

LGSO Annual Report - 2024/25

Co-chairs' Update - Overview of last year

This season has been one of both consolidation and change. Whereas last year's focus was on moving to "business as usual" and laying the groundwork for our 30th anniversary celebrations, this year has been about solidifying those plans as well as enjoying the rewards of what we built. It has also been a year of transition, marking the end of an era with the departure of one of our longest-serving and most dedicated leaders.

Last year we completed the second year of performances from the successful concerto auditions. Once again, we were treated to an extraordinary calibre of soloists including Hsin-I & Danial Shao. Their energy and professionalism lifted each concert, creating moments of real magic both for audiences and players alike. It's been wonderful to see how this initiative has not only showcased our talent, both as orchestra and soloists, but also brought an extra buzz to our seasons.

When it comes to audiences, we are pleased to report another strong year. Ticket sales have again been consistent, with an average of over 200 audience members per concert (214 to be precise). This consistency shows that our ongoing strategy of ensuring a "showstopper" in each programme is the right one. Our marketing efforts have complemented this approach well, helping us continue to build momentum and broaden our reach. A particular thanks goes to Louis, whose additional work in this area has made a real difference.

Financially, the Treasurer's report will go into further detail, but as with last year, much of our profit has come from our external quartet performances. These engagements continue to be an essential part of our financial stability, and we would like to extend a huge thank you to Grant, Corey, and Jo for their commitment in making these such a success. Their work in this area has not only provided vital income but also enhanced our visibility within the wider community.

Artistically, we also made the conscious decision to programme some of our most ambitious and expensive concerts yet. This meant additional investment in both music and extra musicians, but it paid off in delivering some unforgettable performances. Because we had prepared financially for this the previous year, we were able to take those risks confidently—and we believe the results were more than worth it.

Gary and I would like to thank you all for your continued push to make our concerts a sell out, the committee for all their hard work in making the orchestra run as it does – there's so much hard work that goes into it and we appreciate you immensely. Corey, for your continued leadership, wonderful character and ability that you bring week in week out, and of course last but not least, Chris – thank you so much!

After 15 years of tireless contribution, Chris has stepped down. His leadership has been transformational, taking us to new levels of ambition and professionalism. Chris has given his all—always with commitment, creativity, and a deep love for what we do together. It is no exaggeration to say that much of what we now enjoy as an orchestra would not have been possible without his vision and drive. On behalf of the committee, the players, and our audience, we offer our deepest thanks for everything he has done. His legacy will continue to inspire us for years to come.

As we now look ahead to our 30th anniversary season, we do so with pride in what has been achieved, gratitude for those who have given so much, and excitement for what comes next.

Treasurer's Report – 2023/24

Overall, we made a profit last season of £5,717.33 which is the second largest profit made in one season by the LGSO.

The total profit from concerts was £1,027.72. The financial overview for concerts were as follows:

- Concert 1: Income £4,983.94 and Expenditure £3,951.79, giving a net profit of £1,032.15
- Concert 2: Income £6,517.87 and Expenditure £4,751.83, giving a net profit of £1,766.04
- Concert 3: Income £4,295.12 and Expenditure £5,798.35, giving a net loss of £1,503.23
- Concert 4: Income £5,758.65 and Expenditure £5,268.09, giving a net profit of £490.56
- Concert 5: Income £4,638.19 and Expenditure £5,395.98, giving a net loss of £757.59

On top of this we made profit of £4,689.61 in other areas. 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 £9,315.74 across the year (a decrease from last season), and we were able to claim a further £2,367.50 from Gift Aid. In total, subs & Gift Aid made up for 34.2% of our income. Thank you to all orchestra members for paying their subs, and thanks to Helen for chasing members as required.

Ticket sales accounted for £12,617.25 across the year which equated to 36.9% of our income. Thanks to all members for their efforts for pushing ticket sales and for helping us maintain a large regular audience throughout the season.

Income from the Bar and Programmes accounted for £3,557.07 across the year which equated to 10.4% of our income. Thanks to all the volunteers who help with front of house and bar support at all of our concerts.

We also benefited from extra income of £5,100.00 (14.9% of our income) though the external performance opportunities mentioned in the Co-Chair's report. We are very grateful for this additional work, as this has meant we have ended the year considerably in profit. We would very much encourage players to continue 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 donations (regular and one-off) and miscellaneous concert income totalling £1252.65. This included a donation by Christopher Pollard's parents of £400.

