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## WRITERS DATABASE

# WRITERS WHO ARVON HAS WORKED WITH FOR (M)OTHER TONGUES:

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**Anjum Malik** | Urdu, Panjabi, Hindi and English  
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Agent: Georgina Ruffhead, David Higham Associates  
Based in Manchester, available over UK

Scriptwriter, poet, Honorary Writing Fellow, Arvon Tutor. Written original plays and series for BBC, ITV and Theatres. Poetry credits include her collection *Before The Rains* published by Huddersfield University, and anthologies *Spirit Of Bradford*, *Peace Poems*, *Hair* and *The Suitcase Book Of Love Poems*.

Residencies include Poet in Residence at the Lowry for the Commonwealth Games, Cheltenham Literature Festival, Strangeways Prison, Manchester.

Multilingual with extensive experience of working with schools, colleges and universities, literature, arts and community organisations; with all ages and has a special interest working with disadvantaged groups of all ages, backgrounds and cultures.

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**Bohdan Piasecki** | English, Polish, French, some German and some Spanish  
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Birmingham

Born in Poland, Bohdan moved to the UK in 2006 to work on a PhD in poetry translation theory. Writing in Polish and English, he participates actively in the UK spoken word scene, both as a poet and as an organiser. He is the Apples and Snakes West Midlands co-ordinator, Director of Education at the Spoken Word/Education MA at Goldsmiths University, and Lead Artist for the Roundhouse Poetry Collective.

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**Boye N'Diaye** | Bilingual in French and Soninké (spoken in Mauritania, Mali, Senegal and Gambia) and English  
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Germany

I am a French woman with Mauritanian backgrounds who has always shown strong interest in tales and myths. I particularly enjoy listening to my grand-mother who is a talented story-teller when I stay in Mauritania. She relates in Soninké and I translate her stories into French. I have already read and shared some of my texts with teenagers involved in the Arvon Mother Tongue Project.

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**BREIS** | English, Yoruba, Pidgin English  
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Agent: Student of Life  
London

“  
BREIS is one of the best kept secrets in British Hip Hop —*The Guardian*

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BREIS (pronounced breeze) is a dynamic Hip Hop lyricist based in London. His sound, that he describes as BAM (British African Music) is a fusion of the Hip Hop, Soul and Afrobeat he listened to whilst growing up in London and Lagos. Listeners can get an idea of BREIS' style by listening to his recently released "The Brilliant EP." BREIS is a seasoned performer who has toured internationally and shared the stage with artists such as Black Thought (of The Roots), Angie Stone and Omar Sosa. In 2011, BREIS published the UK's first interactive Hip Hop rap book entitled *Brilliant Rappers Educate Intelligent Students*. In 2012 was invited to give a TEDxYouth talk and performance.

“

I believe my purpose is to inspire, educate and entertain people through my music —BREIS

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**Candis Nergaard** | English and Romany  
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Essex/Kent

Candis is an actress and writer of mixed Romany ancestry. Candis co-wrote *Atching Tan*, the BBC's first-ever Traveller drama series for radio, and *Yellow Dress* - also co-written for BBC radio. Candis was nominated best actress at the BBC Audio Drama Awards 2012 and has frequently appeared in film, television and on the stage. She is currently writing her first film.



**Damian Le Bas** | Romani, English and French  
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Sussex/Essex/Kent

Damian James Le Bas was born in 1985 to a large Romany Traveller family from southern England. He read Theology at St John's College, Oxford, graduating with the top First in his year in 2006.

Damian is a widely published poet, journalist and dramatist. His poetry has appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* and *Magma*, and he has read at The Ted Hughes Arvon Centre, The Poetry Café, and Modern Art Oxford. Damian is a native Romani speaker and is passionate about using the language in his work. He edits *Travellers' Times*, a national magazine for Romanies and Travellers.



**Dan Allum** | English and some Romani  
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Agent: Alan Brodie Representation  
Cambridge, UK

Dan is a Romany Gypsy and founder & director of RTC who have created original work and performed nationally for the last ten years. Dan created and was lead writer on the 36 part BBC radio drama series *Atching Tan* broadcast between 2008 – 2010. His first Radio 4 play was shortlisted for the BBC Imison and Audio Drama Awards 2011. His latest Radio 4 play was broadcast in 2012 and he also adapted the book, *The Diddakoi*, for Radio 4 Extra the same year. Dan is currently under commission to the Royal Court Theatre, Eleven Film, and Radio 4.



