

Living the Dream.

Pages 1 – 4 an introduction to the Project

The inspiration, creation and performance of "Living the Dream", a multi-media musical story in three acts.

A two-year creative partnership between the Kent Special Educational Needs Trust (KsENT,) The Big Reveal, the Gulbenkian Theatre/ Colyer-Fergusson Hall and Kent Music from September 2020 to February 2022.

Project work supported with funding from the Kent Community Foundation and KsENT.

For The Big Reveal

Matthew Sharp: project and performance director.

David Burrige: composer, music facilitator and conductor.

Tracey Falcon: artist and art facilitator.

Martin Riley: writer and dramatist.

John Coombes: film maker, designer and teacher.

For Kent Music

Luke Crook: Education Manager (SEND) digital music, music technology.



Living the Dream: The Story.

Living the Dream is an enrichment and continuation of the previous year's project: "Brave New World". It is a story of transition which can be understood on many levels - by children who have had to leave family, move into care, move home or school or perhaps had to find refuge in a new country.

Set in the distant past, before the age of machines and computers, it is an adventure story of a people whose home is under threat and who journey together to find a new place to live.

On their travels, by land and sea, they overcome many dangers and difficulties but arrive eventually at the island of their dreams, an extraordinary place, quite unlike anything they have ever known.

They set out to explore it but soon discover it is already inhabited. The islanders are very different from them and are not in any frame of mind to accept strangers: they are in crisis, with a huge problem of their own.

The newcomers offer to help and, in doing so, take on a task that tests all their courage and ingenuity. They are ultimately victorious but their greatest challenge will be to find a way for both peoples to live together in harmony on the island.

The Process: an overview

From September 2020 to March 2021

Creative exploration

With support from the Big Reveal facilitators and Kent Music, online as necessary, children and staff from all the schools involved will use music, art, drama, movement and story-making with sound and video recording to explore the themes of Living the Dream and create all the detail: the description, character, song, music, dance and action missing from our very generalised story synopsis.

Week of March 18th, 2021.

The Exhibition

Living the Dream Exhibition: art, music, story, video, dance and movement, maybe, who knows, a video game? It will certainly be online and, if possible, live in a venue to be decided. We celebrate what the children have achieved and launch the next stage of the process which will lead up to the Live Performance in February 2022.

April – May 2021

Playwriting.

Drawing from the children's work on the story, Martin writes the drama and lyrics and may commission children for extra story input.

June – July 2021

Book-writing, Composing & Designing

Martin delivers the text for the performance and begins work on The Book. David begins work on music and song. Children engaged for extra art and music input.

August - September 2021

Learning and rehearsing

David finishes Music and Song and the full script with music is given to schools to start learning and rehearsing, with support, for February 2022.

October – November 2021

Publishing

Martin finishes text for book. Children commissioned for any extra artwork and the book is designed and sent to the printers.

January 2022

Book Launch

The Living the Dream Book with illustrations by the children, launched in schools as part of build-up to performance.

February 2022

Performance of Living the Dream

Matthew and David direct the Rehearsal and Performance of Living the Dream with accompanying foyer exhibition of children's work on the project.

From September 2020 to March 2021

Creative exploration

The Detail:

Week of 28th September 2020

The Heads-up!

Release of a short motivational video from The Big Reveal, for staff and for pupils, describing the project and the story and the creative contributions the young people can make in music, song, story and visual arts to its development.

Release of John Coombes' practical guide to using phone and tablet effectively to record contributions.

Zoom Launch Meetings for Teachers.: Three Zoom meetings, for teachers to attend one of, to introduce the Big Reveal team. David, Matthew, Tracey and Martin, with Luke Crook of Kent Music launch the project and answer any questions.

Between October 3rd and October 26th 2020

Stoking the fire.

Suggestion and impromptu interventions from The Big Reveal on social media to motivate and raise profile and consciousness of the project.

Week of 26th October 2020

Approaches to Creativity

The Big Reveal releases three more short videos, each designed to encourage the children in a different aspect of the creative exploration.

Telling the Tale.

In which Martin and Matthew explain what story, character and incident ideas are needed and highlight simple ways to go about creating them.

Making the Music.

In which David and Matthew explain what music and song elements are needed and highlight simple ways to go about creating them.

Picturing the Scene.

In which Tracey and Matthew explain what visual elements are needed and highlight simple ways to go about creating them.

November 2020 to March 2021

The Big Reveal team review and encourage work in progress on social media leading up to the ***Living the Dream Exhibition during the week of March 18th, 2021.***

**“Living the Dream”:
Pages 5-9 a guide to exploring the story.**

Asking the questions that will create the detail.

