



Evaluation summary for **not in my name** Oldham Pilot: 22nd–26th March 2010 A Theatre Veritae production

Theatre Veritae’s nationally-acclaimed and award-winning production of *Not in My Name* was commissioned by the **Lancashire Constabulary** in 2007 as part of an ongoing range of activities to develop young people’s understanding of current issues around the national **Prevent** strategy.

The continued success of the play in Lancashire, where it has now been seen by audiences in excess of 10,000 (a mixture of young people and older community audiences in both formal and informal settings), has precipitated demand to adapt the project for new areas. Work on this initiative began in earnest towards the end of 2009, with pilot productions in Cheshire, County Durham, Merseyside and **Oldham, Greater Manchester** all taking place in Spring 2010.

It is Theatre Veritae’s policy to allow each area to shape the *Not in My Name* project in the most appropriate manner for their local communities, rather than adopting a ‘one size fits all’ approach. This is achieved by working in close partnership with other local service providers to ensure the play is delivered where it is perceived to be of most value, as well as encouraging follow-up work as part of a sustainable strategy. The ‘pilot week’ provides an opportunity for an area to begin their own dialogue with *Not in My Name* and functions as a barometer of the extent of local engagement which, if positive, can then provide a stimulus for further personalised development.

Work in Oldham has been undertaken in partnership with **Oldham Council**, who identified local school students (Years 9 and 10) as their primary audience. The production was performed by a professional cast and hosted for a week at **Failsworth School**, excepting one community performance in **Chadderton Town Hall**. This document is intended to provide an executive summary of the quantitative evaluation data collected from these audiences, alongside with some key observations and recommendations drawn from this regional pilot.

Over the course of the week in Oldham, *Not in My Name* was seen by a diverse audience of approximately 850 people. A statistical breakdown of audiences is provided opposite; the observational nature of collecting this data should allow for a 5% margin of error.

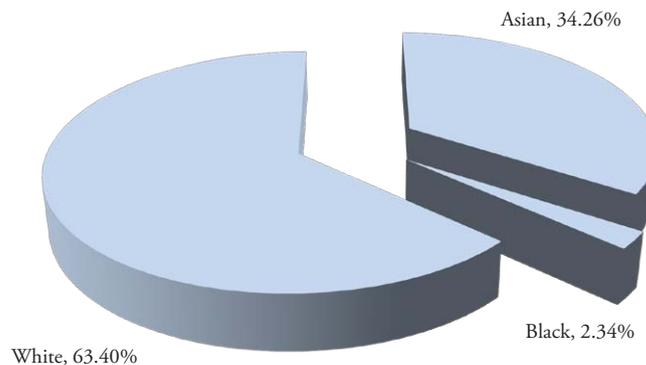


Fig. 1. Audience overview by ethnicity

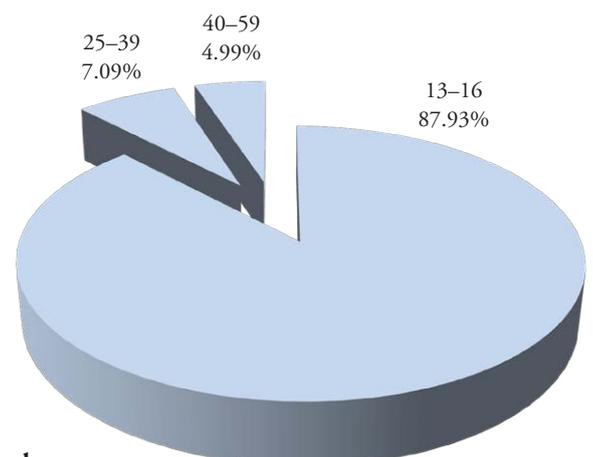


Fig. 2. Audience overview by age

Student evaluation forms were completed by approximately 10% of the total young audience, who were selected arbitrarily. The initial part of the questionnaire asked students to use one of five given options to indicate their personal opinion on three statements relating to their appreciation of the production, as summarised graphically below:

Overall these statistics are extremely positive, and generally reflective of the impact of previous productions of *Not in My Name* on this age-group in other areas.

