

MATTHEW BOURNE'S NEW ADVENTURES & RE:BOURNE: LORD OF THE FLIES

Round	5
Artform	Dance
Funding	£894,116
Time period	January 2013 to March 2015
Applicant	Re:Bourne Ltd
Producers	Matthew Bourne's New Adventures & Re:Bourne
Presenters	Strategic Touring: Lowry, Salford Theatre Royal, Plymouth Birmingham, Hippodrome Liverpool Empire Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury Sadler's Wells, London Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff Theatre Royal, Newcastle Theatre Royal, Norwich Bradford Theatres Creative Scotland: Theatre Royal Glasgow Eden Court, Inverness His Majesty's Aberdeen
Evaluation	Shared Intelligence evaluated the project, alongside an internal evaluation, which obtained feedback from young people. The project also participated in the Manchester Metrics Pilot for Arts Council England.
Points of interest	Joint professional and non-professional cast Longitudinal evaluation Legacy projects in all 13 cities

INTRODUCTION

Re:Bourne is the charitable arm of Matthew Bourne's New Adventures. The objectives were: to create a long-lasting legacy for dance and for thousands of young people through a production which combines professional talent with the energy of young people including those with no previous experience in dance; to create a model of 'triple impact' art that combines artistic brilliance with commercial success and social impact.

CONCEPT

The assumptions behind the project were:

- **Participation drives new audience development.** The cast in each venue included around 20 boys and young men, some with no previous dance experience, dancing alongside New Adventures' professional dancers. This was a different ensemble of young men in each location. The participant and audience data below strongly supports this assumption. Feedback showed the inspiring nature of the experience for the young cast.
- **Collaboration increases skills transfer and sustainability.** *Lord of the Flies* ambassadors (emerging community dance artists) worked with venue staff on outreach, community and school engagement, and in finding and nurturing the local cast in advance of the production arriving for rehearsals.

- **Touring is particularly important for dance.** Dance is particularly poorly represented in arts attendance in the lowest quartile of local authorities, representing 1% to 3% of audiences.

ACTIVITIES

The project had these elements:

- **Workshops.** Re:Bourne organised 1,120 dance workshops for 7,541 participants. Re:Bourne wanted to maximise the impact of the workshops on new audience development. They used the dance workshops to audition but also to get boys involved in dance whether they wanted to join the cast or not.
- **Dance ambassadors.** In each locality Re:Bourne recruited dance ambassadors who acted as community mobilisers before, during and after the tour. The dance ambassadors co-led the workshops, which left a legacy of knowledge and connections in the area.
- **Performances.** The artistic vision, which was delivered, was to have the non-professional dancers on stage throughout the performance and integrated with the professionals. The partners were large-scale venues, which would not usually programme mixed non-professional and professional productions on their main stage.
- **Publicity.** The show received very strong and positive press coverage in the national and local press. Critics seemed to understand the nature of the production and what it was trying to be achieved.
- **Evaluation.** The methods consisted of: electronic registration data on participants; before and after paper questionnaires for participants; vox pop interviews, photos or video diaries from *Lord of the Flies* ambassadors and participants themselves as well as interviews with partner venues, parents, dance infrastructure organisations and youth groups.

Figure 64: *Lord of the Flies*, The Lowry, Salford, May 2015 (photograph by Helen Maybanks)



LESSONS

Lessons from the project were:

- **Boys are interested in dance.** Some dance infrastructure organisations were sceptical about the scale of the project and its possibility of success. For example, one dance representative said that Re:Bourne would be lucky to get 10 boys interested in the workshops, when they actually got 600. The audition process was extremely time-consuming because of the high level of interest generated.
- **Demand from audiences was high.** Across the UK, 78,029 people paid to see a production combining professional and non-professional dancers.

In both cases, the interest was undoubtedly helped by the association with Matthew Bourne.

IMPACT

The project greatly exceeded its audience targets. The targets and actual figures for the project are:

	Target	Actual
Number of performances	60	60
Number of workshops sessions	940	1,120
Live audience	34,911	56,542
Participants	5,620	7,541

The intention was to recruit boys with a mix of experience of dance and this was achieved. Shared Intelligence reported that of the 2,174 boys for whom they had comparable data: 30% said they attended a regular class, and a further 7% had studied for an exam, 21% said they had only a little experience, and 34% said they had never danced before. An ambassador involved in recruitment emphasised that the actual and correct target was: “not so much about boys who had no previous interest – more about boys who have an interest in dance but cannot express it”. Audience Agency analysis of the Mosaic data for 3,234 workshop participants who provided complete postcode data showed an even spread across local authorities with high, medium and low arts engagement.

Bookings were handled by the marketing team at the Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG), who had complete box office breakdowns for their two venues, the Liverpool Empire and the Theatre Royal Glasgow. Using Experian Mosaic data ATG was able to identify the socioeconomic classifications of the neighbourhoods which ticket bookers gave as their home address when booking. These showed that Prestige Positions made up a large proportion of *Lord of the Flies* ticket bookers in both cities as well as Senior Security and Rental Hubs. However, less privileged categories - Aspiring Homemakers, Family Basics, Transient Renters, Municipal Challenge, Vintage Value, Modest Traditions, Urban Cohesion - made up around 30% of Liverpool and around 24% of Glasgow ticket bookers, which is consistently higher than the venues’ theatre-going audiences. Shared Intelligence had data for Liverpool and Glasgow, which showed that first time bookers made up 33% and 27% of bookers respectively. They estimated that around 20% of the audience was under 18.

Data compiled and analysed by Catherine Bunting for Bradford showed strong outcomes for the participants. Respondents scored the project as on average nine or more on a 10-point scale for organisation, enjoyment, artistic experience, aspects of empowerment, support, team working, motivation and achievement.

LEGACY

Re:Bourne feels that it has created a new genre of performance – working at the mid and large scale with emerging artists – and is already planning its next production. The project helped to change external perceptions of the company. The commercial success of the company can blind people to its social importance and impact.

The project has strengthened the local dance sector. Some of the dance ambassadors continued their work after the Strategic Touring project ended. For example, the Norwich team set up a dance company to continue offering workshops along the *Lord of the Flies* model. The Plymouth ambassadors created a boy dance club and one made links to Plymouth Theatre Royal. Legacy projects are taking place in all 13 cities. Each venue is being given a £5,000 legacy grant to continue the work with young boys and the dance ambassadors. The company is in the process of launching a national programme to support community dance artists within its NPO work.

Re:Bourne created an educational pack for *Lord of the Flies*: http://newadventures.net/media/files/LOTF_Resource_Pack.pdf

The young boys have continued their interest in dance. At least eight of the participants have gained a place at a conservatoire to pursue a career as a professional dancer.