



London Gay Symphony Orchestra - Annual Report 2022/23

Co-chair's Report of 2022/23 Season

The last season has been a year to really take stock of where we are, who we are, and how we operate. It's been an opportunity to continue with new energy after Peter Reynold's great 14 years of guidance, continuing his great work, but ushering in a new chapter.

Both Gary Clarke and Josh Sturges have spent a lot of time thinking about what this new chapter looks like – LGSO's identity, what we stand for, how we position ourselves to our community – as knowing that as we celebrate our 30th anniversary in 2026, we are also making sure that the LGSO continues to be around in another 30 years.

We wanted to tighten how we operate and be proactive and forward-looking in how we run. This has meant documentation and making changes where needed for smoother processes, focused on three areas:

- *Pennies* – this meant creating a forward looking budget and a projection for to give the best possibility of each concert being a financial success. Making sure that we continue to be on top of subs, review all costs of music as part of the selection process and continue to look at new ways to make us some money.
- *Processes* – we re-introduced our audition process which allows us to identify talent from within the LGBTQ+ community (and from outside) which has resulted in us partnering with a handful of amazing soloists over the next two years. We have also mapped out an annual plan so every committee meeting focuses on a specific thing as well as business as usual. We are working on a new Safeguarding Policy and contracts.
- *Performance* – we implemented a new repertoire selection process - something we will continue to finesse this year. This has resulted in an amazing programme for this upcoming year where 65% of the music was from the orchestra suggestions and two concerts planned around the most popular genre types.

We've created a clear vision – to be one of the 'best' amateur orchestras in the UK – one that nurtures an inclusive environment for the LGBTQ+ community and actively participates in London's wider circle. "Best" can mean:

- Best musically
- Best in terms of most inclusive and friendly

- Best governed
- Best in terms of the soloists and music we select

Being the best means that we strive:

- to nurture and develop talent in the orchestra
- to ensure we play a range of repertoire that challenges us in different ways
- to ensure that our culture is inclusive, fun and accessible
- to be inclusive
- to ensure that we are a safe space for all
- to play music from diverse range of composers
- to ensure that we are visible and accessible to all
- to make sure that our concerts are fun and exciting
- to engage with other organisations eg elderly groups, schools etc
- to be visible at LGBTQ+ events e.g Pride

This builds on our existing objectives that can be found on the website, but it's aimed at giving us something to check ourselves against and keep our forward momentum.

Achievements

Looking back, last year was a slog that has reaped rewards and that's to do with the big picture too as there are lots of connecting parts to this.

Concerto auditions:

- We rolled these out and have found some great talent both in the family and out.
- Process still needs fine tuning, and we'll be running these again.

Repertoire selection:

- A new streamlined process was run last year.
- The orchestra members gave suggestions, and we listened with large amounts of music put forward being selected.
- The process still needs fine tuning.

New website:

- It's our shop window and it has really lifted our external presence.
- It's more user friendly than the previous one, and the addition of the 'Hire Us' section has proven lucrative, gaining us five external events.
- We will be continuously looking at website improvements – eg the members section

External events:

Thanks to all those that played and contributed to these five events – as mentioned, the website played a key part in setting these up, and bringing in the extra income.

We could really benefit from more of these corporate events and are particularly keen to obtain extra funding as we think big towards our 30th anniversary.

We thank everyone who has made this year a success:

- Corey Wickens, for her great leadership, sublime solos, hard yet kind and encouraging ways of working, your videos with tips on how to get sections right and general awesomeness.
- Christopher Braime, for his gentle yet constant pushing in the right direction. Your guidance in eeking out our musicality and getting us to think and work harder to achieve great music.

Both Chris and Corey's contributions help make our performances what they are.

- All of the extra people in and around the orchestra whose support we are eternally grateful for: Darryl and Steven for organising all of our music and getting it here. Our front of house team and all of our volunteers.
- Finally, to the orchestra committee for bearing with them for the first year and for all of their commitment and hard work in making all of this happen.

Treasurer's Report

Overall we made a profit last season of £3541.87.