An agreement percentage of 100% from young people within the play's targetted age-range on their enjoyment of the play rates the reception of the play in Oldham very slightly higher than that achieved in other areas for the same production. This variance may in part be accounted for by some artistic modifications made prior to the final week of a long tour, but is perhaps also indicative of the perceived relevance of the play to Oldham audiences.

Certainly agreement percentages of 95% and over for questions 2 and 3 supports this supposition, and these figures should be considered outstanding for any educational theatre piece. The fact that no young respondents 'disagreed' with any given statement is also exceptional, and this is compounded by the sensitivity of the subject matter.

Later questions asked respondents to use their own words to discuss their ability to relate to individual characters, elements of the play that they had found surprising, and their perception of the 'message' of the play. Given the comparatively small number of respondents for a 'pilot' week, these responses have been incorporated into our **Comparative Report** exploring reactions to the play across all five areas of its recent activity. All significant regional variances are noted within this.

A small representative sample of 'other comments' follows:

"This play was good. I understood the meaning between two cultures properly as the play went on." (Jodie, 14)

"It was informed to people who don't understand much. It was concerning to the families and inspired me to listen." (Beth, 14)

"I found it helpful and interesting." (Sabhan, 15); *"I was shocked and at the same time informed."* (Nick, 15)

"Shocking and interesting." (Chizche); *"I was challenged."* (Danny, 15); *"It gave me a greater understanding of racism."* (Shane, 15)

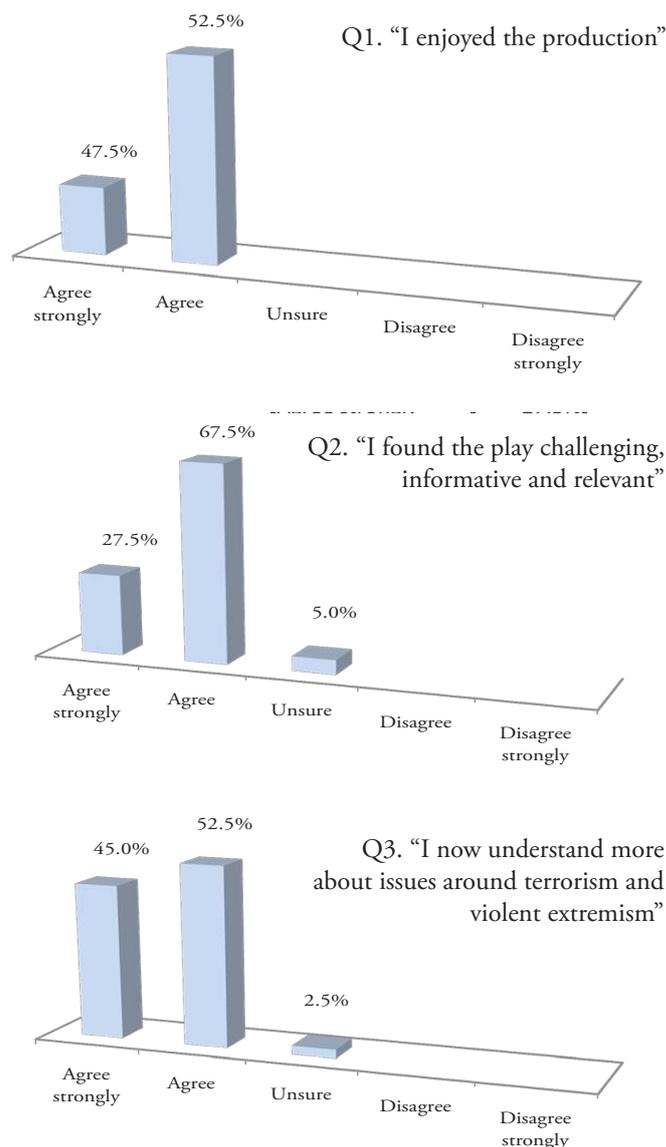
"I gave my opinion across. I was given insight to other people's religion. I felt sympathetic because Shahid was confused." (Katie, 15)

"The play helped me see both sides of the story." (Pakeeza, 13); *"It was a real life play and it was really good."* (Jack, 14)

