

A DERVISH PRODUCTIONS, VITAL XPOSURE AND BELGRADE THEATRE CO-PRODUCTION

in partnership with
SOUL CITY ARTS and THE ALBANY

QUIET REBELS

A new play written and directed by
JULIE MCNAMARA and HASSAN MAHAMDALLIE

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Image design by Mohammed Ali of Soul City Arts

DERVISH
PRODUCTIONS

*Vital
Xposure*

Belgrade
Theatre
Coventry



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

CAST AND CREATIVES

Lottie Bell	Aileen Burnett/Doctor Emmett
Joe Conteh	Michael A/Jamal
Deni Francis	Detective Shade
Fiona Whitelaw	Mary Aziz – Margaret/Barbara Thomas – Betty Grogan
Wayne 'Pickles' Norman	Johnstone
Hassan Mahamdallie	Jed Barking

Written and Directed by **Julia McNamara and Hassan Mahamdallie**

Matthew Green	Relighting/Technical Stage Manager
Farideh Didehvar	Stage Manager
Simon Kenny	Designer
Jeanefer Jean-Charles	Movement Director
Stephen Rudder	Filmmaker/Visuals
Awate Abdalla	Composer/Sound Designer
Troi Lee	Deaf Rave
Mohammed Ali	Digital Artist
Gabriel Finn	Lighting Designer
Paul Burgess	Creative Captions Designer
Joel Carr	Sound Engineer
Thomas Scott	Sound Engineer
Daryl Jackson	BSL Consultant
Clare Edwards	BSL Interpreter
Alison Clarke	Audio Flyer/Show Introduction track
Teresa Garratty	BSL videographer
Becky Bailey	Rehearsal Photography
Rehan Jamil	Production Photography
Simon Startin	Assistant Director R&D, the Albany, AD, Vital Xposure
Khadija Raza	Designer R&D, the Albany
Charlie Folorunso	Actor, Contributor and cast member 2019, 2020
Audrey Simmons	BSL interpreter at R&D, the Albany

QUIET REBELS is based on the true life but forgotten stories of white working-class women who crossed the colour line to marry men of the Windrush generation.

They defied race and class prejudice and social stigma directed against them and their families.


Former Artistic Director of **Vital Xposure Julie McNamara** and **Hassan Mahamdallie's** extensive research gives voice to the stories of these unsung women, who faced hostility, battled discrimination, and showed courage in the face of racism, class and gender prejudice and, who lay the foundations of the multi-cultural society we enjoy today.


The question is posed *“Why were these women treated as if they had committed a crime against society?”*

Supported by

Arts Council England, the Garrick Charitable Trust, Hackney Empire, City Bridge Trust, the Unity Theatre Trust, the National Lottery Community Fund and made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, with thanks to National Lottery players.

www.vitalxposure.co.uk | dervishproductions.com | belgrade.co.uk

 [vitalxposuretheatre](https://www.facebook.com/vitalxposuretheatre) | [BelgradeTheatreCoventry](https://www.facebook.com/BelgradeTheatreCoventry)

 [vitalxposure](https://twitter.com/vitalxposure) | [HMahamdallie](https://twitter.com/HMahamdallie) | [belgradetheatre](https://twitter.com/belgradetheatre)

 [vitalxposure](https://www.instagram.com/vitalxposure) | [belgradetheatre](https://www.instagram.com/belgradetheatre)

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We would like to thank Mike Hoolboom for images used from the films *Identification* (2017) and *We Make Couples* (2016).

PRODUCERS

A Dervish Productions, Vital Xposure and Belgrade Theatre Co-Production in partnership with Soul City Arts, The Albany, Deaf Rave and Hackney Empire

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Isobel Hawson

VITAL XPOSURE

Simon Startin, Artistic Director
Theresa Veith, Executive Director
Foteini Galanopoulou, General Manager

DERVISH PRODUCTIONS

Hassan Mahamdallie, Artistic Director

MARKETING and LOCAL PRESS

JMA

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Bid Mosaku

MANY THANKS TO OUR INTERVIEWEES and SUPPORTERS

Barbara Goodison
Ben Thomas
Mary and Nuruzzaman (Nural) Khan

Yvonne Ali's family
Elizabeth Gavan (Betty)