**Daniel Hahn** | English, Spanish, Portuguese and French  
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Agent: LAW (Lucas Alexander Whitley)  
**Brighton/London**

Daniel Hahn is a writer, translator and editor with thirty-something books to his name. He writes non-fiction, edits reference books for adults and reading guides for children and teenagers, and translates mostly fiction from Portuguese, Spanish and French. His books have won him the Blue Peter Book Award and the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize. Recent projects include writing a picture-book text and translating a Brazilian novel.

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**Elmi Ali** | English, Somali and Swahili  
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**Manchester**

Elmi is a writer/performer and facilitator based in the North West. He writes poetry, short stories and drama. This dynamic artist and enthusiastic performer has performed in venues across the county including Westminster, The Southbank Centre and Contact Theatre Manchester. His work has appeared in publications such as the *Poetry Review* and *Scarf Magazine* of which he is an Associate Editor. He teaches poetry and creative writing to adults and young people across the country in partnership with organisations such as Arvon and Young Identity. Elmi is currently working on his first collection of poetry scheduled for autumn 2014.

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**José Luís Peixoto** | English and Portuguese  
facebook.com/joseluispeixoto | joseluispeixoto.net  
Agent: William Morris Endeavor  
**Lisbon, Portugal**

José Luís Peixoto is a portuguese writer. His novels are translated in 20 languages. Has won several literary awards. In english, *Blank Gaze* and *The Piano Cemetery* have been published by Bloomsbury.

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**Kendel Hippolyte** | English, Kwéyòl (French Creole) and French  
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**Saint Lucia, Caribbean**

Retired lecturer in literature and theatre, he is a poet and dramatist. His poetry has been published internationally in journals, anthologies and six volumes between 1980 and 2012. His writing explores the spectrum of Standard and Caribbean English, working with traditional forms, free verse and forms influenced by popular culture. He is the winner of the 2013 Bocas Poetry Prize. He has performed his work in the Caribbean, Europe and America at literary festivals and events. He has taught poetry workshops in formal and informal contexts for various groups and has edited five anthologies of poetry, including poetry from students of his creative writing courses.

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**Lola Okusami** | English and Yoruba  
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**Minnesota, USA**

Lola Okusami is a writer, musician and aspiring filmmaker. Born in the United States and raised in southwestern Nigeria, she has worked as a journalist and magazine editor. Her short story "First Fight" is published online.

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### **Nell Leyshon**

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Agent: Anna Webber/St John Donald, United Agents  
**London and Bournemouth**

Novelist and playwright. Vast experience working with marginalised groups, including recovering addicts, gypsies and in mental health settings.



**Rukhsana Ahmad** | English, Urdu and Punjabi  
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Agent: Diana Tyler - MBA Literary Agents  
**London**

Rukhsana Ahmad grew up in Pakistan with Urdu, Punjabi and English. She has written extensively for the stage and radio, achieving distinction in both. She writes mainly in English and, occasionally, in Urdu. *The Hope Chest* was her first novel. *The Gatekeeper's Wife And Other Stories* is a collection of short stories. *We Sinful Women*, her anthology of Urdu feminist poetry in translation is taught in many universities. Rukhsana has also translated, Altaf Fatima's Urdu novel, *The One Who Did Not Ask*. She is currently working on a screenplay, based on Nadeem Aslam's novel, *Maps for Lost Lovers*.



© photo:  
Luísa Ferreira

**Susana Moreira Marques** | Portuguese (Mother Tongue), Fluent in English and Spanish  
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**Lisbon, Portugal**

Susana Moreira Marques is a freelance writer and journalist based in Lisbon, Portugal. Her first book, *Agora e na Hora da Nossa Morte (Now and at the Hour of Our Death)*, was considered, by newspapers *Público* and *Expresso*, one of the best books published in Portugal in 2012. Her journalism appears regularly in newspapers *Público* and *Jornal de Negócios*. In English she has published in *The Irish Independent* and in the websites including *The Guardian Unlimited* and *Open Democracy*. She lived in London for some years, working as a foreign correspondent and contributing to the Portuguese service of the BBC World Service.