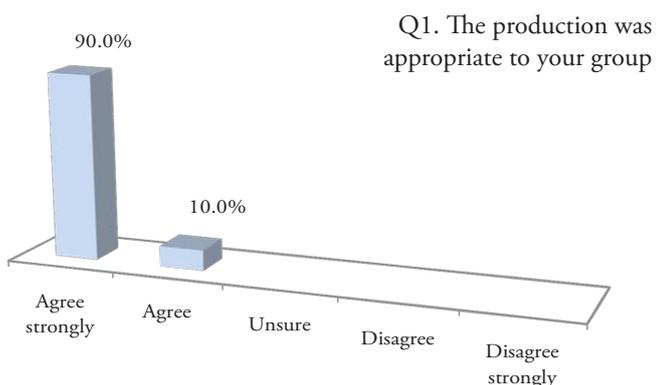
"I understood other people's point of view. It helped me with my understanding of the topic. I heard other people's religious point of view." (Katie, 15); *"Made me more aware of racism and terrorism."* (Adam, 14); *"It was a very good storyline."* (Kira & Arisha, 15)

"I thought the production was really good and made me think about the issues." (Tom, 15); *"I like the play, it taught me a lot about terrorism."* (Ryan, 13); *"Excellent play - thanks!"* (Reena, 13); *"Just thank you very much."* (Katie, 15)

"It was a great performance and I would like them to perform this in many schools." (Colin, 15)



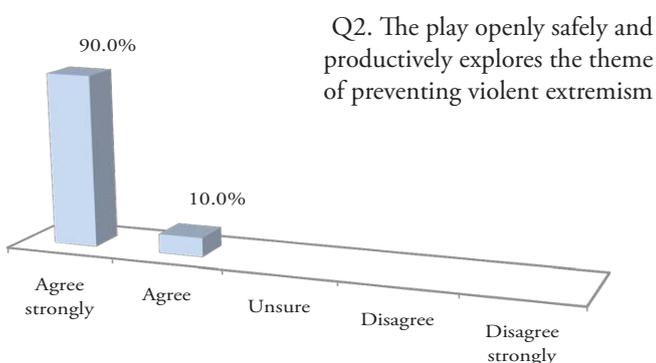
Staff evaluation forms were completed by at least one adult representative for each school, college or community performance; in most instances this was the main liaison. Similarly, staff were asked to express their opinion using a given scale on a number of statements relating to the production and its perceived impacts:



Once again, these figures are very positive, and the absence of ‘disagreement’ with any statement should be noted. Further questions asked staff to use their own words to discuss specific aspects of the production. These can be summarised as follows:

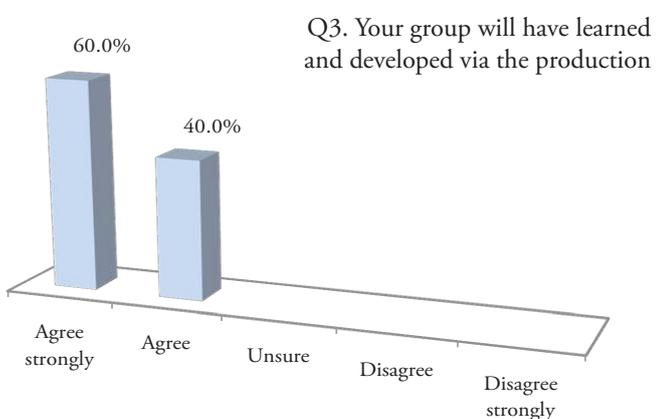
Expectation

All respondents expressed similar sentiments in hoping that the play would address concerns around tolerance and extremism - “to understand different cultures and to work together as a community”; to “make pupils aware of differing perspectives” - and to effectively allow the “open airing of issues”. It was unanimously agreed that these expectations had been met. One teacher also noted that she had “seen some extracts at PVE meetings, but it is far more powerful when watching it”.



