



ROYAL
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA



Wemba's Dream

Creative Activities Resource Pack

Summer 2021

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in Brent

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) is celebrating its 75th anniversary in September this year by announcing a permanent move of the Orchestra's headquarters to Wembley Park. The Orchestra is delighted to build on more than 20 years of work with Brent Music Service to make our new home in Brent, and are eager to reach out to local residents to find out how we can engage in meaningful ways over the next months, years and decades.

Wemba's Dream

To celebrate our new announcement, the RPO are working with Wembley Park to put on *Wemba's Dream*, a fun-filled 'festival' of performances featuring RPO musicians and local artists during the weekend of 11 September. Following a call out to artists in February 2021, RPO musicians are spending the summer working with Brent-based poets, choreographers, designers, theatre makers and musicians to create four bespoke commissions celebrating the local area through innovative performances that we hope will be fresh, relevant and exciting for audiences.

This project is also the Orchestra's chance to meet our new neighbours and find out more about the area, so we're keen to invite as many people as possible to get involved with *Wemba's Dream*. This may be as audience members attending the weekend performances, but also as artists exploring the project theme through a range of artistic responses. In the lead up to the performance weekend, the RPO will therefore build an online collection of responses from local people, sharing and celebrating the themes of the project. This activity pack includes ideas of ways you may wish to engage with the theme, but **submissions do not need to be limited to activities outlined here – any artistic responses that can be documented and shared on the RPO's online gallery are most welcome**. We want to give a platform to as many artistic contributions as possible!

The Theme

The name of the event is *Wemba's Dream*. Inspired by Wemba who, in the year 825, made his home by a clearing (or 'lea') and gave his name to the area ('Wemba's Lea'), we want *Wemba's Dream* to celebrate the dreams of today's modern Wembas – the people of all ages and backgrounds who make their homes in Brent.

The historical connection to Wemba invites us to reflect on the past, present and future of the local area and community. We want to learn more about what makes Brent so special and unique.

The notion of 'dreams' can encompass many ideas across cultures and time. 'Dreams' can make us think of future goals, aspirations and hopes – but they are also where our mind takes flight at night. The language and content of dreams can be deeply moving, fluid, surreal, playful, escapist or more.

We hope that the broad themes of 'Brent' and 'Dreams' will fire up imaginations in many different ways. Artistic responses can relate to any part(s) of the themes, use any artistic mediums and be framed through whatever lens is most relevant to those making it.

How to Take Part

All you need to do to take part is create an artistic response to the project theme – this could be through visual art, music, theatre, dance, sculpture, film, storytelling or another method. To get started, you may like to watch this short [video](#) from RPO violinist Sali-Wyn Ryan to get acquainted with the Orchestra, the project and the theme. Then choose your favourite artistic method and respond to the *Wemba's Dream* themes of 'Brent' and 'Dreams'. You may like to try out the activity ideas listed here, but all creative responses are welcome. Once you're happy your artistic piece is complete, follow the instructions below to submit it for inclusion in the online community gallery.

Submitting Work

To submit work to the online gallery collection, simply send a photo, video, audio file or link to the work to Resound@rpo.co.uk with the information outlined below. The gallery will be hosted on <https://www.rpo.co.uk/rpo-resound/in-action/wembas-dream> and we anticipate the collection will go live in mid-June 2021, running throughout the festival weekend in early September.

A few considerations:

- Any submissions including images of children or young people must be accompanied by a written statement in the body of your submission email giving consent for images to appear online.
- Submissions will be credited with information provided in the accompanying email, so please include information or specifications that you wish for us to use (for example, 'Primary School Name – Year 3 Class') in the submission email.
- Where children or young people are involved as individuals or small groups, only first names will be used.
- Submissions with profanity or inappropriate imagery will not be included.
- There is no limit to the number of submissions a school, class, group or individual can submit – we will do our best to include all submissions in the online gallery wherever possible.
- Large file sizes up to 2GB may be sent via [WeTransfer.com](https://www.wetransfer.com) for free.
- Ownership of artistic products remain with the creators, but submitting work indicates that you are happy for the work to be shared publicly, with no payment or fees, for the duration of the online gallery.
- **NB:** The *Wemba's Dream* artistic team is currently looking for an official logo to use on communications about the September weekend events. If you would like to design a logo for consideration (see *Wemba's Dream* Logo activity below), please ensure you submit creations to Resound@rpo.co.uk by **5pm on Friday 24th June**. Submissions are welcome at any time before or after this deadline for inclusion in the online *Wemba's Dream* gallery.