**Tolu Ogunlesi** | English and Yoruba  
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**Lagos, Nigeria**

Tolu Ogunlesi is a blogger and communications consultant. He has written for the *Financial Times*, *Al Jazeera*, *The UK Guardian*, and *CNN.com*. In 2009 he was awarded a CNN/Multichoice African Journalism Award. He worked as Features Editor and a member of the editorial board at *NEXT* Newspaper between 2009 and 2011, and currently writes a weekly column for *The Punch* newspaper. He lives in Lagos, Nigeria.



**Yusra Warsama** | Somali and English  
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Agent (Acting): Lindy King @United Agents  
**Manchester**

Yusra Warsama is a performance poet, actor, writer and theatre practitioner, her passions lie in creating work through play and exploration of life experiences in world we live in. Past, present and future work takes many forms, from her developing a one woman show which uses spoken word, storytelling, live art and physical expression, to 'Grace' and 'Make – Believe' with Quarantine.



Yusra began her theatre career at The Contact Theatre, Manchester, whilst studying (BA HONS) Criminology & Sociology, from there she worked alongside national and international artists and companies such as Morganics, Sista Native, Lemn Sissay, Victoria- Belgium, Afro-Reggae – Brazil, and a host more through many art projects.

Yusra is currently writing a play for the Birmingham Repertory Theatre with two other writers, has filmed her first international feature, delivering workshops at the Royal Court and writing for radio.



**Zena Edwards** | English

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London

Other relevant media:

Verse In Dialog: zenaedwardscvid.wordpress.com

Raised in Tottenham, North London, Zena Edwards is known as one the most unique voices of performance poetry to come out of London.

Zena graduated from Middlesex University in Drama and Communication studies, and has been writing and performing for 20 years. She is Creative Director of Verse In Dialog, an umbrella company focused on cross art collaboration for positive Change.

She has been commissioned for BBC Radio 3 and 4 and the Birmingham Rep, and was Associate Artist at the Albany, London for 4 years. Published works: *Dance the Guns to Silence*, *Security - the script of her debut one woman show (Flipped Eye)*; *No Condition is Permanent* (Platform London); *Anthology of New Womens Writing* (Loose Muse); *Tales From Mirror City* (Tongue in Chic).

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## WRITERS WHO HAVE EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS WITH MULTILINGUAL YOUNG PEOPLE:

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**Abdourahman Waberi** | French, English and Somali

Agent: Agence Pierre Astier pierreastier.com

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Washington DC & Paris

Abdourahman A. Waberi is novelist, essayist, poet, academic and short-story writer. He was born in Djibouti City in 1965. and currently teaches Francophone literature and creative writing at George Washington University at Washington DC, USA



**Amber Lone** | Mirpuri  
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Agent: Matt Connell - Berlin Associates  
London

Amber is an acclaimed British Asian playwright. Her produced plays include *Paradise* (Birmingham Rep), *DEADEYE* (Birmingham Rep/Kali/Soho Theatre), *Romeo In The City* (Theatre Centre) and *These Four Streets* (Birmingham Rep). She also writes regularly for radio.



**Azma Dar** | English, Punjabi and Urdu.  
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Agent: Rupert Heath  
Corby, Northamptonshire

Azma was born in England and has a Pakistani Muslim background. She has a degree in English, Classics and History of Art. She has written for the theatre, screen and radio, and her work has been produced by companies such as Kali Theatre and BBC Asian Network. Last month her short play was shortlisted for the Bollywood Superstar Writer competition, and in 2007 an extract from her novel won the New Ventures Writing Award. Forthcoming work includes a short play at the Curve, Leicester based on the work of Alfred Hitchcock, a short piece for Kali Theatre, and a feature film project, for which she was commissioned to write a screenplay. Azma has also run writing workshops with community groups (Asian women).



