

PRESS RELEASE
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For immediate release

Brighton rappers' anti-racism message gets a national audience

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Three young Brighton rappers played the biggest gig of their lives tonight (Weds) when they performed at a major showcase gig streamed live on itv.com.

Jamal Ali (18), Lewis Healey (19) and Mrisi Makondo-Wills (17) are each respected rappers in their own right but they wanted to show people in Brighton that despite their different ethnic backgrounds they could come together through music.

They got together to record a track called *What Is Race?* in which they each draw upon their own experiences of racial discrimination to challenge the listener to define race. As ITV Fixers they have made a music video for the song which they now take into local youth centres as part of a presentation on diversity.

Jamal, who sings the first verse, is from an African Arab background; the second verse is rapped by Mrisi, who is mixed race African and British; and Lewis, who sings the last verse, has been discriminated against by other rappers because he is White British. All three have personally experienced racism, ranging from mistrust to physical violence.

The Big Fix Live! (7.30pm-9pm, Wednesday 21 July) was a unique event which, like ITV Fixers the award-winning campaign behind it, doesn't fit neatly into any handy pigeonhole or charitable cliché. Nevertheless, celebrities who have lent their support to the Fix include Stephen Fry, Alan Carr, John Barrowman and Brooke Kinsella.

The live artists appearing in *The Big Fix Live!* are all unsigned, up and coming performers who use dance, drama and music to raise awareness of issues that affect them and their lives. As ITV Fixers they have been given a platform and an audience of primetime ITV viewers for their message.

Produced to celebrate the second anniversary of ITV Fixers, the 90-minute live show was presented by Donal MacIntyre and Natalie Pinkham. A lively mixture of chat, video, and live performances, *The Big Fix Live!* gave the spotlight to some of the toughest issues affecting young Britons today, including knife crime, abuse and homophobia.

Jamal said: "*The Big Fix Live!* is the perfect opportunity to get our message across and we weren't going to miss it for anything: "It's been really interesting to take part in this big event and see what everyone else's issues are and how they are working as Fixers. This studio is impressive, it's really

the best, so professional. It's been fantastic getting up there in front of a full house and thousands watching online.

Big Lew added: "It's also a great opportunity to meet other performers and make new contacts through ITV Fixers."

Presenter Donal MacIntyre, who like most of the professionals working on the *Big Fix Live!* has given his time freely to the event, said: "*Big Fix Live!* is a crazy mix of the glossy and the gritty, and a creative collision between showbiz and grassroots action. We really pulled it off on the night and really celebrated the work of ITV Fixers all over the country.

"Entertainment these days is so often about competition and pitching one young person against another. What we have done here is the polar opposite of that - there's no auditioning, no hype. Yet the talent is there in abundance. Everyone working together helped out to make the whole event a big success."

Margo Horsley, chief executive of the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, which created ITV Fixers, said the event is the culmination of two years hard work getting the Fixers campaign established throughout the country.

"It started as a simple idea in 2008 when we offered young people in the ITV Meridian and West regions the opportunity to have their voices heard on the issues they felt strongly about. We now have some 3000 young Fixers and over 400 projects nationwide, and it's still growing. The opportunity to have a prime time news platform on ITV Regional News for their concerns has given these young people such a boost. Young people having a voice in over 12 hours of airtime not only changes perceptions of young people but also open doors; suddenly their opinions are valued and they discover they have the power to change things for the better. With some 150,000 hours of effort already put into their projects Fixers are fast becoming a force for change.

"Our Fixers have won awards and recognition for their work all over the country. It seems to me that ITV Fixers are showing how the big society works; young lives are being transformed because they have the chance to do something meaningful with the added bonus is that it changes things for lots of other people too. One young woman who suffered from mental health problems was too scared to leave the house when she became a Fixer. Now she's about to start a medical degree. In the process she also changed the hearts and minds of local employers about giving people with mental health problems a job. The confidence boost that being an ITV Fixer can bestow is priceless and I hope the 'Fixers effect' will stay with these people for the rest of their lives."

Ends

Notes for Editors

- o *The Big Fix Live!* was streamed live on www.itv.com from 7.30pm to 9pm

on Wednesday 21 July and is now available on demand at www.itvfixers.com <<http://www.itvfixers.com>> .

- o ITV Fixers with vinspired.com is a major campaign created by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust, giving young people between the ages of 16-25 the opportunity to tackle any issue that they feel strongly about. What they choose to do is up to them as long as it benefits at least one other person.
- o The Fixers are given all the resources they need to make their chosen project a success, with creative help from media professionals to make their own promotional material, from DVDs to websites. Support is on hand for the duration of the project and a broadcast production team produces features about the Fixes for ITV regional news.
- o In July 2010, ITV Fixers was named “Best TV portrayal of young people” in the Positive Image Awards. More info at www.positiveimagesawards.tv <<http://www.positiveimagesawards.tv/>> .
- o The Public Service Broadcasting Trust is a charity that brings together mainstream broadcasters, public and voluntary sector services, and viewers.
- o v, The National Young Volunteers’ Service aims to inspire a new generation of volunteers (aged 16-25) across England. It does this by creating a diverse range of volunteering opportunities to help young people take action to improve lives, communities and the planet.

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