Karen Gallagher
Sophie Greatbanks
Kenrick Akiana Black

Smita Bajaria
Gaele Sobott
Cat Agar Jelo

Madinah Usman and family

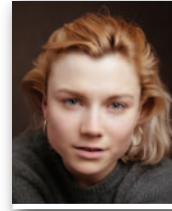
Clare Edward
Professor Hakim Adi
Ian Crichlow

All our audiences and critical friends during our R&D process

THANKS

Jules Deering, Technical Director, Queen Mary University
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Chats Palace
Brady Arts Centre

CAST

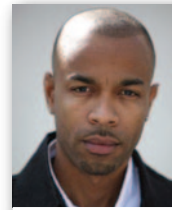


LOTTIE BELL – Aileen Burnett/Doctor Emmett

Lottie is an actor from Oxfordshire. She started acting in screen in 2010, appearing in the BBC's adaptation of *Just William*.

Since then she has trained at East 15 drama school and has recently graduated from the Acting BA at Rose Bruford College.

www.spotlight.com/5817-5648-9031



JOE CONTEH – Michael A/Jamal

Joe Conteh, born in Chelsea, is a model, actor and drama facilitator. He started out as a background actor in *Family Affairs*, *The Bill* and *EastEnders*

and starred in a Vodafone commercial as a double for Lewis Hamilton. He worked in Theatre in Education, by joining Face Front inclusive theatre and starred as a main actor and facilitator in the plays *Sex FM* and *Whisper Me*. Joe was a stunt double in the season 8 of *Trial and Retribution* and in 2012 starred in the film *Fifteen* as Taylor.



DENI FRANCIS – Detective Shade

Deni Francis is an actor, improviser, creative facilitator and writer. Recent acting work includes: *Queer Lives* at the Tower – playing King James, King

Edward II, and Roger Casement, (site specific at The Tower of London), directed by Tom Latter, *Little English*, feature film (BFI, 2021), playing Urmila, directed by Pravesh Kumar.

Spotlight www.spotlight.com/7369-9080-9154



WAYNE 'PICKLES' NORMAN – Johnstone

Pickles has been working professionally for forty-five years – his first job was the Artful Dodger in the West end

production of *Oliver* in 1977. His list of many TV shows include *Worzel Gummidge*, *Terry and June*, *Dr Who*, *The Bill*, *EastEnders*, *Murphy's Mob*, *Grange Hill*, *Inspector Morse*, *The Harry Enfield Show* and *Shine on Harvey Moon*.

Theatre work includes Falstaff in *The Merry Wives*, *Welcome Home*, *The Coming of Gowf*, *Afters* and *Counting the Ways*.

Pickles has been working for Graeae theatre company for many years as an access worker and an audio describer, appearing in their hit shows *Reasons To Be Cheerful*, *The Iron Man* and *The Threepenny Opera*.



FIONA WHITELAW – Mary Aziz – Margaret/Barbara Thomas – Betty Grogan

Theatre includes – *Stoke A Love Story* (Potboiler Theatre), *This Wounded Island* (Tour & Theatre

503), *Fix* (Edinburgh, national tour, Theatre Royal Stratford East), *Tinned Goods Tea and Tenacity*, (national tour, Home Theatre UK & Muncitor Theatre Royal Stratford East), *The Knitting Circle* (Vital Xposure, national tour), *More Soup And Tart & HAND* (Barbican), *Prometheus Awakes* (Graeae/Fura Dels Baus).

TV/Film – *Undocument* (Studio Soho International), *Feel The Dead* (Real Dreams), *Acceptable Damage* (Hem Heath, Evolutionary Films : Winner 'Best Action' National Film Awards UK 2021), *Tales From The Old Bailey – The Suffragettes* (BBC2), *True Stories* (Bafta nominated, BBC2), *The Princess And The Pea* (BBC2).

