

# British Theatre Guide

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## Mohan: A Partition Story

Niall Moorjani

Vault Crypt

26 February–26 March 2023

Niall Moorjani's grandfather was eleven years old in 1947 when India was divided by the British colonial rulers into two separate countries with horrific consequences.

On the Crypt's thrust stage with the heavy rumble of trains above, Niall switches between speaking directly to us about the context of those events and sitting in a chair as their elderly grandfather living in Britain recalling what happened to him and his family.

As Niall, the account is light of touch in depicting the cruelty and at times idiocy of Britain, particularly of the man who drew the partition line who knew nothing about India, "stayed in Delhi, used out-of-date maps and didn't consult locals."

The grandfather's harrowing story includes being shocked at the sudden violence the division generated in the area they lived, being forced to flee in a train that was later surrounded by men of a different religious group brandishing sticks and spending part of a night alone on the run.

He witnesses horrific events he will never forget.

It's an engaging, important play directed by Sanjay Lago and performed by a very compelling storyteller with the occasional accompanying low-key music of Dibyo Mukherjee.

In a final sequence of the monologue, Niall describes enjoying a conversation with someone on a train, who, as they part, says, "the Empire was worth it." Astonished Niall concludes that such views demonstrate why the history of the British rampage across India still needs to be known.

**Reviewer:** [Keith Mckenna](#)