Expenditure overview

Conductor & Leader Fees (£8000.00 in total) accounted for 28.1% of our expenditure.

Total cost for rehearsal and concert venue hire was £10,259.00 (36.0% of expenditure). This continues to be great value for money when compared to other venues, and we get the benefit of rehearsing in our concert venue.

Music hire was £3198.16 which accounted for 11.2% of expenditure. We continue to provide a varied repertoire and some of this is within copyright which causes higher costs for music hire. Thanks to those who have been helping with the orchestral librarian work.

We have supported professional players in the orchestra who have supported us through playing in our external performance opportunities by offering payment (£1,600 in total, 5.6% of expenditure).

We also had other expenses for 'extra' musicians at concerts, soloist fees, marketing, hire of instruments (primarily percussion), sundry concert expenses, bar expenses and general orchestra expenses (which include covering our Making Music membership and PRS fees.)

The balance in the bank was £16,820.27 as of the end of 31st July 2025.

Overall, a fantastic year financially, particularly as many of the items for the coming season have already been paid for. We are updating our budgeting for next season so that we are continuing to manage the concert financials robustly.

Conductor Review 2023-24 season

During the 2024/25 season we have continued to perform the most challenging of repertoire to the highest of standards. Two pieces stand out for me: Shostakovich Symphony No 10, a piece we have presented before, showing how far we have come. And the Bartók Concerto for Orchestra, a work which would have been untouchable by us only a few short years ago. The piece has been on LGSO repertoire lists for years, but the comment has always been the same “too difficult for us”. Too difficult no more.

The orchestra now begins the process of looking both forward, and back. Back over 30 incredible years, and forward as it begins its search for a new Musical Director.

I wanted to give some final thoughts, before someone new stands here next year to give this report. As an orchestra I think we have achieved levels of musical and organisational success that those who saw that first rehearsal back in the 1990s (several of whom remain here now) can be incredibly proud of, and I feel quite sure that those who looked down their noses at a “gay orchestra” then would struggle to do so today! I have more to say on my time as part of that history, but I will leave that until my final concert.

If I may, I give, however, one warning. Success can actually be an organisation’s greatest threat, and as our orchestra leaves the glittery disco splendour of its 20s and starts to need its full eight hours sleep, and the occasional early night of its 30s, we need to be mindful of complacency. This orchestra has always been a trailblazer, it has always been at the cutting edge. My final words are to urge you to continue being dangerous – there are plenty of amateur orchestras out there, and some groups who now legitimately challenge the LGSO’s LGBTQI+ space in the amateur musical world. I urge you to keep being the trailblazers you have always been, backed now with a well deserved reputation for quality; you can continue to set the agenda. I hope, now from the sidelines, to continue seeing an orchestra whose instinct is not to play safe, but to keep pushing boundaries and conceptions.

I want, as ever, to thank you all for everything you have done over the last year. I’m really looking forward to our last three outings together.

Concert 1: 13 October 2024

- Wagner – Tannhäuser Overture
- Strauss – Till Eulenspiegel
- Brahms – Symphony No. 3

Concert 2: 8 December 2024

- Rimsky-Korsakov – Capriccio Espanol
- Tchaikovsky – Sleeping Beauty Suite

- Rachmaninov – Symphony No. 1

Concert 3: 16 February 2025

- Ethyl Smyth – On the Cliffs of Cornwall
- Ibert – Flute Concerto (soloist Daniel Shao)
- Shostakovich – Symphony 10

Concert 4: 13 April 2025

- Bernstein – Candide Overture
- Copland – Rodeo
- Stravinsky – Symphonies for Winds
- Bernstein – Symphonic Dances from West Side Story

Concert 5: 22 June 2025

- Weber – Der Freischütz: Overture
- Clara Schumann – Piano Concerto (soloist Hsin-I Huang)
- Bartók – Concerto for Orchestra

Overview of Repertoire for 2024/25

Looking ahead, the 2025/26 season promises to be one of the most ambitious and exciting in our history, with five concerts. To mark our anniversary year in style, we have chosen a bold and challenging repertoire, including works by Ortiz, Tippett, Vaughan Williams, and Adams – again with the majority of these having been selected by members. These pieces represent a significant artistic and financial investment, but they also embody our commitment to celebrating this milestone by pushing ourselves musically and delivering memorable performances for our audiences.