CREATIVE BIOS

JULIE McNAMARA – Writer and Director

Julie McNamara is a national/international artist and activist in Disability Arts, award winning playwright, screenwriter and published poet. *Whisper Me Happy Ever After*, from stories from children surviving violence in the home; *Ready, Steady, Retreat* in Dolly Sen's series *Birdsong From Unobservable Worlds*; *Burst my Bubble*, for Funny Ha Ha! online events dir. Vici Wreford-Sinnott; *The Butch Monologues* by Libro Levi Bridgeman; *Let Me Stay*: A love letter to a mother challenging Alzheimer's; the award winning documentary, *Voices from the Knitting Circle*, Picture This... Film Festival Canada, 2018, Melbourne Australia, 2019, published in *Creative Activism, Research, Pedagogy and Practice*, Cambridge Scholars 2022, ed Elspeth Tilley.

www.juliemc.com



HASSAN MAHAMDALLIE – Writer and Director

Hassan Mahamdallie was born in London into a large working-class Indo-Trinidadian/English family. He is a playwright, theatre

director, author and journalist. A former Director of the Muslim Institute, he is senior editor on its journal *Critical Muslim*.

Hassan is the founder of theatre company Dervish Productions.

www.dervishproductions.com

He writes extensively on culture, working class and Black history and politics, racism and Islamophobia.

He is the author of *Crossing the River of Fire: The Socialism of William Morris*, *Black British Rebels: Figures from working class history* and edited the collection of political essays *Defending Multiculturalism*.



SIMON KENNY – Designer

Theatre includes: *Blue/Orange* (Royal & Derngate), *Nothello* (Belgrade/Coventry City of Culture), *The Death of a Black Man* (Hampstead), several UK

tours for Eclipse including *The Gift* (Stratford East), *Noughts & Crosses* (Pilot/UK tour), *Red Dust Road* (National Theatre of Scotland), *Babette's Feast* (The Print Room), *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Island* (National Theatre), and *BORDER FORCE*, an immersive installation/performance/club event for Duckie.

Musical theatre includes: *Whistle Down The Wind* (Watermill), *The Lion* (Arizona Theatre Company), *The Wiz* (Hope Mill), *Ghost Quartet* (Boulevard Theatre), *Assassins* (Nottingham Playhouse), the multi award-winning *Sweeney Todd* in a purpose-built pie shop (West End/Off-Broadway), *Cabaret* (English Theatre Frankfurt), and *Saturday Night Fever* (Theatre Royal Bath/UK tour).

Opera includes: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Nevill Holt Opera), and *Vivienne* (Royal Opera House: Linbury).

Simon's designs for *Black Men Walking* (Eclipse) were selected to represent the UK at the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and the V&A Museum.

www.simonkenny.co.uk



JEANEFER JEAN-CHARLES – Movement Director

Jeanefer Jean-Charles MBE is a globally respected Creative Director with over 20 years' experience, specialising in large-

scale performances, opening ceremonies, stadium events, outdoor spectacles, carnivals, and parades. Her unique creative process brings to life the talents,

strengths, and shared stories of local communities and artists in inspiring and unforgettable ways.

www.jeanefer.com



STEPHEN RUDDER – Filmmaker/Visuals

Stephen Rudder is an award-winning audio-visual artist.

Under Quiet Voice, he creates art documentaries and immersive installations. Credits include: *This is Your History*, *ToughBlood* and *Black Men's Minds*. He has worked with organisations including UNESCO, Wellcome Trust and Science Gallery.

AWATE ABDALLA – Composer/Sound Designer

Awate Abdalla is a visionary Eritrean rapper, raised in Camden's Maiden Lane Estate.

His debut EP, *Shine Ancient* (2016) and LP, *Happiness* (2018) were produced entirely by Turkish Dcypa. *Happiness*, recorded while out on bail for two years, was hailed a "British rap masterpiece" by Trench Magazine and supported by BBC Radio 1, 1Xtra, 6Music, Spotify, Noisey and The Line of Best Fit.

AWATE has worked on residencies and archive projects with UCL, Tate Archives, British Library Sound Archive, the PRS Foundation and is a graduate of The Roundhouse's Resident Artist program. He is also a screenwriter and educator.

TROI LEE – Deaf Rave

Deaf Rave is a London-based group of broad-spectrum creative artists led by Troi 'DJ Chinaman' Lee, working towards awareness and promotion of Deaf culture.

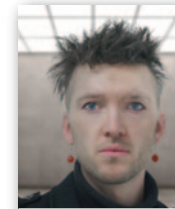
Over the past 16 years Deaf Rave has become widely recognised at the forefront of successful contemporary music and multi-disciplinary showcases for the national and international D/deaf community.

