

Case study: HARMONY at London Wall Place

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What is the project?

HARMONY at London Wall Place is a series of augmented reality artworks that bring the City of London to life with visuals and music from Guildhall School of Music & Drama and London Symphony Orchestra.

Students from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama have been mentored by musicians from the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) to compose newly-commissioned music to be featured in a site specific immersive experience at London Wall Place.

The compositions, performed by soloists from the LSO, form part of an augmented reality installation featuring 3D animation overlaid onto the feed of a user's phone camera. Co-commissioned by Culture Mile and Brookfield Properties, the four compositions and corresponding artworks by Guildhall School Live Events, form the second part in a trilogy of creative projects that constitute the PLAY Festival.

Why did you do it?

Brookfield Properties has a long legacy of supporting emerging, local artists and delivering vibrant, creative and attention-grabbing artistic activations within its properties and the surrounding area. In addition, Culture Mile's long-term cultural placemaking vision includes delivering projects that share the value of creativity amongst everyone within its footprint.

As London Wall Place is a Brookfield Properties-owned space and a key focus for Culture Mile, establishing a longer-term collaboration was natural and intuitive.

In 2020, Culture Mile and Brookfield Properties partnered with the London Symphony Orchestra to create two short films celebrating the creative energy of the City featuring LSO musicians and dancers in collaboration with emerging filmmakers.

The two films, *PLAY: Rising* & *PLAY: The Spell* and *The Promise*, which were filmed during lockdown within Brookfield's City-based properties, featured LSO musicians Gareth Davies and Maxine Kwok, filmmakers Antonia Luxem and Lexi Kiddo and dancers Marie Astrid Mence, Salome Pressac and Faye Stoesser. The filmmakers involved, Lexi Kiddo and Antonia Luxem, were found through a partnership with content agency The Smalls.

The resulting films notched up over 20,000 views and were nominated for a Brand in Film Award.

HARMONY at London Wall Place was the second part of this collaboration and built on the success of the PLAY films. In addition to supporting local creatives and students, Brookfield Properties was also keen to develop live music elements and performances for the experience, as well as place-inspired AR and music, to act as an incentive for their tenants and neighbours to reengage with the City of London.

In order to draw attention to the spaces, Brookfield Properties also commissioned some dichronic totems to draw attention to the work within London Wall Place, to build awareness amongst its everyday footfall.

How did you do it?

Culture Mile worked with Guildhall School of Music & Drama students on the development of contemporary pieces that were inspired by London Wall Place.

The pieces were worked on by four students who were studying on the GSMD Undergraduate Electronic and Produced Music course as part of their practical learning requirements, under the tutelage of Mike Roberts.

Each of the students was given an area to compose for within London Wall Place and a LSO musician to act as a mentor during the writing process. Each one of the LSO musician mentors also performed the completed work.

The mentoring took place within Guildhall School in person, while the majority of the project management was done remotely via Zooms and through phone calls.

“HARMONY highlights the delicate balance of the elements that make a particular place unique. Collectively, the augmented reality, music compositions and totems draw inspiration from this magical blend of characteristics in the City of London and celebrate its place specific creative energy by balancing contrasting elements unique to each location, such as the ancient and the modern at St. Alphage’s Gardens, the flora and fauna at Salter’s Gardens, the groundedness and flight at highwalks, and the stillness and movement at One London Wall Place water feature.”

DAN SHORTEN
CREATIVE DIRECTOR, GUILDHALL LIVE EVENTS

Once the music had been composed, Guildhall Live Events Creative Director Dan Shorten assembled a group of creatives to deliver AR environments that were inspired by the pieces and places in which they are to be experienced by audiences.

In addition, Nicola Clifton, one of the young composers featured within the project, will perform the compositions live alongside improvising musicians as part of a series of in-person events to celebrate the launch of this programme.

What has happened so far?

HARMONY at London Wall Place will launch on Monday 27th September after which we will be able to report on engagement figures.

Did you learn anything new as a result?

Through this process it has been clear that there is a real appetite for cultural content that is not only right for a space but reflects the place in which it was made, especially if it supports local and emerging artists and/or students.

In addition, working with new digital, technologies – as opposed to in-person, live events – has its own set of delivery challenges, especially during periods of lockdown.

Who has benefitted from project activity and in what ways?

“After such a long time not being able to work with musicians, it’s been wonderful to be able to collaborate with young composers from the Guildhall School. The future has seemed quite bleak at times and so it is particularly important that we’ve been able to help and encourage the younger generation in writing new pieces which can be shared with people as they gradually come back into the city.”

GARETH DAVIES
PRINCIPAL FLAUTIST, LSO

“Arts and culture are an intrinsic part of Brookfield Properties. We are proud to be working with Culture Mile once again to enliven the City and welcome back workers and visitors to the Square Mile. With HARMONY, as well as our other installations across the City, all of which are completely free and open to the public, we want to strike the right balance between returning to the office and creating a new future by transforming places to somewhere we all want to come together.”

CAITLIN WARFIELD
VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING EUROPE, BROOKFIELD PROPERTIES

Culture & Commerce Taskforce