The financial overview for concerts were as follows:

Concert 1: Income £4,263.65 and Expenditure £4,963.62, giving a net loss of £699.97

Concert 2: Income £3,783.27 and Expenditure £3,811.78, giving a net loss of £28.51

Concert 3: Income £5,494.55 and Expenditure £4,854.13, giving a net profit of £640.42

Concert 4: Income £4,438.88 and Expenditure £4,862.60, giving a net loss of £423.72

Concert 5: Income £4,637.90 and Expenditure £4,672.80, giving a net loss of £34.90

Although we are not a commercial organisation, and did budget to make a loss on certain concerts (eg there is particular music we want to play, eg underrepresented composers or that we feel will benefit us musically or technically), we budgeted for an overall loss across the season of just £71.32. The actual loss was £546.69.

The full figures can be seen in the finance supporting document.

Income overview

Subs, along with ticket sales, account for the core of our income. Subs totalled £8,379.37 across the year (slightly lower than last year), and we were able to claim a further £1,610.04 from Gift Aid. In total, these made up for 34% of our income. Thank you to orchestral members for paying their subs, and thanks to Helen for chasing members as required.

Ticket sales accounted for £10,916.51 across the year which equated to 37.5% of our income. Members were thanked for their efforts for pushing ticket sales, and helping us get back to a large regular audience.

Despite the loss across the concert season, we benefited from extra income of £4,700 (16.2% of our income) though the external performance opportunities mentioned in the Co-Chair's report, notably playing during the Pride weekend for Duckie and a £500 donation from the Ambache Charitable Trust for promoting the performance of music by women. We are very grateful for this additional work, as this has meant we have ended the year considerably in profit. This is higher than the last two years (£1,096.12 and £1,442.31) and we would very much encourage players to help identify any such performance opportunities or potential for sponsorship as this income helps provide the orchestra with stability and a basis towards planning for future events and tours.

The remaining income included regular and one-off donations, and money taken for bar & programmes during concerts.

Expenditure overview

The season was an expensive one, due to the size & scope of the music, which meant music hire, instrument hire (mainly percussion & celesta) & extra musicians costs were sometimes high. Also, St. Giles increased costs by £303 per concert mid-season for rehearsals and concert days.

We also had additional general orchestra expenses to make to cover our Making Music membership, PRS fees and additional costs to sort out the Concerto Auditions.

Overall a good year financially, and we have been working on updating our budgeting for next season so that we are managing the concert costs more robustly moving forwards.

Membership Subscription Payments

Subs are currently set at £35 for waged (£10 if unwaged) or £150 for the season of five concerts. These current rates have been in place since 2014.

In the current cost of living crisis, all our overheads have gone up, as detailed in the expenditure overview of the Treasurer's report. Further rises are expected with current high rates of inflation.

As the Treasurer's report shows, we tend to average a small loss on concerts over a season and rely on additional income (such as extra gigs and promo work) to keep the LGSO on a sound financial footing. If we want to continue to play in our current venue – leave aside looking at better venues for specific concerts – or plan for a tour or to play more extensive repertoire such as film music, then we need to bring in more money, and subs provides a large part of this.

We will increase subs this year (from the October 2023 concert) to the following: £40 for waged (£20 if unwaged), or £170 for season of 5 concerts.

We will also ask new players to pay subs, rather than to put the onus on regular players to cover them. Subs are not due until the 3rd rehearsal so any new players still have the chance to trial us and make sure they wish to continue. Typically five new players join per concert, and this could bring in £200, which goes a long way to covering music hire costs.

The committee has made this decision in order for the LGSO to continue operating on a sound financial footing, so no vote is needed.

Review of 2022/23 season

Co-Chair review:

We started the year with the October concert where we played Lysenko: Overture to Taras Bulba, Ravel: Concerto for the Left Hand and Vaughan Williams: Symphony No.3 "Pastoral".