Deaf Rave provides entertainment with music, sign song and visual performances to an all-inclusive audience. It's aim is to unite everyone through the love and passion for music, by promoting its unique Deaf/Disabled identity and teaching everyone about Deaf Culture.

MOHAMMED ALI – Digital Artist

Art meets faith, identity and social change in Ali's work adorning the canvas of walls and public spaces, which change the visual landscapes of cities we live in.

Ali combines street art with live performances, installations, digital projections and moving soundscapes. He has created immersive experiences for audiences world-wide. An educator and curator, Ali is driven by a commitment to transform society and captures community stories. A trustee of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, he was awarded an MBE for services to 'Art and Community Cohesion'



GABRIEL FINN – Lighting Designer

Gabriel has a multi-disciplinary practice working with light in opera, theatre, dance, film, public art and architectural installations, and has recently lit productions at

Somerset House, Eastbourne Theatres, Tobacco Factory & the Arcola.



PAUL BURGESS – Creative Captions Designer

Paul is a set, costume and video designer, visual artist, and artistic director of Daedalus Theatre Company. He has designed for numerous venues in the UK and abroad, alongside campaigning for sustainable theatre practice, teaching and youth arts work.



DARYL JACKSON – BSL Consultant

Daryl has a 2.1 BA Hons in Deaf Studies with Interpreting English/BSL and Linguistics and is a sign language consultant, translator, advisor, script

supervisor, television presenter/reporter and actor. Daryl was a lecturer at Wolverhampton University in Interpreting and is a Sign Theatre lecturer for Reading University. He has also worked coaching actors, deaf and hearing signers at Graeae, Unicorn, Sadlers Wells, Gate Theatre, Green Candle, Almeida, Jackson Lane, The Globe, Royal Stratford Upon Avon Theatre.

Theatre credits include: *Motherland*, *Dysfunction* and *Children of the Greater God* (Deafinitely Theatre); *The Rule and the Exception* (Young Vic).

Daryl acted in BBC drama *Switch* and several other films for BSLBT. He was nominated for a Bafta for directing a Film4 children’s drama and directed three different plays titled *4Play*. He performed at the 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony.

Other credits include: creative translation consultations for, *My Almost Famous Family*; sign coached a specialist actor as a lifelike gorilla for film *Vanilla Gorilla*; assisted a deaf actor for film *Goya’s Ghost*; sign supported two actors in the film *Choyua 5*; BSL translation support for *Constellations* (Royal Court), *Casualty* and Numerous BSLBT programmes. Also the 2 successful *Ramps on the Moon*, *Government Inspector* and *The Tommy Who* musical and *Oliver Twist*.

Presented and in-vision interpreted for many TV channels and websites, and lastly Teaches Deaf awareness workshops all over the UK for a variety of theatre venues.

Previously done BSL Consultancy for BBC series *Casualty*, *Moving On* and currently working with *Silent Witness*.



CLAIRE EDWARDS (BSL Interpreter)

ALISON CLARKE (Audio Flyer/ Show Introduction track)

Ali has worked in theatre for more years than she cares to remember, specifically as an audio describer for the past 15

years providing description for blind and partially sighted audience members: this has included West End, London and National theatres, including the Old Vic and National tours, you name it... she is a regular describer for vocaleyes and particularly enjoys her involvement over the years with vitalxposure.

She worked internationally in the middle and Far East both as director and actor in commercial theatre for 15 years and also provided theatre in education.

On returning to the UK over 25 years ago she has devised and provided theatre in education and forum theatre for business nationally. She also completed a masters degree at the Central School of Speech and Drama.

DERVISH PRODUCTIONS

ABOUT DERVISH

Dervish Productions create high quality, political, multi-media work informed by authentic voices. Their work is crafted by artists who are committed to and understand the diversity agenda.

Founded and led by Hassan Mahamdallie, a specialist of diversity and equality in the arts, previous productions include *The Crows Plucked Your Sinews*; a one woman play about Somalis in Britain and Britain in Somalia. Based on real events and featuring the epic lyrical tradition of Somalia the play brings forward a unique exploration of the violence of empire and the poetry of resistance and was nominated for the Alfred Fagon audience award 2016.