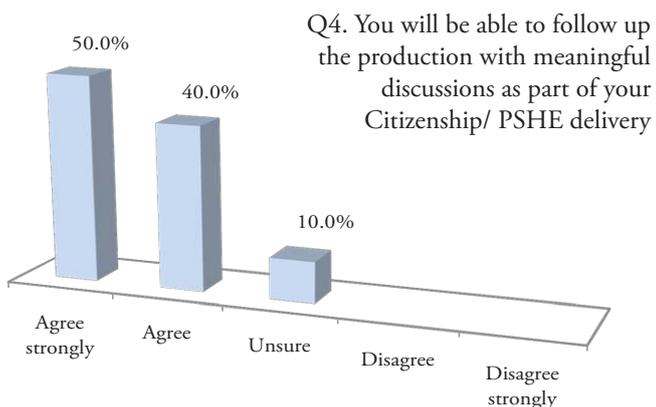
Perceived value

There was a consensus among respondents that the production had been of value to themselves, their staff and their students: “It will help in addressing the issues - going to look at it in our ‘who do we think we are’ week”; “Can build on it in school - support two assemblies and anti-racism week”. Beyond the play’s content, two elements were highlighted as being of specific value in the facilitation of the production - proximity to school, and the relative youth of the performers.



Student reaction

Most respondents felt that their students had responded “very well” or “very positively” to the performance. It should be recorded that there was one exceptionally difficult performance (in terms of retaining the young audience’s attention) over the course of this week; nevertheless it was observed that “other than some who were immature, I feel messages were clear and misconceptions may have been addressed”.



Quality

Once again, all respondents were unanimous in their appreciation of the quality of the production: “Excellent performance - very creative and thought provoking”; “Excellent pace and use of space”; “Very good. Strong actors”. A couple of respondents noted that the vocal projection of some actors could have been improved, which is a criticism we have encountered previously and one of the potential hazards of our policy of incorporating young ‘apprentice actors’ into our professional casts; this is countered by consistent feedback that younger audiences tend to relate most strongly to our youngest actors. In the instance of this production, the difficult acoustics of the venue (due to an inability to silence the air-conditioning!) should also be taken into account.

Other comments

Typically this section was not completed, but there was some reiteration of earlier impressions of the production’s value how much it had been enjoyed by these audiences: “It was great!”; “Enjoyed it, and gives a clear message of misconceptions of different cultures”.

Reflections

The production performed in Oldham was similar to that originated in East Lancashire, with no major alterations for this area desired by the project partners or deemed necessary by Theatre Veritae. Key to the success of this pilot were the preparations for our residency with local secondary teachers; facilitated by Oldham Council, these may provide an accessible model for future introductions of the play into 'new' areas:

Over the course of a year, a series of (existing) twilight training and networking sessions for teachers incorporated successive presentations and workshops by Theatre Veritae. These began an important dialogue around the play and how it might benefit each school, resulting in a genuine anticipation of the pilot from school staff. The process allowed for discussion around fears or doubts about raising the issues in the play with students, as well as the planning and sharing of ideas for teacher-led work to follow up the performances.

In common with all previous Theatre Veritae productions, *Not in My Name* was available to local schools as a free resource thanks to the generous funding of this pilot by Oldham Council. Student access to the venue was also facilitated by the Council at no cost to schools, and audiences were typically constituted of half-year groups from two separate schools. The choice of a (very well facilitated and accommodating) school auditorium as our host venue was observed to generate some tensions for visiting students, who might have preferred to encounter the production in a more neutral environment.

Attendees at post-production review meetings have agreed that this pilot has clearly demonstrated the potential benefit and relevance of this play to young people in Oldham, and discussions are at an advanced stage for a second phase of *Not in My Name*-related activity for local schools to be facilitated by students and staff from Oldham College in November 2010. Theatre Veritae will support this initiative, in the hope of generating a model for more sustainable peer-led delivery of future work around *Not in My Name* in Oldham.

Company for **not in my name** (Oldham Pilot):

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Actors: | John Afzal Lianne Curtis Shaun Foxcroft Mandip Gill Leon Jan Constance Oak |
| Apprentice Actors: | Daniel Eddison Donna Rainford |
| Writer & Director: | Alice Bartlett |
| Associate Director & Forum Facilitator: | Rob Glyn Jones |
| Producer: | Andrew Raffle |
| For Oldham Council: | Elliot Brown Richard Gore |

The Oldham Pilot of *Not in My Name* was produced by **Theatre Veritae** in partnership with **Oldham Council**; this production was hosted by **Failsworth School**:

