

<p><b>Institution:</b> London South Bank University</p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Communication Culture &amp; Media Studies Library &amp; Information Management</p>
<p><b>Title of case study:</b> Bilingual Radio Drama for Monolingual Audience – a first in production</p>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study is based on research investigating the nature, challenges and potential of audio-drama, and especially bilingual audio-drama. Specifically, it explored the possibilities for creating bilingual drama for monolingual audiences; the effects of using different recording environments; and the advantages of cross-cultural collaboration.</p> <p>Impact includes: (i) a growth in the practice and reach of bilingual audio-drama in the radio broadcasting sector, both in the UK and internationally; (ii) the establishment of the radio play as an act of live theatre; and (iii) an increased awareness of the possibilities for collaborative audio-drama production across cultural and linguistic borders.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The research underpinning this Impact Case Study explored the nature, challenges and potential of bilingual radio drama for an audience fluent in only one of the languages involved. It was carried out over the period 2005-2009, and was led by Jonathan Banatvala (Senior Lecturer in Theatre Practice: Creative Producing at LSBU, and Artistic Director of Moving Theatre), with international collaborators: Dr Gunther Freisinger (Vienna University), Toma Enache (Radio Romania International) and Eoin Brady (RTE Lyric FM). The research was funded by grants from the Arts Council, England (£40,000) and the EU Culture 2000 programme (€60,000).</p> <p>A two phase action research methodology was adopted, to explore:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whether radio drama could be created entirely bilingually to be fully understood by a monolingual audience from either language;</li> <li>the impact of recording radio drama in a range of different recording environments; and</li> <li>the artistic benefits of partnership working across cultural and linguistic borders.</li> </ol> <p>Phase 1 (2005-6), co-ordinated and led by Banatvala, involved all four partners and selected multi-lingual actors, in identifying and developing a framework and conventions for the creation and delivery of radio dramas in two languages. This culminated in a two-day ‘laboratory’ workshop. Suitable pieces were adapted, recorded and analysed. The research clearly identified the important contribution of creatively written code-switching in the overall listening environment and how this enhances the dramatic experience.</p> <p>In Phase 2 (2007-9), each production team contributed to the production of a season of five 30-minute bilingual dramas in English and a second language. As well as producing the two UK productions, Banatvala curated and directed the overall season (on opera heroines). The research also explored different recording environments: two of the dramas were recorded in front of live theatre audiences, one was recorded on location in rural Ireland, and one in a traditional recording studio. In a further development, the studio-recorded drama was then performed live as an audio-drama at LSBU before a multi-lingual audience of over 100 people. The season of radio dramas was intended for an online audience as well as for a mainstream radio broadcast.</p> <p>Key findings from the research were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bilingual radio drama which a monolingual audience could understand could be produced without the aid of visual clues.</li> <li>Notwithstanding the linguistic challenge, the audience experience was enhanced because the changes in language were used to signal relationship and character developments through the process of code switching between bilingual characters.</li> <li>The choice of music and soundscape were important in contributing to audience engagement and understanding. The musicality of the language was also a key factor in this process.</li> <li>The audience experience across the two languages was not necessarily identical but neither was superior to the other.</li> </ul>

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- Where the performance was recorded as live and subsequently edited, this was not directly discernible for the radio audience but it had an important impact on the performers and the heightened performances they gave. This was reflected in the overall quality of the production.
- A live audience can fully respond to bilingual radio drama as an art form in its own right.
- The choice of English as one of the languages by all producers gave the plays a broader international currency than had been expected.

This innovative research indicates that carefully orchestrated bilingual radio drama not only equals but can exceed the dramatic experience of listening to radio drama in a single language. The outputs which embody the research primarily consist of live performances, creative writing, multilingual radio and audio, with impacts on cultural life and civil society.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

*The Works* Season, The Works Partnership (2009), Artistic Director J. Banatvala, publ. Monochrom. <http://theworks24.wordpress.com/> The following are the 5 productions in *The Works*:

- *A La Villa Bab Azzoun* (w. K. Hesketh Harvey, d. J. Banatvala, LSBU & Moving Theatre), recorded as live at Hampstead Theatre, London 2008 (Prix Marulic 2009, Prix Europa finalist 2010)
- *The Way of All Women* (w. J. Fletcher, d. J. Banatvala, LSBU & Moving Theatre), recorded as live at Canning House, London 2008 (New York Festivals Radio P & P Award 2009)
- *The Flying Dutchman of Iniskillin* (w. T. Swift, d. J. Mangan, RTE Lyric FM), co-funded by RTE Lyric FM, recorded on location vic. Dublin 2007 (PPI finalist 2008)
- *Bucharest Underground* (w. S. Stanescu, d. T. Enache, Radio Romania), co-funded by Radio Romania International, recorded in studio Bucharest 2007 (Grand Prix Marulic 2007)
- *La Grotta di Bernd* (w. F. Schneider, d. G. Friesinger, Monochrom, Vienna), co-funded by Monochrom, recorded in 'basement', Vienna, 2008