ACTIVITY: Wemba's Dream Poems

As part of *Wemba's Dream*, our musicians are working with local poets to create new poems about daydreaming and what dreaming means to people in Brent. We'd love to receive poems from local residents, whether written as individuals or as groups/classes. Poems can take any form, length or structure, but here's an idea to get you and/or your group started in case you find it helpful.

Create a 'list' poem

Often the hardest part of writing a poem is getting started – take the pressure off by thinking first of just creating a list of words, phrases or ideas. Try to make the list as long as possible so you've got plenty to work with later. If working as a group/class, you might like to work in pairs or small groups to bounce ideas off of each other. To get the creative juices flowing, you might find it useful to think about the five senses and how they relate to the themes of 'Brent' or 'Dreams': What does dreaming feel like? What does Brent taste like? Extra points for creative similes or metaphors.

As you can see, what starts off as a list becomes a collection of interesting wordplay and twisting ideas. It gives people the chance to use their imaginations without feeling forced, and with a sense of fun as ideas build on top of each other.

Once you've got a collection of words and phrases, trim it down to the best bits. If working as a class, get the group to choose their favourite statement from each group or pupil and write these all down in one place, on the board or large pieces of paper. Once your list is prepared, look for first and last lines – these are strong or evocative statements that introduce and conclude the message. Finally, order the rest of the poem by setting the remaining statements in a way that makes sense. Don't be afraid to lose extraneous words or edit phrases in the process – iterations are good!

Next steps

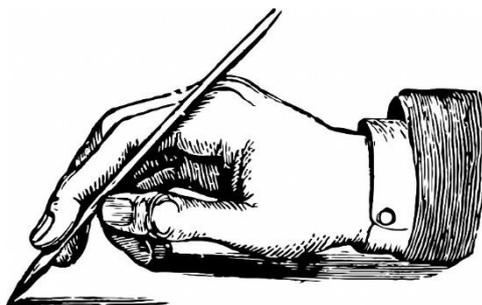
Once you have the main body of the poem created, you may like to introduce repetition to highlight the main themes and add a little structure to the poem. Choose another related word or phrase and add it to either the beginning or end of each stanza – does this repetition anchor the poem? Experiment with a few words/phrases and the frequency or placement of the repetition – is it adding to the poem or is it distracting? Feel free to remove or re-order lines as you go, and choose to use repetition or not, until you're happy with the final product.

Even more steps

Is your poem actually fit for performance? Some poems work well (or even better!) spoken or performed out loud. Is there a way to perform your poem that adds to the message? If it's a group poem, could participants alternate lines or read those that especially speak to them?

Submit to the gallery

Once you're happy with your poem, don't forget to share it with the online gallery following the instructions under the 'Submitting Work' section above.





ACTIVITY: Wemba's Dream Melodies

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra musicians love music and value its ability to communicate with audiences. Try your hand at writing a *Wemba's Dream* song or musical composition that shares your thoughts and feelings about Brent or 'Dreams'. We're really keen to hear all creations, from individuals humming to mixed instrumental ensembles, and submissions can be audio-only tracks or videos if you'd like to show off your performance. All submissions are welcome, but here's a little advice if you're starting from scratch.

Find your message

First, you'll need to brainstorm your message: what do you want people to know or feel about 'Brent' or 'Dreams'?

Initial musical decisions

Next, consider what the music should sound like to reflect the message. Choices to make include:

- tempo - how fast or slow
- dynamics - how loud or soft, or changes in loudness
- articulation - are sounds short or long; hard or soft?
- style - straight vs jazzy swung rhythms; sounds from specific cultures

If you're working with instruments you can choose which ones feel more or less appropriate for the melody (trumpets for bold, exciting music vs acoustic guitar for soft, mellower sounds). If you're working with classroom or household items for more of a soundscape feel, experiment with what materials work best – wood, fabric, metal – for each part of the song. If you're up for a more technological approach, consider using 'found sounds' by recording daily noises and editing these together to create or complement your music.