On Crows: *“Is this the future of British Theatre? I hope so.”* – Media Diversified

www.dervishproductions.com



ABOUT VITAL XPOSURE

Vital Xposure is a bold, dynamic disabled-led theatre company, offering multi layered theatre productions, providing quality experiences for talented disabled artists and audiences alike. The productions lift the lid on vital social issues raising awareness and uncovering new voices in the arts and creates a fairer world for marginalised artists to become creative leaders, with their work celebrated in the heart of our culture.

Founded by disabled artist and activist Julie McNamara who led Vital Xposure’s creative work for its first decade, from January 2021, the artistic torch was passed to actor, playwright and activist, Simon Startin.

On Let Me Stay: *“A fantastic show with great visuals... Deeply moving and mesmerising.”* –

Diversityworks, New Zealand

www.vitalxposure.co.uk

BELGRADE THEATRE

The Belgrade Theatre is Coventry's largest professional theatre, producing and presenting a diverse range of shows, events and ground-breaking community and education initiatives.

The Belgrade Theatre was built in 1958 as part of the reconstruction of Coventry after World War II. Holding 858 in its two-tier main auditorium, and 250–300 in the flexible, second space, B2, it remains one of the largest regional producing theatres in Britain.

Autumn 2007 saw the re-opening of the Belgrade Theatre after completion of its £14 million redevelopment project, including the creation of B2, and refurbishment of the existing listed building.

Having started the Theatre-in-Education (TIE) movement in the 1960s, the Belgrade also continues to pioneer new initiatives in this field as well as other community and outreach programmes.

The Belgrade is in a period of transition into a new future, led by CEO Laura Elliot and Creative Director Corey Campbell. These leaders have ambitious plans to build on the Theatre's rich history of pioneering theatre, participation, and talent development, to realise a lasting place of sanctuary for creatives and communities.

Through values of collaboration, evolution and authenticity, their working mission is to use the transformative power of theatre to enrich the people of Coventry and beyond.

Over the next three years, Laura Elliot and Corey Campbell will lead a people first approach; prioritising co-creation and cultural democracy, aiming to be a leading example of a regional inclusive learning theatre that sits at the heart of its community.

Recent productions include: *Fighting Irish*, *Nothello*, *May Queen* and the innovative digital project *SeaView*.



QUIET REBELS

INTERVIEW WITH CO-WRITERS JULIE McNAMARA and HASSAN MAHAMDALLIE

How did you come together to create this project?

JMc: Two significant producers and advisers in the creative industries raised Hassan's name: 'You should work with Hassan Mahamdallie.' Then I heard Hassan speak with great passion about his vision of a creative case for diversity. It was crystal clear, convincing and he began his presentation with a beautiful poem by Langston Hughes – *Harlem: A Dream Deferred*. I wrote to Hassan afterwards and thanked him, then I went to see his show. That was the beginning.

HM: In 2016 Julie came to see my play *The Crows Plucked Your Sinews* (about the British colonisation of Somalia and the lives of British Somalis today). We had a chat, realised that although we each had our particular historic arenas of struggle, myself, anti-racism, and Julie the struggle for disabled rights, we both shared a radical agenda around the working class, and writing for and about working class people and their suppressed histories.

We both share the conviction that those who really change the course of history are those most ignored and forgotten. So we agreed that we should collaborate on a play at some point in the future.

I thought it would be exciting to work with Julie and Vital Xposure, and to learn from her and the company about the politics and aesthetics of disability in theatre. But we didn't have an idea – a subject area to explore. And then sometime later, the whole Windrush 'hostile environment' scandal blew up – which for me was an attempt by the Tories to forcibly erase that whole post World War Two generation of our elders and their contribution.