FRAMING:

The World of The Story

This story takes place at a time long ago, when there was no electricity, when people cooked on open fires, when there were no computers or phones, when they spoke or wrote letters, when there were no cars or aeroplanes, when the roads were made of mud and stone, when people travelled on foot or on horseback or on wagons or sailed in sailing ships, a time when tools were made of iron and steel and the only weapons were swords and spears and bows.

Exploring the World of The Story

The world described here is a historical time, yes, but it’s not too specific and could also be described as the world of traditional and mythic story.

As a preliminary to interrogating the tale itself some time could be spent exploring the limits and possibilities of this world with some artwork, some research, some imaginative music and song making: a rowing, riding, sailing or marching song, telling or reading some adventurous stories set in this world at an appropriate level.

Exploring character

The “Travellers” in the story can be the schoolchildren themselves who create characters and personas for themselves, set in the world of the story, key fictional characters with appropriate skills, back-stories and roles within the community. But they may also wish to create “stand alone” characters with input from everyone.

Exploring the Three Acts of The Story

To help focus and strategic planning, each chapter of the adventure can be approached separately and thematically.

Act 1. The Journey of Hope. What happened on the way!

The Travellers tell of what made them have to leave their home, the adventures they had on the way, over deserts and mountains, through woods and fens, across stormy seas. There was danger and loss, but what kept them going was their trust in each other and their hope of finding somewhere to live in peace.

Why we had to leave our home: *what happened that made it impossible to stay in our land?* Was it a famine, a plague, a catastrophic event like an earthquake or a volcanic eruption, invaders? Could we draw or paint this moment? Could we use drama to explore the difficult moment of making the decision? Some want to hang on till the last moment – but will that be too late?

Saying Goodbye - *to the places, the world where we grew up, like saying goodbye to the house we grew up in, full of memories, to special places where special things happened, to the land of our ancestors, where they are buried, where our history is. We have regrets because we have to go but we will carry our memories with us. This is a great opportunity to examine with words, music, art – any kind of expression, what “home” means to us: people, place, memory, security.*

Journeying – *movement, steady as we go, one yard after another, a music of the travelling soul, maybe the song we sing to keep our spirits up, the hopes of where we are going, the dream of what we’ll find when we get there, our encouragement to each other, a song of following the star, the sun, eyes on the horizon. How to travel with children, with grandmothers and grandfathers, helping each other, those who can travel easily and those who need special assistance.*

Landscapes – *music of the mountains and valleys, the dark woods, the desert, the fens and swamps, a song of struggle and achievement: we climbed the mountain, survived the heat of the desert, forded the flooding river, crossed the stormy sea. Maybe a sea-chanty, a work song or rowing song?*

Creatures – *we met on our travels*, related to the environments – the scorpions of the desert, the stinging insects of the jungle, the mountain lion, the whale, the shark ... N.B. This will include the “Monster” described musically in “Brave New World”. Now we can find out exactly what it was.

People and moments – *helping each other along the way*, encouraging each other not to give up, remembering what we’ve been through, affirming our strength together. Times of resting, sleeping and dreaming. Times when we nearly gave up and why we didn’t.

Act 2. Paradise Island? When a dream becomes reality!

When the Travellers arrive on their boat, they discover a place quite different from the land they left and people living there who are different from themselves. How will they get along? Will they be allowed to settle? They learn that the Islanders have a problem of their own.

The Anticipation – *our imagination works on what the new land will be* – perhaps wildly optimistic, a dream of what a wonderful and perfect place to live would be like, the weather, the food, the surroundings, what paradise or near paradise might be like. A chance to let imagination have free reign in art, in story, in words, in music.

The Reality – *what the island actually is*, its difference, its strangeness, its familiarities, its fun. What fauna and flora, what landscapes? The song of celebration that we are here, that we have survived, that we have a new home. Nothing is ever as we imagined, but some things might be. There will be dangers as well as delights, things we get wrong, what’s good to eat, what’s a threat and what isn’t. Another chance for imagination and invention, tempered with knowledge of the actual variety of nature in different parts of our world.

The Islanders and us – *who are they*, what is their music and song, the song they sing to us, a song to greet strangers? What do we want? Our song which is a telling of our travels and hardships on the way, our asking for a place to live, a home to settle, to have a future here.

The Islanders' problem – the ballad, the legend, the words and music that outline the special difficulty the islanders face – is it climate, is it creatures, is it disease, crop failure, war, civil unrest? What is it that they face which makes it difficult for them to say yes to us. We have left one place with a problem and now we find that problems are everywhere but this time it should not be insolvable! The Islanders are in despair. They sing the song of locking down, that no one can be allowed in: they have enough troubles.