Write your lyrics (or not!)

Some people may prefer to use words or lyrics to share their message – if so, you might like to write these words before creating the melody. One way to write lyrics is similar to the 'list' poem activity above: generate loads of words or phrases and then order these in a sensible way. It's useful if lines share similar amounts of syllables and cadence (the speed or rhythm of the words) as this means melodies will fit multiple lines, and lines will feel like they flow instead of some being longer or shorter than others. The easiest way to tell if lyrics fit is to read them out loud and feel whether the words roll off your tongue easily or if you need to add pauses or remove words to make the lines fit together. (Remember, there's no reason lyrics must be in English!)

Find your melody

Once you've made initial decisions about the style of your piece, work on creating a melody or soundscape that expresses the idea(s). The easiest way to do this is often through out-loud trial and error: by either humming/singing ideas until you find one you like, or noodling on instruments and sharing ideas until one sticks. If you're working towards a soundscape, try layering sounds on top of each other or hearing specific sounds individually to see how that changes your piece. Are there different sections to represent different parts of your idea?

Some groups may find it useful to have a single note or chord progression playing on repeat while they try out ideas over top – this helps give your ear an anchor point.

Submit your ideas

Once you've got your melody, more advanced groups may like to fit harmonies and chords underneath. However, a melody itself is a significant achievement and certainly something we'd like to hear and include in our gallery!

ACTIVITY: Wemba's Dream Visual Art



What do your dreams look like when brought to life via painting, drawing or other visual arts? How do you feel about Brent and how can you express that visually?

You may wish to reflect your dreams or Brent experiences realistically, drawing exactly what you imagine or see. Alternatively, you may go for more of an 'abstract' style, expressing the feeling or mood of your dream rather than a clear reproduction.

Feel free to use whatever materials you have available: pencil/pen, paint, collage, textiles, sculpture, photography, iPad, etc. and remember to snap a photo once complete, for sharing on the online gallery. All creations are welcome, but if you need an idea to get you or your group started, try out the following activity with recommended dream-related listening links.

Interpreting the 'sounds' of dreams

Sounds and music can evoke different pictures, moods or ideas for each of us, and these ideas are a great place to start if you're looking for visual art inspiration. To get you in the *Wemba's Dream* spirit, we've selected six pieces of music that explore different moods and imagery related to dreams which you might like to listen to and interpret in your art (**NB:** some pieces may be better suited to different ages, so if you're leading this activity you may wish to listen to each piece first and select those you think are most appropriate for your group):

- **Masquerade** by Anna Clyne
<https://open.spotify.com/track/5ZKn8czTQDW6iYwiSZaeeW?si=816f9cea77364265>
- **Háry János Suite: II. Becsi harangjatek (Viennese Clock)** by Zoltán Kodály
<https://open.spotify.com/track/2p7suW65VwyAUFjHbeonyl?si=f1b67761eabd4a25>
- **Night on Bald Mountain** by Modest Mussorgsky
<https://open.spotify.com/track/690mJxFYDsjPwK6OMH8oIlg?si=0d0fbf24aca24ca1>
- **Icarus in Orbit** by George Walker
<https://open.spotify.com/track/0MbA2npQVqTel7k8RDxKvX?si=1ad6d0f3f7364a92>
- **Mothership** by Mason Bates
<https://open.spotify.com/track/1G0sFGSJjFtSAC3h4WbZR?si=2ea3bdadee3584ae4>
- **The Nutcracker: Waltz of the Flowers** by Pyotr Tchaikovsky
<https://open.spotify.com/track/0Jl28MlrpS2MuaisRZcz4D?si=d157a939025d49d2>

Choose which piece(s) you'd like to listen to and then follow these steps to stretch the imagination:

- Discuss the idea of 'Dreams' and brainstorm adjectives or moods to describe them: realistic, strange, surreal, scary, calm, etc. Discuss how these descriptions might be evoked visually.
- Ask the group/close your eyes and listen to the selected music. Don't tell anyone the titles of the tracks – it's much more fun to see where each person's imagination takes them.
- After (or during) listening to each piece of music, ask each person to brainstorm what the music sparked in their imaginations: What pictures did they see? What sort of dreams would this make someone have? What moods did it evoke? What areas or aspects of Brent did it remind them of?
- Finally, ask participants to think of their favourite bit of music you've listened to and use whatever art materials you have to hand to visually express the imagery of the sounds and how it can relate to Dreams and Brent.

