



**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT**  
**of the London Gypsy Orchestra (LGO)**  
**April 2011 - March 2012**

**1. Meeting our Objectives**

**The LGO's objectives are:**

1. To advance, improve, develop and maintain public education and appreciation in music, arts and culture, particularly, but not exclusively, in relation to Gypsy and folk music from Eastern Europe and the Balkans.
2. To advance public education in music and musical skills and to inspire participation in and appreciation of the art of music.
3. To advance public education in the arts and musical traditions of different cultures.
4. To promote equality and diversity for the public benefit, in particular by:
  - a) providing or supporting music and creative arts projects which foster integration and skill sharing between people from diverse backgrounds;
  - b) educating the public about different peoples and cultures, especially through music and arts, to increase awareness and understanding.

**The LGO meets its objectives through:**

- Running the orchestra and its weekly rehearsals
- Organising participatory and educational events and performances for the public
- Giving public performances at external events, venues and festivals.

**Our activities and achievements this year to meet these objectives, are detailed as follows:**

**Orchestra and weekly rehearsals:**

Rehearsals are held every week in term-time, so throughout the year members have been learning repertoire, developing their instrumental and group-playing skills and musicality, and learning Gypsy and Eastern European musical and playing styles, and their cultural context.

Expressiveness and communication in playing, which is very important in Gypsy music, continues to be emphasised, as well as the discipline of playing cohesively and sensitively in a large group while conveying the music's energy.

This year, as well as revising and improving the existing repertoire, we have added several new pieces, including two challenging new compositions, based on Gypsy tunes but written and arranged specially for the orchestra by the musical director, which we successfully completed and performed. One of these, *The Young People's Guide to the London Gypsy Orchestra*, is a fun educational piece which highlights all the individual instruments of the orchestra in turn, with their characteristics and roles within the orchestra.

We have increased the frequency of section rehearsals, and are now spending the first part of most rehearsals on special sessions for specific instrument groups to work on details like phrasing, learning new lines and arrangements etc, to help facilitate the need for both individual/section learning and whole group practice.

**Organising participatory and educational events and performances:**

The LGO organises a number of events and activities each year, which are designed to educate, involve and inspire the public in appreciation of and participation in music-making. At the same time, the LGO promotes Gypsy music and culture in a positive way. Children are especially encouraged, with special family events tailored to them.

These are the events organised and presented by the LGO between April 2011 and March 2012:

**April 17, 2011:**

**Final event of the Gypsy Exchange project, held at the Notting Hill Arts Club**

This was a celebratory and showcasing event at the end of our Gypsy Exchange project, a project funded by Awards for All, which had been running over the previous months and involved Gypsy music and dance learning sessions, taught directly by Gypsy tutors, as well as Gypsy dance costume making. At this particular event, we demonstrated the dances and tunes taught to us by the Romany Diamonds, and displayed the spectacular Gypsy costumes made. This event was attended by the public, including members of the

Gypsy/Roma community. Some of those who came were also inspired to join the orchestra and since then have become committed members. Through the Gypsy Exchange project, strong inter-cultural connections were made, with increased confidence and understanding achieved between Gypsy and non-Gypsy participants.

**October 8, 2011:**

**Children's Concert, Trinity Centre, Dalston, East London**

This was a special concert for children and their families, featuring also a puppet show by The Marionettears accompanied by music from orchestra members. Young people – babies, toddlers and school age children - had the opportunity to see inspiring live music in an entertaining, informal and friendly setting which they could freely respond to and engage with.

**November 6, 2011:**

**Gypsy Extravaganza, Union Chapel, Islington, London**

This was our big showcase concert of the autumn, giving the public the opportunity to see a performance in an accessible and inspiring setting. The event featured our Gypsy Dance Group performing the dances originally taught to us in the Gypsy Exchange project, and successfully premiered our new self-devised composition based on the tune 'Time'. There was a good audience of several hundred, allowing us to cover costs and make a surplus.

**March 25, 2012:**

**Music Discovery Day at Cecil Sharp House, Camden**

Our annual all-day event at Cecil Sharp House was focused this year on inspiring people to make music. To encourage this, the day featured fun hands-on activities such as:

- workshops making instruments out of easily-available and unorthodox materials such as recyclables and root vegetables
- a musical instrument try-out market, which gave both adults and children the rare opportunity to freely handle and play a wide range of instruments, from the orchestral to the obscure and exotic
- informal jam sessions for anyone to join in, both traditional and experimental
- an Open Mic event which gave many individuals and groups the free opportunity to perform or try out new pieces in front of a generous and supportive audience.