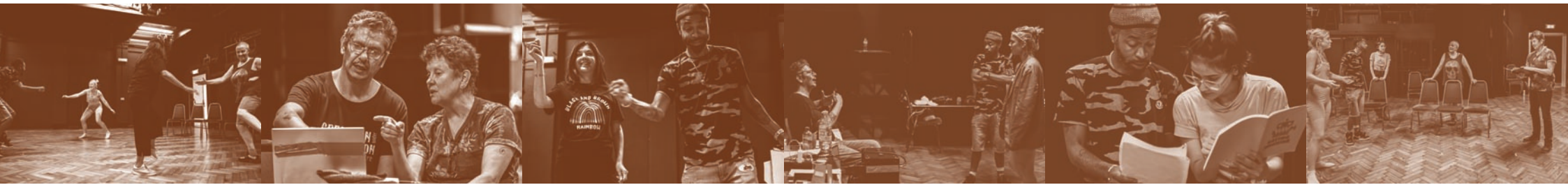
At the same time, I came across a biographical article

from the renowned educationalist Professor Heidi Safia Mirza, whose father, like my own, was an Indian from Trinidad, and whose mother was a white European, like my mother. In the article Mirza wrote that:

"White women, like my Mother, who married black men – those so-called 'dark strangers' – are the silent heroes of this generation. They were true pioneers, those who crossed over in another way. They too have a story to tell of racism and transcendence, of love and care for their dark-skinned children... Their story of mothering work to shape a new generation of 'dual heritage' children is one that is largely forgotten in the post-colonial story of diaspora and displacement".

I thought that was a really interesting way of looking at the history of the Windrush generation – through the lens of these white working-class women who fell in love with these 'dark strangers' and in their own way altered history, and shaped the multicultural society we enjoy today. I told Julie that I thought I had something we could both write about. What I didn't know at the time, was that Julie and her family was in the middle of their own fight against racism and the state.

JMc: For me, researching these stories and writing this play, was vital to my mental health. I have been seething with rage at the devastating impact of successive governments' casual disregard of the contribution of Black people and other communities of colour in shaping the country we live in today. My nephew Troy has been in this country since he was 18 years of age, he's been at the heart of our family for 21 years and together with my niece Sophie, they



are raising four beautiful, creative, passionate political souls as part of our family.

It has taken us 5 years in an excruciating legal process to fight against Troy's deportation. In October 2020, in the middle of lockdown no 3, justice was finally done in the Royal Courts of Justice, or for us, in a hideous experience on a Zoom tomb in a laptop screen in Liverpool! I am still seething, at the emotional, mental and financial impact of those 5 years of institutional racism that meant we were obliged to prove in four hearings in court that 3 Sophie and Troy are in 'an enduring relationship' and that it would indeed be 'unduly harsh' on the 4 children to have their father removed to Jamaica. WTF?

How did you go about the research for *Quiet Rebels*?

HM: We set about looking for working class women that we could interview who had married across 'the colour line' from the period of the end of World War Two up until the 1970s. Their voices had to be at the heart of our play. This generation are now in their seventies and eighties, and we realised that their testimonies were in danger of being lost forever. The final script is built around interviews with four women we interviewed – from Yorkshire, Liverpool, West Midlands and London. Tragically, two of them have died since we conducted the interviews, including my own mother. We decided to concentrate on women's voices, but we know there were also working-class white men who married women of colour who came to the UK to work during the post war period. But the white women in those mixed relationships faced particular hostility that their white male equivalents, on the whole, didn't

experience. The women were widely regarded as race traitors, sexually deviant and punished for 'going' with men of colour. My mother was ostracised by her parents for decades, shunned by her closest neighbours, and regularly spat at and called an N-lover for the 'crime' of walking in the street with her husband or her 'half-caste' children.

Maybe it is difficult today to comprehend the barbaric level of hostility that mixed couples faced back then. But when I was born, in 1961, surveys showed that around nine out of ten people were totally against marriages between white women and black men. By 1986 that number had gone down to 50%, and now stands at 15% of the population. But that gradual turn-around didn't happen by itself – it's because people down the years refused to concede to bigoted attitudes and fought against racism.

Part of our motive for staging the play was to show how crucial those 'silent heroes' as Mirza puts it, are to laying the foundations for the modern multicultural society we perhaps too easily take for granted. The stories we collected were fascinating in all sorts of ways.

Firstly, the variety of backgrounds of the women – from rural backgrounds, from poor working class, manual backgrounds, and what you might call white collar families. They all met their partners in different ways – at a Saturday night dance, a chance encounter in a lunch café, at a night out in an Indian restaurant.