This season also marks the beginning of a new chapter in our leadership. The search for a new conductor is now underway, with around 20 applications being received and reviewed currently. A trial will take place next year, giving members the chance to play under different candidates and give feedback as part of the process. By the end of this season, we will be ready to offer a one-year contract to our chosen conductor, just in time for our return to the prestigious Cadogan Hall in October—a fitting stage for our next era.

Concert 1: 19 October 2025

- Vaughan-Williams – The Lark Ascending
- Ravel – Daphnis et Chloé suite no. 2

- Dvořák – Symphony No. 9 (New World)

Concert 2: 14 December 2025

- Schumann – Overture to Genoveva
- Tchaikovsky – Violin concerto
- Glazunov - The Seasons

Concert 3: 15 February 2026

- Elgar – Cockaigne Overture
- Tippett – Ritual Dances
- Vaughan Williams – Symphony no. 2 (London)

Concert 4: 19 April 2026

- Mozart – Overture to Marriage of Figaro
- Delius – On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring & Summer Night on the River
- Mozart – Sinfonia Concertante for Four Winds
- Farrenc – Symphony no. 3

Concert 5: 21 June 2026

- Shostakovich – Festive Overture
- Ortiz – Antropolis
- Adams – The Chairman Dances
- Prokofiev – Symphony no. 5

Election of 2024/25 Committee

There have been some changes to the committee this year. Josh Mock will be stepping down after having supported us the last year, particularly in having non-playing fun with some orchestra socials. Thank you for your hard work and dedication.

As usual, we would encourage anyone who is able to spare a few hours per month to get involved, there is always a lot to get through and if you have a skill set that might be useful we would love to speak with you.

Members voted in the following committee: Gary Clarke & Josh Sturges (co-chairs, with Gary Clarke acting also as Orchestra Manager), Govind Kharbanda (secretary), Derek Benton (Treasurer), Louis Lister (Marketing), Helen Cook (Open Place – Front of House, Subscriptions), Chris Dempsey-Doyle (Open Place),

The point was made that there is also additional support needed, particularly for a librarian, and should anyone be interested in becoming more involved (which need not imply joining the core committee), they should contact the Co-Chairs.

Concert Breakdown

Income and Expenditure for year 24/25

	24/25		23/24		22/23		21/22		20/21		19/20		18/19		17/18		16/17
Income																	
Ticket income (inc. bar)	15565.44		17550.07		13112.32		10178.76		840.00		6184.74		12340.71		13069.21		15850.06
Subs	9315.74		9556.98		8379.37		8599.05		3131.07		5627.55		8610.17		8435.95		6800.44
Donations received (inc. programmes)	1661.53		1323.12		740.79		779.50		1918.60		4370.59		1478.37		538.70		142.44
Extra concert income	5100.00		4900		4700.00		0.00		0.00		0.00						500.00
Misc income (inc. Gift Aid)	2567.50		2414		2155.20		2496.56		8619.05		2749.64		2166.05		1820.57		74.28
Total Income	34210.21		35744.17		29087.68		22053.87		14508.72		18932.52		24595.30		23864.43		23367.22
Expenditure																	
Rehearsal venue hire	4464.00		4192		3859.00		2577.00		726.32		1443.00		5362.69		4934.90		4034.60
Concert venue hire	5795.00		5521		4800.00		4181.00		944.00		2911.00		4537.00		4950.94		4812.00
Conductors fees	4800.00		4920		5100.00		4250.00		4250.00		4250.00		4320.00		4250.00		4250.00
Leaders fees	3200.00		3125		3000.00		2500.00		1300.00		2180.00		2550.00		2350.00		2183.22
Sundry musicians fees	2355.00		2061.34		2210.00		990.00		0.00		131.00		1850.45		530.00		952.80
Soloist fees	600.00		1275.6		1102.35		250.00		0.00		0.00		2259.50		1400.00		650.00
Instrument hire	915.00		733		1367.40		1913.00		0.00		887.00		729.20		428.00		928.25
music hire	3198.16		1685.68		1512.02		2491.94		510.10		1782.28		2514.50		2302.28		8350.75
Marketing	558.68		138.64		437.47		174.97		0.00		458.20		345.85		964.04		2080.21
Sundry concert expenses (inc bar)	1240.20		1289.91		1076.69		765.02		0.00		555.21		1367.20		1162.36		673.80
General orchestra expenses	1366.84		838.11		1080.88		864.82		5335.99		344.00		379.98		382.9		753.01
Total Expenditure	28492.88		25780.28		25545.81		20957.75		13066.41		14941.69		26216.37		23655.42		29668.64
Profit/loss	5717.33		9963.89		3541.87		1096.12		1442.31		3990.83		-1621.07		209.01		-6301.42

