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(Pictured above): The TX Theatre team takes delivery of their new console at DWR. Pictured:



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Motlotlo Makhobotloane (DWR), Kamogelo Raphadu, Tramain Nkoane, Duncan Riley (DWR), Skhongo Lehlogonolo, and Mxolisi Masilela.

When Dr Ismail Mahomed — renowned writer, director, and former Artistic Director of the National Arts Festival — reached out for help after TX Theatre Productions in Tembisa had their console stolen just before their annual festival, DWR Distribution responded with a donation of a Vari-Lite FLX S24 lighting console, a 24-fader surface designed to create beautiful looks fast and easily.

In the heart of Tembisa, TX Theatre Productions has been a hub for drama, music, and dance since 2008. Founded by Mxolisi Masilela and registered as an NPO in 2014, this multi-Naledi Award-winning company produces around 50 shows annually, regularly earns plays at festivals like the National Arts Festival, and supports local talent through awards, publications, and its Writers Lab.

Tembisa was established in 1957 during apartheid-era forced removals, relocating Black residents from areas like Alexandra, Edenvale, and Kempton Park. “There’s a reason we started TX Theatre,” says founder Mxolisi Masilela. “Black artists from Tembisa had no access to major venues like The Market or Joburg Theatre.” So, with a group of young theatre makers, he created a space of their own — humble, but theirs. Black plastic bags covered the windows, household bulbs on planks lit the stage, and sometimes, mid-show, those bulbs would burst — plunging them into darkness, but never stopping the show.”

Over time, TX Theatre secured government and Lotto funding, allowing them to upgrade from makeshift gear to basic stage lights and a hybrid controller. “Our previous console couldn’t record cues,” recalls Mxolisi, “so someone had to manually move the faders during the show.” They bought better gear with funding—some of which they still use today, including a few moving heads.

TX Theatre has since become a vital space for young, often overlooked talent. “Our mission is to give a chance to those who’d never get one,” says Mxolisi. “Art is expensive to study, and bursaries are rare. Many haven’t even finished matric—but here, they’ve found a way to grow into professionals.” Some have gone on to make their mark globally—Mxolisi too is directing a play in California.



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During their recent Theatre Week, which featured 36 productions in just one week, disaster struck: their lighting console was stolen. The team considered postponing the festival—until a Facebook post by Mxolisi changed everything.

“The TX Theatre has suffered a setback due to crime—we’ve lost our lighting control system,” he wrote. “Some of our programs are on hold. If you have a second-hand console to donate or want to help, your support would mean the world.”

When Ismail Mahomed saw the post, he reached out to Duncan Riley of DWR Distribution, who was quick to respond. “It was an honour that Ismail contacted us and that we were in a position to help,” says Duncan. “Mxolisi and his team are dedicated to the arts. It’s wonderful to see what they are doing and the difference they are making.”

“For audiences and performers, TX Theatre has become essential,’ says Skhongo Lehlogonolo from the theatre. “We built a theatre community where there once was none, and now, if ever there are no shows, people notice. We started in a 100-seater, stretched to 150, and once had over 500 people trying to get in and there was no space. We have a huge database of people who believe in the work that the TX Theatre produces and want to be part of.” Today, TX Theatre has a loyal and growing audience, international attention, and a packed calendar featuring drama, dance, and powerful local storytelling.

“DWR is a vital player in South Africa’s theatre and entertainment industry. Their generosity of a lighting console to the TX Theatre coupled with practical training is a very significant contribution to both resources development and human resources capacitation for South African theatre. I am most delighted that the TX Theatre’s passion, commitment and vision is supported by one of South Africa’s leading industry players”, said Ismail Mahomed, Director of the Centre for Creative Arts at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

On the day they received the desk, the excited team from TX Theatre received hands-on training from DWR’s Motlotlo “Mac” Makhobotloane. It was certainly a happy day! “This contribution is worth more than its financial value—it’s an investment in the future of our theatre, our artists, and the stories we tell. A big thank you to DWR Distribution,” said Mxolisi. “And a special thank you to Ismail Mahomed for making this sponsorship possible. Your belief in me and in the power of independent theatre has opened new doors, helping ensure our work continues and the future stays bright for all independent artists.”