All broadcasts carry the following credit information:

'Name of work' was recorded in 'name of place' as part of the *The Works*, a pan-European Radio Drama season by partners Lyric RTE, Monochrome, Moving Theatre and National Radio Romania. *The Works* is funded by Culture 2000, Arts Council, England and the season's Artistic Director is Jonathan Banatvala.

Report on *The Works*, A European Radio Drama Project: by Moving Theatre, Radio Romania International, RTE Lyric FM, SRA/Monochrom, ed. M. Nock, submitted to EACEA Brussels, March 2009 (available from LSBU on request).

Arts Council England, *The Works* Final Evaluation Report: by Moving Theatre, ed. M. Nock, submitted online, 2009 (available from LSBU on request).

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Banatvala's research outputs have been manifested in a number of novel works, which have received international acclaim. To develop, produce and present these works, Banatvala together with the partners set up a special purpose production and marketing vehicle, The Works Partnership, in 2007.

Since 2008, the Works Partnership together with Moving Theatre Ltd have received over £252,000 in development grants, including over £100k from the EU Culture Programme, £11k from the European Cultural Foundation and £95k from the Arts Council to:

- Develop the successor project to *The Works: The Mechanics*, a partnership between Moving Theatre, Radio Romania International, Theatre Ephemeride (France), Association Greenwave (Georgia), and Tbilisi State Music and Drama Theatre (Georgia), to produce five different interpretations of the story of *Carmen* from an original adaptation commissioned by the partnership. The partnership produced a choreo-drama, a bilingual stage play, a radio installation, and an interactive audio-drama.
- Develop and co-produce a bilingual adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida* in Georgian and

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Russian with interleaved monologues written from original interviews with survivors on both sides of the South Ossetian war (2008). Produced in Kutaisi and Tbilisi (see below).

Up until 2011, The Works Partnership was the only UK arts company to: (i) be the lead partner on two EU Culture Fund projects; (ii) lead a project in the 2011 EU Culture Fund Third Country Stream; and (iii) have led a radio-based collaboration project. Access to Banatvala's research has enabled Moving Theatre to move from producing works for UK national touring to being a leading international research and development company in the field of audio-drama.

Banatvala's research has made an impact in three important areas:

### 1. The practice and reach of bilingual radio drama:

Prior to Banatvala's research, bilingual radio drama was primarily drama written in two languages but not integrated into a single drama (e.g. Beckett's work). Following Banatvala's research there has been a tangible uplift in bilingual radio drama, evidenced by, for example:

- BBC Radio has collaborated with Radio France to produce *Déjà Vu*, a play in French and English, on Radio 4 and Radio France in 2009 [[www.arteradio.com/son/334014/](http://www.arteradio.com/son/334014/)].
- Among the radio projects which received funding in 2010 from Ireland's Cogar Sound & Vision, three were bilingual Irish/English [[www.cogar.ie/default.aspx?treeid=346&ItemID=76](http://www.cogar.ie/default.aspx?treeid=346&ItemID=76)].
- In 2013, the international arm of the French National Radio Station (Radio France International) began broadcasting a bilingual radio drama series in French and Hausa to African listeners [<http://allafrica.com/stories/201310120194.html>]. This is believed to be the first of its kind.

In addition, the bilingual plays emanating from his research have reached audiences beyond their partner countries, for example:

- Australian Broadcasting Corporation Radio National acquiring *Bucharest Underground* in 2010 for *Airplay*, its primary radio drama programme, attracting an average audience of 40000 [[www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/airplay/bucharest-underground/3029062](http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/airplay/bucharest-underground/3029062)].
- Following the award of the Prix Marulic 2009, Hannu Karisto from YLE Radio Finland is in negotiations to broadcast *A La Villa Bab Azzoun*.
- Radio Romania specifically broadcast *Bucharest Underground* through its international arm, Radio Romania International.