Although we did make our biggest loss of the concert season (£700), musically this was a fantastic concert and we welcomed Nicolas McCarthy as soloist who we know had a great time playing with us – and helped to pull in a respectable audience given the gradual recovery from the pandemic.

In December we played Coleridge Taylor: Ballade in A Minor, Chaminade: Callirhoë Suite, and Beach: Symphony in E minor 'Gaelic'. This was our worst attended concert in the year, which bucked our usual trend in December and is something to consider moving forwards. Whilst musically this was a really interesting concert to play in, it didn't have a crowd pleaser for the audience – or anything seasonally themed – something we are expected to have.

Our February concert, in contrast, was our best attended concert in the season. We played Carwithen: Overture ODTAA (One Damn Thing After Another), Chopin: Piano Concerto no. 2 and Rachmaninov: Symphony no. 2. We sold 230 advance tickets (selling out) which is testament to the pull of the music, as well as the pull of the fantastic Anastacia Tolstonog.

Our penultimate concert featured Mussorgsky: Night on the Bare Mountain, Wiseman: The Nightingale and the Rose, and Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique. We welcomed the wonderful Zeb Soanes from Classic FM who narrated the Wiseman.

Our final concert of the season saw us play Mahler Symphony No. 6. This was a concert without an interval, so put our playing – and ears – to the test. It really was wonderful and we had amazing feedback from audience members. It was also really well attended so well done to everyone for getting people to attend – this is not the type of piece that is everyone's cup of tea!

All in all we had another great year. The programme was varied and overall tested us musically. There were also some learnings about scheduling diverse pieces together – something that we have taken into account whilst programming the next two years.

Thank you to everyone involved in the process of pulling the programme together, all of our extra players and everyone involved in making it happen.

Conductor / Musical director review (Christopher Braime):

The LGSO has transformed from its standard form when I first conducted the orchestra in the same room 12 years ago. I'd like to thank the orchestra for its hard work, dedication, and commitment to music. It is inconceivable to imagine the LGSO tackling works such as the Rite of Spring and Mahler Symphony 6 and this is a testament to how hard the players have applied themselves.

We plan to hold section leader meetings once per concert to help with planning.

Moving forward I would like to see LGSO being even more forward-thinking with the projects it undertakes – not afraid to work alongside DJs, in genres such as film, game, electronic etc. alongside the classical canon.

Overview of Repertoire for 2023/24

The orchestra has now embarked upon the 2023/24 season and is scheduled to perform five concerts, with six rehearsals for each concert, as detailed in the AGM invitation:

15 October 2023:

- Boulanger: d'un Soir Triste
- Rimsky-Korsakov: Golden Cockerel Suite
- Tchaikovsky: Symphony no. 4

10 December 2023 (Christmas)

- Humperdinck: Hansel and Gretel Overture
- Helly-Hutchinson: Carol Symphony
- Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition

18 February 2024 (Music from stage and screen)

- Williams: Superman March
- Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue (Soloist: Lewis Kelly)
- Dukas: Sorcerers Apprentice
- Sutton: War Horse Suite
- Williams: Star Wars Main Title

21 April 2024 (Chamber concert)

- Holst: St Paul's Suite
- Mozart: Flute & Harp Concerto (Soloists: Derek Benton & Catrin Meek)
- Beethoven: Symphony no. 3 (Eroica)

23 June 2024:

- Brahms, Tragic Overture
- Beethoven, Piano Concerto no. 5 (Soloist: Raymond Yiu)
- Rachmaninov, Symphonic Dances

A new repertoire selection process was carried out in March/April 2023. This was more streamlined than in previous years. It took player suggestions of both orchestral works and genres/styles into account (accounting for 65% of the repertoire above), as well as other key factors, such as music hire cost, playability, audience interest, and instrumentation. Concerto auditions were held in April, with orchestra members and external candidates (e.g. from music colleges) invited to audition – as well as those listed above, a number of concertos have also been selected for the 2024/25 season.