Act 3. Making the Best of it! Finding a way forward!

Can the Travellers find a way to help the Islanders deal with their problem? If they can, perhaps they will earn respect and a chance to begin a new life here. But there may still be differences to resolve: what is it that brings the Islanders and Travellers together?

Making our case – we want a chance to help. What is our plan for dealing with the Islanders problem? We make an appeal to allow us to, at least put our plan into operation, to give it a go, not to give up. We didn't give up on our way here. We are resilient and resourceful. We won't be a burden. We can help.

A "give us a chance" song. Tackling the problem together – nothing insurmountable if we don't panic, if we think and work in harmony, if we look after each other, take responsibility. But what is it that we face? This song will be different depending on what the problem is.

We overcome the problem. The threat to the Islanders' is removed, but, again, the detail of this will depend on what is decided about its nature. It shouldn't be too easy a job. There will be obstacles in the way and things that go wrong, emergencies, sacrifices to be made. If it had been that easy the Islanders would have sorted it already on their own. We should avoid the kind of instant "easy magic" that spoils a good story. Surprises, acts of heroism or leadership or intelligence from unexpected sources are always good.

Celebration: victory over obstacles, but has there been a cost? Is the victory celebration tinged with any sadness?

Dealing with difference – *the problem has been resolved* but there remains the question of if and how we can share the island, the Islanders and the Travellers together. This resolution will involve debate, compromise and different skills working together. We look forward to a future together.

Living the Dream – *the theme song, the theme music.* Life is never going to be like in a story book, a dream of a paradise, but two different peoples with different cultures can build a future together.

THE UNEXPECTED

Probably the most important section of all.

We have provided this detailed structure and framework because – well, because it would be impossible for everyone to work together without some idea of where we are going, and whereas some of us are happy swimming in open waters, others need to know where the banks are.

However – we know that the unexpected will arrive, from young people’s imaginations and inspirations and we want to celebrate and be responsive to those surprises.

And so – when we come to create the performance from the exhibition of the creative work in response to this stimulus – it may not be exactly as we have imagined!

ADDENDA

To help understand how this story is an enrichment and continuation of the previous year’s project, for those who weren’t involved, we have attached some notes and lyrics.

Also, for those who don’t know the Big Reveal artistic team, some biographies of David Burrige, Matthew Sharp, Tracey Falcon, John Coombes, Martin Riley and Luke Crook.

Pages 10 – 12 Addendum 1.

Brave New World - Words and Sections performed Spring 2019

1. Brave New World

Brave New World A land for all
Hopes and dreams for big and small
Hearts and Minds, we'll join as one
Fear-less as the scorching sun!
Brave New World our future bright
Brave New World we'll find your light

2. We are a people under threat

We are a people un-der threat
Our hopes and dreams have not been met
We face the future with-out love
If only peaceful like a dove
Soaring freely, carefree, happy,
seeing life from high above.

We'll fight our case until it's right
We hope our future will be bright
We face the future without love
If only peaceful like a dove

3. We join together

Fighting, squabbling, disagreement, brawling, wrangling, battle royal,
dispute, hassle, argie-bargle, scrap!
Fighting, squabbling, disagreement, brawling, wrangling, battle
dispute, hassle, argle-bargie, row!
Cat fight, tangle, controversy, protest feuding, altercation, cross-fire,
run in, argument and feud!
Cat fight, tangle, controversy, protest feuding, altercation. Stop it, end
it, why are we so rude?
Now let's join and act as one
All together, battle won?

4. The Journey (Instrumental)

5. The Monster (Instrumental with Student compositions)

6. Brave New World (Reprise)

Addendum 2. Big Reveal Team biogs.

DAVID BURRIDGE

David's musical career began at the Royal Marines School of Music as principal Euphonium/Cellist with the Staff Band. A long career in education culminated as Kent Secondary Schools Music Adviser, a post he held for 8 years, composing and conducting for County Groups. The Burning of the Boats (librettist Martin Riley, Director Matthew Sharp) commissioned by the Deal Festival in 2012, a highly acclaimed community work. A new commission The Weight (librettist Martin Riley), allowed him to compose for a Drama in which the World Champion Cory Band combining with academy bands for a moving story of the Kent Coalfields. In 2014, The Community Covenant and Arts Council England commissioned the Anglo/French Dancing on Armistice Day (librettist Martin Riley, Director Matthew Sharp) with its 350 performers old and young, actors, singers, dancers, and large orchestra with performances in England and France. The Heart of the Wood (librettist Martin Riley) in 2019 supported by Arts Council England. 2020 Brave New World commissioned by KsENT.