JMc: I started with my niece's story. And in the first R&D we presented at the Albany, south London, we used the actual court transcripts and the judgement in the Upper Tier Supreme Court in London. The

language used then and now, clearly depicts the deeply ingrained racism we have been raised with in this country. It seeps through every structure in our society, starts with Royalty and is woven into the fabric of our class ridden society. I went on to interview friends from the Travelling community whose parents were known as 'Scots Marie and the Black Gypsy', perhaps their story deserves a play of its own. I chose people from Liverpool because the city is built on slavery and has one of the largest and longest established Black British communities in the country. 5 I chose a colleague who has a mixed heritage family and who has lived in five countries and still describes England as 'the most racist country I ever had the misfortune to live in'. The women I interviewed are ordinary working-class women who have fought hard throughout their lives to hold onto what they believe in, with extraordinary fortitude and unexpected defiance. When Hassan and I sat together with the stories we had gathered, there was a common thread underlying the spirit of these women. These are our Quiet Rebels.

How did you create a framework for feeding those stories into the narrative of *Quiet Rebels*?

HM: The initial R&D for the project was started pre-COVID, and then we were plunged into the lockdown. At the time both me and Julie, like a lot of people, were bingeing on Netflix. We realised we liked the same kind of stuff – particularly detective stories and film noir and sci-fi and dystopias. We decided to write the play as a dystopia, set in the near future in a disintegrating post-Brexit England, in the grip of a racist authoritarian regime where Black and brown immigrants have been expelled, and where mixed

relationships are illegal. And make the central protagonist a detective attached to the regime, ordered to solve a murder of an elderly white woman who had been branded a race traitor, and as a result had lost her children. For the next stage of R&D we wrote some key scenes and then rehearsed and recording the actors over zoom sitting in their bedrooms. We asked Mohammed Ali from Soul City Arts to construct a digital sci-fi backdrop to each scene, edited it all together, and then had an online showing for some of our theatre friends. And people really loved what we had done by placing the women's' stories in this imaginative framework.

What was the reason for staging the play in 2028?

JMc: Playing with sci-fi, inventing a world with the smoke and mirrors of our imagined future, gives us plenty of room to rattle our audiences' imagination and say to them: *'Yes, we did say 2028, but look around, we already have Race Detention Centres, look to your left, we've already built Testing Centres where we send Disabled people, anyone on income support, for 'Work Capability assessments'.*

We use evidence from history, accurate dates and historical facts, and then we throw in a curved ball. So we write as if this is Enoch Powell's legacy. This is the racist future he had dreamed up.

HM: All the elements of our dystopia – extreme racism, intolerance and scapegoating, authoritarian "strong men", efforts to reverse engineer this country (and other European states and the USA) back to some kind of mythical ethnically "pure" white, male-dominated society, where groups such as the poor, disabled and marginalised are erased through



state policy, are all in motion now in 2022. And that process is accelerating. To our dismay, we kept being confronted with aspects of our 2028 fictional dystopia appearing in the real world. The criminalisation of “race-mixing” is the starting point of the narrative of *Quiet Rebels*.

In July, Victor Orban of Hungary makes a speech asserting that “we [Hungarians] are not a mixed race... and we do not want to become a mixed race,” and that countries where European and non-Europeans mingle were “no longer nations”. Now the idea of forbidding “race mixing”, that we thought had been buried with Apartheid South Africa, is back out there in the European mainstream. We want to remind people that history and progress does not always go forward -sometimes very quickly it can be thrown back. We hope that our audiences will leave the theatre determined to make sure that the 2028 the play depicts never happens.

JMc: I can't add to this except to point out the number of people who have witnessed the first versions of this work and come away feeling perturbed. And then they begin to question what has been happening recently and we have allowed it, because we are second guessing our own reality. This is what our Tory government want.

What are you aiming to do with the creative residencies for young people and online resources?

JMc: We are hoping to fill in a piece of missing history in young people's education to date. Our education system is institutionally racist, filled with skewed histories from a White Supremacist perspective.

And we all know that history is told by the winners, by the colonisers, by the imperialist upper classes. We are aiming to challenge those skewed stories with some of those stories from our *Quiet Rebels*, and have the young people go out and find out from their elders about their particular histories and struggles. That the multicultural society they are a part of today has not always existed. Past generations had to fight to establish it, and now this generation of young people in particular will have to defend it from those destructive forces who want to take us all backwards.