Future Plans

After our first year as co-chairs, in which we have created a new vision and objectives for the orchestra, we want to keep up the momentum of this and use our vision to drive us forward. This will include:

- Maintaining a safe inclusive space for the LGBTQ+ community with the rollout of our safeguarding policy
- Continuously improving our performance level while keeping it fun and welcoming.
- Supporting the orchestra to thrive both financially and socially.
- Start planning for our 30th anniversary year in 2026 thinking big and celebrate who we are.

We have some amazing ideas for our 30th anniversary but have asked orchestra members to be involved in initial ideas and how we could implement them. There is always so much to get through, so having a small dedicated team to work on this will allow us to do much more.

Election of 2023/24 Committee

Federico Espinosa (Orchestra Manager) had stood down during the course of the season, and Gary Clarke has taken on this role in the interim.

Members voted in the following committee at the AGM: Gary Clarke & Josh Sturges (co-chairs, with Gary Clarke acting also as Orchestra Manager), Govind Kharbanda (secretary), Derek Benton (Treasurer), Chris Doyle (Marketing), Helen Cook (Front of House, Subscriptions), Trevor Beers (Social).

Concert Breakdown

Income and Expenditure for year 22/23

	22/23		21/22		20/21		19/20		18/19		17/18		16/17
Income													
Ticket income (inc. bar)	13112.32		10178.76		840.00		6184.74		12340.71		13069.21		15850.06
Subs	8379.37		8599.05		3131.07		5627.55		8610.17		8435.95		6800.44
Donations received (inc. programmes)	740.79		779.50		1918.60		4370.59		1478.37		538.70		142.44
Extra concert income	4700.00		0.00		0.00		0.00						500.00
Misc income (inc. Gift Aid)	2155.20		2496.56		8619.05		2749.64		2166.05		1820.57		74.28
Total Income	29087.68		22053.87		14508.72		18932.52		24595.30		23864.43		23367.22
Expenditure													
Rehearsal venue hire	3859.00		2577.00		726.32		1443.00		5362.69		4934.90		4034.60
Concert venue hire	4800.00		4181.00		944.00		2911.00		4537.00		4950.94		4812.00
Conductors fees	5100.00		4250.00		4250.00		4250.00		4320.00		4250.00		4250.00
Leaders fees	3000.00		2500.00		1300.00		2180.00		2550.00		2350.00		2183.22
Sundry musicians fees	2210.00		990.00		0.00		131.00		1850.45		530.00		952.80
Soloist fees	1102.35		250.00		0.00		0.00		2259.50		1400.00		650.00
Instrument hire	1367.40		1913.00		0.00		887.00		729.20		428.00		928.25
music hire	1512.02		2491.94		510.10		1782.28		2514.50		2302.28		8350.75
Marketing	437.47		174.97		0.00		458.20		345.85		964.04		2080.21
Sundry concert expenses (inc bar)	1076.69		765.02		0.00		555.21		1367.20		1162.36		673.80
General orchestra expenses	1080.88		864.82		5335.99		344.00		379.98		382.9		753.01
Total Expenditure	25545.81		20957.75		13066.41		14941.69		26216.37		23655.42		29668.64
Profit/loss	3541.87		1096.12		1442.31		3990.83		-1621.07		209.01		-6301.42

Concert Breakdown 2022-2023			Concert 1			Concert 2			Concert 3			Concert 4			Concert 5			Other			TOTAL		
INCOME	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance		
Ticket income	1815.07	2000.00	-184.93	1558.37	2000.00	-441.63	2987.64	2000.00	987.64	2254.23	2000.00	254.23	2301.20	2000.00	301.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	10916.51	10000.00	916.51		
Bar	380.75	200.00	180.75	417.40	200.00	217.40	519.42	200.00	319.42	600.78	200.00	400.78	277.46	200.00	77.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	2195.81	1000.00	1195.81		
Programmes	129.44	130.00	-0.56	113.53	130.00	-16.47	116.03	130.00	-13.97	120.69	130.00	-9.31	140.03	130.00	10.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	619.72	650.00	-30.28		
Subs	1726.52	1700.00	26.52	1570.23	1700.00	-129.77	1847.72	1700.00	147.72	1439.44	1700.00	-260.56	1795.47	1700.00	95.47	0.00	0.00	0.00	8379.37	8500.00	-120.63		
Donations	11.87	20.00	-8.13	23.74	20.00	3.74	23.74	20.00	3.74	23.74	20.00	3.74	23.74	20.00	3.74	14.24	0.00	14.24	121.07	100.00	21.07		
Extra concert income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4700.00	0.00	4700.00	4700.00	0.00	4700.00		
Misc income (inc. Gift Aid)	200.00	0.00	200.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	1755.20	2000.00	-244.80	2155.20	2000.00	155.20		
Total	4263.65	4050.00	213.65	3783.27	4050.00	-266.73	5494.55	4050.00	1444.55	4438.88	4050.00	388.88	4637.90	4050.00	587.90	6469.44	2000.00	4469.44	29087.68	22250.00	6837.68		