**Évelyne Trouillot** | Haitian Creole, French and English  
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Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Born in Port-au-Prince, Haïti, Évelyne Trouillot lives and works there as a French professor at the State University. She also facilitates writing workshops for children and youth in Creole and in French. She published her first book of short stories in 1996. In 2004, her first novel, *Rosalie l'infâme*, received the Prix de la romancière francophone du Club Soroptimist de Grenoble. In 2005, her first piece for the theater *Le bleu de l'île* received the Beaumarchais award.

Her novel *La mémoire aux abois* published in France, in May 2010 received the prestigious award le prix Carbet de la Caraïbe et du Tout-Monde in December 2010. Her latest novel *Absences sans frontières*, France, 2013, tells the story of a family between Brooklyn and Port-au-Prince.

Évelyne Trouillot has also published poetry in French and in Creole. Some of her work is translated in Spanish, Italian, English and German. *Rosalie l'infâme*, (*The infamous Rosalie*) is available from the University of Nebraska Press.



**Indrė Valantinaitė** | Lithuanian, English and Russian  
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Vilnius, Lithuania

Indrė Valantinaitė (born 1984 in Kaunas) is a fresh voice in Lithuanian poetry. Her debut collection *Žuvm ir lelijom* (*For fish and lilies*) won the 2006 First Book Contest of the Lithuanian Union of Writers. Her second book *Pasakos apie meilę ir kitus žvėris* (*Stories about love and other animals*) was published in 2011 and won the 2012 Young Jotvingian Prize at the Druskininkai Poetic Fall Festival; this is the most prestigious award for Lithuanian poets under 35. In addition to being a poet, Valantinaitė is also a renowned singer. She studied at Vilnius University and The Vilnius Academy of Arts. At the moment she lives in Vilnius and works as a TV journalist.



**Kangni Alem** | French and English

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Agent: Pierre Astier and Associés

Lomé, Togo

Kangni Alem in full name (Kangni Alemdjrodo) b. in 1966 is Togolese dramatist. Born in Togo, 1966, Kangni Alem holds a PhD in French, Comparative and French African Literature of University of Bordeaux III, France. Novelist, playwright and short story writer, he has published more than ten books. He is professor of theater and literature at University of Lomé, Togo. His works explore the political and historic memory of African peoples through themes like slavery, dictatorship and racial and cultural métissage. He lives between Lomé and Bordeaux in France. Some publications: *Chemins de croix*, *Atterissage*, *Cola cola jazz*, *Canailles et charlatans*, *Un rêve d'Albatros*, *Esclaves...*



**Kevin Le Gendre** | English and French

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London

I am a journalist and broadcaster with a special interest in black music. I have contributed to publications such as the *Guardian*, *The Independent* and *Jazzwise*, and also appear regularly on BBC Radio 3. Every year I teach journalism at the London Jazz Festival but I have also taught French at secondary level and English As A Foreign Language.



**Naylah Ahmed** | Urdu

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Agent: Micheline at Micheline Steinberg Associates

Birmingham

I am a writer who has written for theatre, radio, television and short prose. I am currently exploring screenwriting. I have also been a director/producer/script editor of radio drama for the BBC for many years and still do some work on a freelance basis.



**Nii Ayikwei Parkes** | Ga Twi and French

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Agent: David Godwin Associates

UK from August 2014

Nii Ayikwei Parkes is a writer, editor, socio-cultural commentator and broadcaster. A 2007 recipient of Ghana's national ACRA award for poetry and literary advocacy, he is the author of the acclaimed hybrid literary novel, *Tail of the Blue Bird* (Random House), which was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Prize and the recent poetry collection, *The Makings of You* (Peepal Tree). He is currently working on a book on Accra for Jonathan Cape.



**Paulina Pukyte** | English, Lithuanian and Russian

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London

Paulina Pukyte is an artist, writer and cultural commentator. She graduated from the Vilnius Academy of Art and received a Masters from the Royal College of Art in London. In 2001-2003 and 2006 was a guest lecturer at Kaunas Art Institute. *Contributes to 7 meno dienos (7 Days of Art)* and to other cultural periodicals in Lithuania. Published two books: *Jų papročiai (Their Habits)*, 2005, Tyto Alba; and *Netikras zuikis (Fake Rabbit)*, 2008, Apostrofa. The latter was shortlisted for the Book of the Year award in Lithuania. She is currently preparing a new inter-genre book for publication.