There were also two concert performances by the LGO, with children catered for by a special family concert which involved participation and allowed them to move about, dance, respond, and even conduct! We also premiered our fun educational composition, *The Young People's Guide to the London Gypsy Orchestra*.

We continue to involve other art forms wherever possible – for example, our new compositions *Time* and *The Young People's Guide to the London Gypsy Orchestra* both incorporate spoken word/poetry as an integral part of the compositions. For the children's concert in October, we worked with the puppeteers to create a show that combined their puppetry with our live music. We work with the Gypsy Dance Group and individual dancers as often as possible, showing the original context and purpose of many of the musical pieces.

Events and activities such as those described earlier, which are accessible and low cost, educational and participatory, are an important part of the LGO's provision. As these events tend not to cover their costs, they are dependent on external funding. Therefore an important focus for LGO staff and interns is working on funding applications, so that we can deliver more of these projects. This has successfully been achieved for autumn 2012 with an *Awards for All* project funding application that was prepared in 2011/2012.

### **Performances at external events, venues and festivals:**

The LGO also gets invited to perform at various venues, events and festivals – as well as being an opportunity to bring the music and culture to a wider audience, this is also a source of revenue for the orchestra.

The LGO's Gypsy Dance Group continues to be popular with both audiences and LGO members, and provides new avenues and audiences for the LGO, opening up opportunities not only at musical events but also dance events. This year the Gypsy Dance Group was invited to perform at Dance Around the World at Cecil Sharp House in October 2011 (at which they also presented a workshop which was very well attended), and the Harrow Dance Festival in March 2012. At both events they performed to live music from members of the LGO.

The LGO also performed at the Bedford Corn Exchange in February 2012 where they presented the Gypsy Extravaganza show, featuring the Gypsy Dance Group. This was very well received and events like this help to spread positive images of Gypsy culture outside London and in the home counties, where it is often most needed.

In general however, bookings from festivals and venues are down, due to the recession affecting promoters' budgets and audiences. We try to obtain bookings by actively approaching venues, and having the Gypsy Extravaganza show to promote increases our potential appeal.

## **2. How our Activities Have Delivered Public Benefit**

The trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, in particular when recommending levels for membership subscriptions, considering admission prices and accessibility to activities and performances, and ensuring provision of educational and participatory activities.

### **Who has benefitted from our activities this year:**

**Members of the orchestra:** Membership of the orchestra is open to all, of any cultural or musical background, the only requirement being an adequate level of skill on their instrument (or an active effort to reach that standard) and the only restriction being on space available in the orchestra. An average of 45 members are actively involved in the orchestra at any time, and over a year, 55+ people are active as a member during that time. Current members include a wide variety of people – from students to retirees, working people and unemployed. Membership fees have been kept at a very affordable level (£55 employed, £40 concessions, £30 SOAS students/staff, per term), with alternative arrangements available for those with limited means; several members have arranged to pay in instalments or opted to do work for the LGO in lieu of fees.

**The general public:** Our events and activities, as described earlier, are designed to be as accessible as possible to the public - in pricing, location etc - and include participatory learning aspects such as workshops and joining-in opportunities, in order to actively involve the public and inspire them to make music. Many events have been low cost or free to attend, and all prices kept at accessible levels, with concessions always available, including low prices for children. Those who attended our events this year included many family groups, members of the Gypsy/Roma/Traveller community, Eastern European nationals and recent immigrants, individuals with an interest in world music, and general members of the public who might not otherwise have known about the LGO or Gypsy/Eastern European music and culture who came to free public events, e.g. the Harrow Dance Festival. Other informal events – e.g. occasional 'busking' and the fundraising day at Whole Foods Market in Stoke Newington - have reached further people and made new connections.

### **How the public has benefitted:**

#### **Education in music and musical skills, and inspiring appreciation and participation:**

The LGO performs accessible music that is skillfully played and arranged, and presented with energy and engagement, which increases the appreciation of music, not only to existing enthusiasts but also to those who are new to orchestral ensembles or music from different cultures. We have continued to receive extensive positive feedback from our

concerts and events this year, which confirms the impact of our performances. Both orchestra members and audiences have given feedback not only on their enjoyment and appreciation of the music, but also the positive benefits to themselves, in terms of encouragement, inspiration, stress release and contributing to a positive outlook in life.

As well as orchestra members benefitting from learning and practising music year-round, the public has been able to benefit from events such as the Music Discovery Day and its opportunities to directly try out music-making and instruments. Many people who attend our events become interested in joining, or have reported that they have been inspired to take up or return to playing a musical instrument. Several who attended our events over the year have joined the orchestra or are on the waiting list to join in the near future.

