

# The Opening Ceremony – a drama for Key Stage 2

## by Pamela Bowell

### 27th July 2012 – Opening Night!

Through imagining being a performing arts company, the children explore the connection between drama and the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Games using the Olympic and Paralympic Values (friendship, courage, determination, excellence, equality, respect and inspiration) as a focus.

### At the beginning

Children imagine they are a performing arts company. They examine pictures and/or footage of previous Opening Ceremonies and identify types of performance they see and the types of symbols, costumes and props used. They find out what the Olympic and Paralympic Values are.

### The Drama

The performing arts company is bidding for the contract to create and perform the Opening Ceremony. (A parallel class might create the Paralympic Games Opening Ceremony.) Their reputation is at stake. Will they succeed? How will they create the ceremony? What form will it take?

### Establishing the dramatic context, developing roles, building belief in the story

In role as performers, the children complete profiles (using a form created by the teacher) detailing their skills and previous experience, and introduce themselves to each other. They individually create a still image of a key moment in their performance careers. The Company Administrator (*teacher-in-role*) takes digital photographs to add to the profiles.



### Writing the bid

After in-role discussion, each performer in turn explains:

'We should create the Ceremony because...'

The Administrator sends the bid and profiles to the London 2012 Games Organising Committee.

### Moving the drama forward

A letter (created by the teacher) arrives, awarding the contract to them. It reminds them that the Ceremony should focus on the Olympic and Paralympic Values and that the Committee will need an initial outline, promptly.

A company meeting is held to discuss what to do. What are the Values? How quickly can they devise a plan? How can they work efficiently? Dividing into teams, each works on a Value and then the company reassembles to share what they have discovered. Each team creates a group still image that represents one of the Values. Now they must develop a plan for the Opening Ceremony based on them.

### Tension

The Administrator receives a text from the Organising Committee. They need the initial plan in one week. The pressure is on!

### If the venue could speak...

In an oval, the children become the collective spirit of Stadiums Past and describe aspects of the best Ceremonies – excitement, sound, colour, passion, imagination?



### Capturing the mood of the moment

That night the performers write in their diaries...

### Subsequently they:

- ▶ devise the plan, present it to the Organising Committee (*teacher-in-role*), get feedback and revise
- ▶ rehearse the Ceremony and document progress
- ▶ create the costumes and props
- ▶ compose or select music to use
- ▶ hold a press conference (half as performers, half as reporters) to give a progress report
- ▶ produce publicity and programme
- ▶ create dreams and nightmares about the Ceremony.



### Opening night

The company performs the Opening Ceremony – the rest of the school might be the audience.

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