MATTHEW SHARP

Matthew Sharp studied cello with Boris Pergamenschikow in Cologne, voice with Ulla Blom in Stockholm and English at Trinity College, Cambridge. He has performed at major venues and festivals worldwide as solo cellist, baritone and actor. Performed in title role in the world premiere and UK tour of The Rattler for Mahogany Opera Group, soloist in Dave Mckean's Black Dog - The Dreams of Paul Nash as part of 14-18 NOW, recordings with Kenneth Woods and the ESO including concerto works by Hans Gal, Prokofiev, John Tavener, James MacMillan and Elgar, the release of Errollyn Wallen's cello concerto on NMC, HK Gruber's Frankenstein!, Weill and Schoenberg with Thomas Kemp and Chamber Domaine, the release of ZRI's now acclaimed re-imagining of Brahms' Clarinet Quintet, a solo disc of devotional works from across denominations and the world for multi-tracked cello and voice, a Schubert/Brel project with the Brodsky Quartet, songs and works for violin and piano by Schumann and Brahms, Zipoli with BBC NOW and the release of DECCA's Ola Gjeilo album on which he is featured soloist. He will be staging Shostakovich's 14th Symphony with the ESO for live performance and DVD. Matthew performed in and directed the community music dramas, The Burning of the Boats, Dancing on Armistice Day and The Heart of the Wood.

MARTIN RILEY

Martin's career spans theatre, television and opera. Stage works include The Canterbury Tales, Oxford University Press, House of The Gods (Music Theatre Wales) and Captain Blood's Revenge (Glyndebourne) with Lynne Plowman, The Opera Fox with Joe Cutler (all British Composers & Songwriters Award nominated), Gwyneth & The Green Knight (BC&S winner), The Burning of the Boats and The Weight and The Heart of The Wood for The Big Reveal with David BurrIDGE, Killing Cousins and Close Shave for The Workhouse Kids for Welsh national Opera and Death's Cabaret, Tommy Foggo Superhero (Matthew Sharpe) and The Rattler for Mahogany Opera with Stephen Deazley,. TV credits include Jackanory, Grange Hill and Emmerdale and his own series: Gruey, Kevin's Cousins, (R.T.S nominated) and The Worst Witch (BAFTA nominated). Martin is co-director of Alive & Kicking Theatre Leeds.

JOHN COOMBES

John Coombes has been making films and television programs for 30 years, producing over 200 hours of broadcast television. He's designed games for many TV shows including *Gladiators*, *Jungle Run* and *The Really Wild Show*. He's written drama for both BBC and ITV. He's directed dance films that have been shown in film festivals around the world. He has made documentaries ranging from the plight of orphans from the civil war in Kosovo, to under-privileged children on the streets of East Leeds. He has recently advised and produced distance filming for Arts Council funded projects during the COVID-19 pandemic.

TRACEY FALCON

Tracey Falcon is a multimedia visual artist based in Whitstable, Kent, UK. Tracey works across a range of media including video, projection, text, painting and sculpture. Her philanthropic approach has drawn her to community-oriented projects with refugee groups in Hong Kong and the UK, and a cross-borders collaboration with European teenagers. She has worked with, amongst others: *Medicin Sans Frontiers*; *Hong Kong Youth Arts Festival*; *The British Council*; *Whitstable Yacht Club*; *University of Kent* and *Canterbury Christ Church University*. She is also a crisis text line volunteer. Tracey is also an artist educator, learning, engagement and project manager for arts organisations and galleries including *Turner Contemporary*, *Stour Valley Arts*, *Canterbury Museums and Galleries*, *Workers of Art*, *People United* and as a sessional lecturer at several universities. Interaction, intervention and inclusion are central to her motivation. Her work is interpretive with a strong social or environmental foundation. She is a director of *Outdoor Studios CIC*. In 2018, Tracey suffered a spinal injury which left her unable to walk and impacted her practice immensely. Read about how she discovered new artistic directions, reignited her creativity and found relief in lockdown, here in her [blog](#).

LUKE CROOK, Kent Music

Luke is a professional & community musician specialising in SEN/D and music technology. His aim is to make music accessible to all, no matter age or ability. He is a self-taught musician with a background in community music facilitation, youth work and voice and sound engineering, as well as experience within the record industry as a product and project manager. Using the skills, he has learnt across these roles his aim is to bring out the musician in everyone and let them explore and improvise with music to build new skills.