ACTIVITY: Wemba's Dream Logo

Could your visual art creation make a good *Wemba's Dream* logo?

When getting the word out about public events, it really helps to have a

logo that can communicate the themes and inspiration for the event to

audiences. The best logos are clear and visually engaging – they should draw audiences in whilst

clearly communicating their message. What is the message of the *Wemba's Dream* event and

project themes? Can you express this in a simple, enticing way? Re-visit your original artwork made

during the Visual Art activity above, or create a brand new piece to depict the *Wemba's Dream*

message to the public.



A couple of top tips when designing logos:

- Remember the *Wemba's Dream* project is all about Brent and the dreams of local residents, so be sure the location or community is evident.
- Consider the 'vibe' you want your logo to give – what is the vibe of Brent?
- You may wish to include the words 'Wemba's Dream' in the logo – this isn't required but may help drive the message home.
- Since messaging is paramount in logos, test whether your message is coming through by showing your logo to peers or family members and asking what ideas or feelings your image evokes for them. If they get close to your intended message, you're on the right track!
- Often feedback or time can make a difference in appraising one's work, so it may be useful to consider artwork as 'draft' versions until you're confident you've given it enough thought to be considered the 'final product'.

NB: The *Wemba's Dream* artistic team are looking for an official logo to use on communications about the September weekend events, and are happy to consider submissions from the public. If you create a really good logo that you'd like the team to see, please ensure you submit responses to Resound@rpo.co.uk by **5pm on Friday 24th June**. Submissions are welcome at any time before or after this deadline for inclusion in the online *Wemba's Dream* gallery.

ACTIVITY: Wemba's Dream Dance Response

Movement is such an important part of how we express ourselves, both through small, unconscious gestures as well as large, choreographed moves. This summer RPO musicians are working with Brent choreographers to create a special dance performance for *Wemba's Dream*. Put on some comfortable clothes and try your hand at creating a dance routine that expresses the local community or your ambitions. You may like to work alone for a solo piece, in pairs or small groups or even as a whole class!

You might like to use the music tracks in the visual art activity above to give you inspiration, or use your own *Wemba's Dream* musical composition as a backing track.

Once you've choreographed and practiced your dance, record the outcome in a short video and submit it to the online gallery for sharing with the rest of the borough.



ACTIVITY: Wemba's Dream 3-Shot Film

Creating short films is a really fun way to communicate your ideas – you can think of them as a short scene or advert for your message. One of the simplest ways to get started is to make a film with only three shots: a close-up, medium and wide shot.

Close-ups show just the subject's head/face, and are really effective at showing emotion or giving detailed character information.



Medium shots include the subject from the waist up, giving a little bit more of a view of what's around them. You can also fit more than one person/object in the frame, making it work well for scenes with multiple actors.



Wide shots show the entire subject from head to toe. These shots give context to the film as they show the setting or location you're in, and/or are really great for action sequences where you need to show movement or loads of people.



The first step to creating a film is to plan your message: what story will you tell in your short film? Is it a depiction of an aspect of life in Brent? Is it a surreal dream based near a Brent landmark? Remember, you only have three scenes to work with if you're working towards a 3-shot film so you'll need the story you're telling to be concise.

Once you've got your story idea, decide which type of shot would best communicate the message. Consider what information you're trying to convey with each scene and what you want the audience to see and focus on. What order should the scenes appear in to make your story make sense to (or surprise!) your viewer? Put these together into a storyboard.

Now you've got your story planned out, grab your phone or tablet and use the camera function to film each shot separately. Remember to turn your phone landscape (sideways) so it looks like your TV screen: wide instead of tall. Try to also leave a few seconds between when you start recording ('Action!') and when the subject starts speaking/acting – this makes sure you don't accidentally miss anything while the camera starts up. Remember to always watch the scene back before moving on, and take as many 'takes' or tries as you need to get it right.

When you're happy you've captured each scene exactly as you want it, use a video editing app such as iMovie or Quik to drag your scenes into one film. Make sure you put the scenes in the order that matches your storyboard and watch it back to check you're happy before exporting and submitting it to the online gallery for sharing!