Concert Breakdown																					
2024-2025	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	2164.33	2500.00	-335.67	3415.33	2500.00	915.33	1868.18	2500.00	-631.82	2980.26	2500.00	480.26	2189.15	2500.00	-310.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	2164.33	2500.00	-335.67
Bar	588.78	500.00	88.78	871.79	500.00	371.79	359.45	500.00	-140.55	728.51	500.00	228.51	399.66	500.00	-100.34	0.00	0.00	0.00	588.78	500.00	88.78
Programmes	103.20	130.00	-26.80	186.59	130.00	56.59	97.53	130.00	-32.47	142.75	130.00	12.75	78.81	130.00	-51.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	103.20	130.00	-26.80
Subs	1983.89	2000.00	-16.11	1770.42	2000.00	-229.58	1771.22	2000.00	-228.78	1865.76	2000.00	-134.24	1924.46	2000.00	-75.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	1983.89	2000.00	-16.11
Donations	143.74	20.00	123.74	73.74	20.00	53.74	198.74	20.00	178.74	41.37	20.00	21.37	46.11	20.00	26.11	548.95	0.00	548.95	143.74	20.00	123.74
Misc concert income	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00	0.00	200.00	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	0.00
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	5100.00	0.00	5100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fundraising	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	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gift Aid	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	2367.50	2500.00	-132.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	4983.94	5150.00	-166.06	6517.87	5150.00	1367.87	4295.12	5150.00	-854.88	5758.65	5150.00	608.65	4638.19	5150.00	-511.81	8016.45	2500.00	5516.45	34210.21	28250.00	5960.21
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	870.00	870.00	0.00	876.00	870.00	6.00	906.00	906.00	0.00	906.00	906.00	0.00	906.00	906.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	870.00	870.00	0.00
Concert venue hire	1166.00	1100.00	66.00	1100.00	1100.00	0.00	1133.00	1133.00	0.00	1133.00	1133.00	0.00	1263.00	1133.00	130.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1166.00	1100.00	66.00
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	0.00	0.00	0.00	960.00	960.00	0.00
Leaders fees	625.00	625.00	0.00	625.00	625.00	0.00	650.00	650.00	0.00	650.00	650.00	0.00	650.00	650.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	625.00	625.00	0.00
Sundry musicians fees	0.00	200.00	-200.00	270.00	200.00	70.00	320.00	200.00	120.00	0.00	200.00	-200.00	165.00	300.00	-135.00	1600.00	0.00	1600.00	270.00	200.00	70.00
Soloist fees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	300.00	300.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Instrument hire	0.00	200.00	-200.00	270.00	200.00	70.00	100.00	200.00	-100.00	545.00	400.00	145.00	0.00	200.00	-200.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Music Hire	108.00	100.00	8.00	200.94	150.00	50.94	1080.84	1200.00	-119.16	934.08	1200.00	-265.92	874.30	500.00	374.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	108.00	100.00	8.00
Marketing	98.68	150.00	-51.32	0.00	150.00	-150.00	100.00	150.00	-50.00	0.00	150.00	-150.00	0.00	150.00	-150.00	360.00	360.00	0.00	98.68	150.00	-51.32
Sundry concert expenses	0.00	50.00	-50.00	0.00	50.00	-50.00	66.92	50.00	16.92	22.08	50.00	-27.92	34.03	50.00	-15.97	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bar expenses	124.11	150.00	-25.89	449.89	150.00	299.89	181.59	150.00	31.59	117.93	150.00	-32.07	243.65	150.00	93.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	124.11	150.00	-25.89
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	1366.84	1500.00	-133.16	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	3951.79	4405.00	-453.21	4751.83	4455.00	296.83	5798.35	5899.00	-100.65	5268.09	5799.00	-530.91	5395.98	5299.00	96.98	3326.84	1860.00	1466.84	28492.88	27717.00	775.88
PROFIT	1032.15	745.00	287.15	1766.04	695.00	1071.04	-1503.23	-749.00	-754.23	490.56	-649.00	1139.56	-757.79	-149.00	-608.79	4689.61	640.00	4049.61	5717.33	533.00	5184.33

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 2025.

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: 2 April 2026