA SKILLS."

"TO ALWAYS ASK FOR HELP AND DON'T BE ASHAMED OF THINGS YOU ARE STRUGGLING WITH."

"CONFIDENCE AND THE ABILITY TO IMPROVISE."

# SCHOOL STAFF FEEDBACK

100% OF SCHOOLS AGREED THAT:

- THE THEMES IN THE PLAY WERE RELEVANT TO THEIR STUDENTS.
- THEATRE IS A GOOD WAY TO PRESENT THESE ISSUES/THEMES.
- THEY'D RECOMMEND THE PRODUCTION TO OTHER SCHOOLS.
- THE WORKSHOPS WERE USEFUL IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS TO EXPLORE THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE PLAY.
- THEIR STUDENTS WOULD BENEFIT FROM MORE WORKSHOPS



“IT SHOWED HOW MUCH PEOPLE STRUGGLE IN LIFE TO BE ABLE TO GET WHAT THEY WANT. ALSO, BECAUSE PEOPLE ON THE STREETS ARE MOSTLY GOOD PEOPLE.”

“THEATRE IS THE PERFECT MEDIUM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO HAVE SOCIAL ISSUES PLAYED BACK TO THEM FOR THEM TO REFLECT ON THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES.”


“I THINK IT IS AN EXCELLENT MEDIUM, IT ALLOWS THE STUDENTS TO SEE IN LIVE PERFORMANCES SOME OF THE VERY REAL EXPERIENCES THAT THEY MAY FACE, OR WILL FACE IN THE FUTURE, WHILE KNOWING THAT IT IS ALL A PERFORMANCE, AND THEY ARE THEN ABLE TO USE THIS A SPRINGBOARD TO DISCUSS THESE ISSUES AND THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THEM WITH EACH OTHER.”



“IT WAS FUNNY AT TIMES, AND IT SPOKE ABOUT REAL THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD.”

“I WOULD ABSOLUTELY RECOMMEND TO OTHER SCHOOLS. THE THEMES OF PRESSURE DROP ARE HIGHLY RELEVANT TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND ARE EXPLORED IN A THOUGHTFUL AND ENGAGING WAY.”