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**Rehan Sheikh** | Urdu (Reading, writing and speaking), English, Punjabi, Hindi (colloquial)  
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www.rehansheikh.com (under construction)  
**Islamabad**

Born in London, Rehan has worked both in UK and Pakistan. He worked as an actor in a number of TV serials, films and Theatrical productions and in Radio drama for BBC. He has written two films in Urdu. (One currently under production). Ran an Asian Theatre group in South London in his student days doing Bilingual plays. He wrote a weekly column for the News International's London edition called Roomi's Diary.

Co-wrote *Who am I to you* with John Fletcher for Radio 4 and also created a comedy show that toured Edinburgh Fringe and UK, *Ryman and the Sheikh*. Recently wrote his first Urdu song for a film.



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**Samatar Elmi** | English, Somali and Arabic  
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**Cardiff**

Samatar Elmi is a poet and a poetry editor at the *Cadaverine*. He was shortlisted for the Venture Award and the Complete Works II.

Poems have appeared in *Magma*; *Bristol Poetry Institute*; *The Cadaverine*; *Ink, Sweat and Tears*; *Young Inscribe Anthology*; *Scarf*; *Sable*; *Myths of the Near Future*; *The Echoing Gallery: An Anthology of Bristol Art and Poetry*; *Helicon Magazine*.



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**Bessora** | French and English  
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**Paris**

Bessora is a French, Gabonese and Swiss writer, born in Brussels from a Gabonese father and a Swiss mother. She is the author of seven novels and three collections of short stories. Bessora's writings focus on the representations of identity, taboos, categories, and the various registers of bereavement.



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**Sigitas Parulskis** | Lithuanian, Russian and English  
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**Vilnius, Lithuania**

Sigitas Parulskis (b. 1965 in Obeliai, Lithuania) is a poet, playwright, essayist, novelist and translator. He majored in Lithuanian Language and Literature at Vilnius University. Parulskis works include several books of poetry, two books of essays, two short story collections and five novels. He is also an author of several plays and scripts for theatre.

Sigitas Parulskis has translated into Lithuanian some works of A. Chekhov, D. Charms, L. Andreyev, J. Brodskij, O. Mandelstam, V. Yerofeyev, D. Gorchov, A. Turgenev, S. Shepard and others.

In 1991 Parulskis won the Zigmus Gélé Award for the best literary debut of the year. In 1995 his achievement in the book of poetry *Of the Dead* was recognized by the prestigious Jotvingian Award. His play *From the Lives of the Dead* received the 1996 Kristoforas Award for the best young artist's theatre play debut. The novel *Three Seconds of Heaven* was recognized as the best book of the year and was awarded the Lithuanian Writer's Union Prize. In 2004 Parulskis received the National Prize in literature. He has won the following international awards: Der Stiftung Preussische Seehandlung – 2009; LCB (Berlin), Bank Austria Literaris – 2009, Kulturkontakt, Vienna; H.C. Artmann stipendium – 2010, Salzburg.

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Works by Parulskis have been translated into Latvian, Finnish, Italian, Polish, Czech, French, German, Greek, Swedish, Norwegian, Russian, English and other languages.

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**Sudha Bhuchar** | Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu

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Agent: Fay Davies at The Agency

London

Sudha is Co founder and Artistic director of Tamasha theatre company and is an established playwright. Writing credits for Tamasha include *A Fine balance* (from Rohinton Mistry's novel), *Strictly Dandia* and *The House of Bilquis bibi* (adapted from Lorca's *The House of Bernada Alba*). Sudha has written two children's plays; *Child of the divide* (currently on a recommended reading list for AQA English literature A level and AS level), and *Small fish, big cheese* which was part of Unicorn theatre's Class Acts festival. Sudha has extensive credits for Radio 4, including three series of *Girlies* (with Shaheen Khan). Sudha likes to work from research and her play for the Unicorn was inspired by the year 6 class at Shapla Primary school (all British Bengali) and her kids. Recent work includes *My Name is...* and *Golden hearts* for Tamasha.