EXPENDITURE	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance
Rehearsal venue hire	625.00	625.00	0.00	750.00	625.00	125.00	828.00	625.00	203.00	828.00	625.00	203.00	828.00	625.00	203.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3859.00	3125.00	734.00
Concert venue hire	900.00	850.00	50.00	900.00	850.00	50.00	1000.00	850.00	150.00	1000.00	850.00	150.00	1000.00	850.00	150.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4800.00	4250.00	550.00
Conductors fees	960.00	960.00	0.00	960.00	960.00	0.00	960.00	960.00	0.00	960.00	960.00	0.00	960.00	960.00	0.00	300.00	0.00	300.00	5100.00	4800.00	300.00
Leaders fees	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	600.00	600.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3000.00	3000.00	0.00
Sundry musicians fees	310.00	300.00	10.00	150.00	200.00	-50.00	0.00	200.00	-200.00	350.00	300.00	50.00	400.00	500.00	-100.00	1000.00	0.00	1000.00	2210.00	1500.00	710.00
Soloist fees	507.35	250.00	257.35	0.00	0.00	0.00	295.00	250.00	45.00	300.00	250.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1102.35	750.00	352.35
Instrument hire	280.00	150.00	130.00	0.00	150.00	-150.00	354.00	150.00	204.00	233.00	250.00	-17.00	500.40	250.00	250.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	1367.40	950.00	417.40
music hire	447.00	500.00	-53.00	161.90	150.00	11.90	272.52	150.00	122.52	535.60	150.00	385.60	95.00	150.00	-55.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1512.02	1100.00	412.02
Marketing	138.07	100.00	38.07	155.33	100.00	55.33	99.89	100.00	-0.11	0.00	100.00	-100.00	44.18	100.00	-55.82	0.00	0.00	0.00	437.47	500.00	-62.53
Sundry concert expenses (inc b	196.20	150.00	46.20	134.55	150.00	-15.45	444.72	150.00	294.72	56.00	150.00	-94.00	245.22	150.00	95.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	1076.69	750.00	326.69
General orchestra expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1080.88	500.00	580.88	1080.88	500.00	580.88
Total	4963.62	4485.00	478.62	3811.78	3785.00	26.78	4854.13	4035.00	819.13	4862.60	4235.00	627.60	4672.80	4185.00	487.80	2380.88	500.00	1880.88	25545.81	21225.00	4320.81

PROFIT	-699.97	-435.00	-264.97	-28.51	265.00	-293.51	640.42	15.00	625.42	-423.72	-185.00	-238.72	-34.90	-135.00	100.10	4088.56	1500.00	2588.56	3541.87	1025.00	2516.87
--------	---------	---------	---------	--------	--------	---------	--------	-------	--------	---------	---------	---------	--------	---------	--------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------	---------

Independent examiner's report to the committee of The London Gay Symphony Orchestra (LGSO)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the LGSO for the year ended 31 July 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the committee of the LGSO you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the LGSO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the LGSO as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Name: Darryl Davies

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any): ICAEW.

Membership number: 8531262

Address: 3 Leverton street, London, NW5 2PH

Date: 26 March 2024