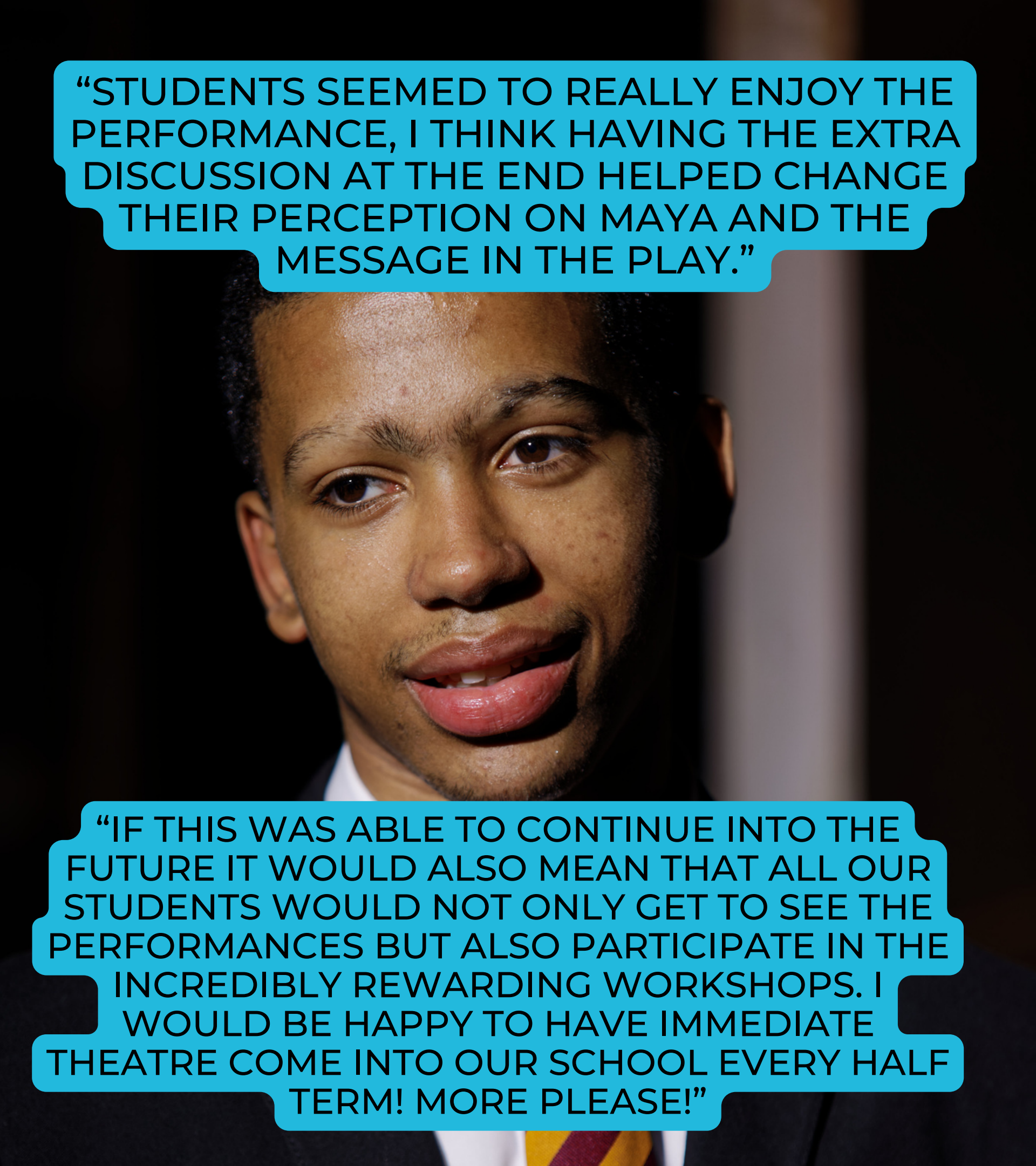
“I THINK THERE MUST BE MANY MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MORE SCHOOLS TO BE ABLE TO ACCESS THESE KINDS OF PERFORMANCES AS IT TACKLED AND MADE RELATABLE ISSUES IN WAYS THAT IT IS SIMPLE IMPOSSIBLE TO DO IN ANY OTHER WAY, INCLUDING THE FOLLOW UP WORKSHOP THAT ALLOWED STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO ROLE PLAY WITH ONE OF THE ACTORS FROM THE PLAY, WHICH IS QUITE SIMPLY AN INVALUABLE AND INCREDIBLY RICH EXPERIENCE FOR ALL OUR STUDENTS THAT WERE ABLE TO ATTEND.”



“AS GCSE DRAMA STUDENTS THEY WILL TAKE AWAY INSIGHT INTO DEVISING, PERFORMANCE SKILLS AND STAGING. AS YOUNG PEOPLE, THEY WILL HAVE REFLECTED ON THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES OF SOME OF THESE ISSUES AND WILL HOPEFULLY HAVE INFORMED DECISION MAKING GOING FORWARD.”

“AFTER WATCHING A PLAY THAT EXPLORED SO MANY RELEVANT ISSUES, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS AND ROLE PLAY THESE ISSUES. MISCONCEPTION AND GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE CAN BE ADDRESSED.”

“I THINK IT WAS EFFECTIVE AND IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE WORKSHOP AFTER THE PERFORMANCE TO GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING.”



“STUDENTS SEEMED TO REALLY ENJOY THE PERFORMANCE, I THINK HAVING THE EXTRA DISCUSSION AT THE END HELPED CHANGE THEIR PERCEPTION ON MAYA AND THE MESSAGE IN THE PLAY.”

“IF THIS WAS ABLE TO CONTINUE INTO THE FUTURE IT WOULD ALSO MEAN THAT ALL OUR STUDENTS WOULD NOT ONLY GET TO SEE THE PERFORMANCES BUT ALSO PARTICIPATE IN THE INCREDIBLY REWARDING WORKSHOPS. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO HAVE IMMEDIATE THEATRE COME INTO OUR SCHOOL EVERY HALF TERM! MORE PLEASE!”



# WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS...