### 2. The practice of live recording of serious drama:

A further manifestation of Banatvala's research has been the establishment of the radio play as an act of live theatre and as an important theatrical experience in its own right, through the recording of serious drama as a live performance in front of a theatre audience (e.g. *A La Villa Bab Azoun* and *The Way of All Women* recorded live in London, 2009). Prior to this, live radio had been confined to comedy and panel games in the UK and some community radio. For example, the Romanian Cultural Centre presented a live performance of *Bucharest Underground* as a cultural event in 2009. In the UK, since 2010, The Wireless Radio Company has established a reputation as a producer of live performances for radio drama recordings, playing to sell out audiences. Other companies too have subsequently developed a profile for radio plays for live performance: the Fitzrovia radio plays have toured to popular and critical acclaim in each year since 2009, for instance, and a version of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* for radio will tour theatres in late 2013 performing to live audiences.

### 3. Partnership working across cultural and linguistic borders:

The impact of Banatvala's research in this area is reflected in the Moving Theatre company's involvement in a partnership programme (set up 2010) with Theatre Ephemeride (France), Radio Romania International, Association Greenwave (Georgia) and Tbilisi State Music and Drama Theatre (Georgia) which received EU Cultural funding and support from Arts Council England for *The Mechanics* – a programme to reinterpret the story of *Carmen* using a range of languages and performing arts forms. At the heart of *The Mechanics* was the creation of a full-length bilingual stage play reinterpreting the *Carmen* story for an English and French audience. Other elements of the programme included:

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- a radio installation led by Association Greenwave in which selected participants worked with an artist on themes inspired by the *Carmen* story;
- an original 'interactive radio drama' (with Wireless Theatre Company), extending the radio drama as an art form for the digital age. Individual online users create their own drama from a selection of scenes, sound effects and music and then re-post their creation for others to hear. All the scenes are professionally performed but the individual listener is invited to create his/her own relationship with the piece by choosing which to include and deciding where to take the storyline.

Across the programme, figures reported to the Arts Council for *The Mechanics* included 48 artists involved; 1,000 participants; 4,000 members of live audiences; and 150,000 viewing the production via broadcast, online or written versions; 6 commissions; artist employment of 1,200 days; and 40 education, training or participation events across the partner countries during 2011-12.

A partnership between Moving Theatre and Lado Meshkishvili State Theatre (Georgia), delivered a ground-breaking bilingual production of *Troillus and Cressida* in Georgian and Russian with interpolated verbatim monologues (2011). The monologues were drawn from interviews from participants in the Georgian/Ossetian war. The production involved 24 actors, two translators, a set and costume designer for eight weeks.

The research has also contributed to the UK listener's appetite for internationally-produced radio drama and a willingness to engage with unfamiliar formats, languages and themes. One indicator of this has been a clear interest in the UK in establishing an International Radio Drama festival in Britain. Drama producers from ABC Australia, Radio Romania, Radio Croatia, Deutchelandfunk and the BBC have all supported this proposal. A survey of thirty representatives at the 2013 Prix Marulic received unanimous support for such a festival. The project has similarly been met with approval from Arts Council England, Canterbury Festival 2010, East Sussex County Council (RUGEf programme) and the Interreg Manche European funding programme.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

The following links should be treated as a single reference. They measure the number of times each audio-drama was viewed, listened to in its entirety and downloaded from the Wordpress site:

<http://radio.sztaki.hu/node/get.php/011pr1986>

<http://radio.sztaki.hu/node/get.php/011pr2032>

<http://radio.sztaki.hu/node/get.php/011pr2033>

<http://radio.sztaki.hu/node/get.php/011pr2031>

<http://radio.sztaki.hu/node/get.php/011pr2030>

**Nominations and Awards:**

- A Prix Marulic award (2009) for *A La Villa Bab Azzoun*. (A total of 47 shows from over 20 countries submitted to an international panel) – (citation available from LSBU on request.)
- New York Festivals Radio Programming and Promotion (NYFRP&P) award (2009) for *The Works* season [<http://www.newyorkfestivals.com/main.php?p=3,1&compcode=RP>] (NB: search for Moving Theatre, 2009)].
- Shortlisted for the Irish PPI Radio Awards (2009) for *The Flying Dutchman of Iniskillin* - (available from LSBU on request).
- Shortlisted for the Prix Europa (2010) for *A La Villa Bab Azzoun* - (available from LSBU on request).

**Contacts:**

- (i) Development Director, Moving Theatre.
- (ii) Director, NFA International Arts & Culture (former Theatre Officer, Arts Council, England).
- (iii) Producer, Wireless Theatre Company.
- (iv) Actor; Self Employed Freelance.