### **Education in the arts and musical traditions of different cultures, and promoting equality and diversity:**

Audiences and the public have learnt about Gypsy and Eastern European music and arts through our performances and activities, which have contributed to their interest in and awareness of these cultures. The Gypsy Exchange project, as previously mentioned, was very successful in making connections between Gypsy and non-Gypsy groups. With Gypsy tutors teaching their own culture to non-Gypsies, it increased understanding and trust between the cultures.

Many of the songs we perform are in different dialects of the Roma language, giving this little-understood language more exposure and accessibility, and our Gypsy Dance Group continue to perform the dances taught by the Gypsy tutors - these colourful and exciting dances make a positive and memorable impression on audiences. We have also started working regularly with a dancer of Czech Roma origin who has an ongoing interest in involvement with the LGO, and we hope will continue to contribute to our interpretation and communication of Gypsy culture.

The LGO, in its performances and activities, aims to present Gypsy culture in a positive and respectful way, to help create positive associations in the way Gypsies are perceived, and contribute to awareness which is necessary for good inter-cultural relations.

### **3. Structure, governance and management**

The LGO is an unincorporated association, governed by our constitution adopted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2010 and amended on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2011.

The LGO is managed by a Board of Trustees, who are recruited from LGO members (whether active members or associate members) and are elected by a members' vote at our Annual General Meeting, or any other General Meeting of the orchestra in the case of there being resignations or changes in the interim. As trustees are members of the orchestra, they are fully involved and aware of the week to week workings of the orchestra and the implications of decisions.

Trustees have a formal meeting before each term to approve the budget and discuss and agree future plans. Interim matters will be discussed and agreed by e-mail and additional meetings.

Orchestra members are also actively encouraged to offer their ideas and preferences for how rehearsals are run, what they would like the LGO to be doing, and what it should be working towards or focussing on. An important aspect of the LGO's Annual General Meeting is the space for members to give their opinions, feedback and suggestions. Members can also bring up their suggestions at any time in weekly rehearsal meetings or directly with the Musical Director.

#### **Trustees:**

Current trustees at the time of this report (August 2012):

Chair: Anne Malcolm

Treasurer: Sarah Filippi

Secretary: Martina Habeck

Other trustees: Antonio Riva, Kat Henderson, Ruth Shellard, Suzanne Lancaster

Trustees during the financial year being reported on (April 2011 – March 2012):

*(Unless stated otherwise, those named were in office for the full duration of the financial year)*

Anne Malcolm – Chair

Cathy Taylor – Secretary

Antonio Riva

Joanne Murray

Tom Smith, Nina Muller and Clare Southworth - Co-Treasurers until 31.12.11

Rose Chacko - Treasurer elected 17.11.11 to replace those above, allowing for a handover period.

Kat Henderson - from 17.11.11 onwards

Ursula Donnelly – until the end of 2011

Josef Pogadl - from 07.07.11 onwards

#### **Staff:**

Gundula Gruen is employed as the LGO's Musical Director. Much work is carried out voluntarily by trustees, members and interns, but some of the essential tasks in the ongoing running of the orchestra are now carried out by part-time staff, e.g. book-keeping.

## 4. Financial Review

### Statement of assets & liabilities at 31 March 2012 (end of the financial year):

	2012 £
<b>Cash and bank</b>	
Bank – Current Account	7,169
Bank – deposit	0
Cash in hand	0
	7,169
Other monetary assets	-
Fixed assets used by the organisation	-
Current liabilities	-

### Income:

The LGO's principle sources of income are membership subscriptions and performance fees, and when applicable, funding grants\*. Income from performances is lower than previous years due to the impact of the recession on bookings. We are therefore pursuing other sources of income, e.g. from donations and sponsorship. In September we earned a sizeable donation from Whole Foods Market, as part of their monthly scheme to donate 5% of the day's takings to a chosen charity or community group who takes up residence in their store for a day. In November 2011 we launched our Friends and Patrons of the LGO scheme as another source of support and income, but we have found that this will need much stronger promotion before we have adequate uptake.

\*the funding from Awards for All for the Gypsy Exchange project was received in the previous financial year, and the project completed in April 2011.

### Expenditure:

The LGO's main expenses are fees to the Musical Director, admin costs, venue hire, and hire of personnel for events (artists, dancers, technical support).

We use volunteers as much as possible, and provide regular internships (3-4 part-time internships running simultaneously, each for 4-6 months) which have been very successful in helping cover promotional, administrative and planning tasks while providing training and experience for education-leavers and others wanting to get music and arts industry experience.

### Reserves Policy:

The LGO is currently developing a reserves policy which will be based on holding back unrestricted funds in order to ensure that the LGO's work can continue in the case of any unforeseen cashflow problems in the future. A savings account has been opened, and the precise strategy for saving will be developed during the course of the next financial year.