

Company registration no. 3685489

Music Illuminated

Registered charity no 1074016

Report and Accounts for the period ended 31 August 2023

Directors (at 31 August 2023):

Matthew Saunders
Fiona Cairney
Pui Wah Poon

Registered address:

20 Wimborne Close
Epsom
Surrey
KT17 4DP

Registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee without share capital.

Review of activities 2022–2023

The Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra (ERSO) was founded in 1931 by Ernest Read, the pioneer in the development of music education and youth orchestras.

The charity Music Illuminated was formed in 1998 by ERSO members in order to continue the running of the orchestra following the ending of this role by the Ernest Read Music Association.

ERSO takes great pride in working to a very high musical standard. Ninety years after the orchestra was founded, the community of musicians who make up ERSO strives to continue Ernest Read's legacy with our charitable work with emerging professional musicians and children together with our core symphonic concerts which aim to illuminate the music to our audiences.

October concert

This was the orchestra's first concert back at our usual concert venue. Being back at the newly transformed space at St John's Waterloo was greatly appreciated by our players and our wonderfully warm audience. The evening opened with newly appointed Assistant Conductor Olivia Tait expertly directing the orchestra in Grant Still's Threnody in Memory of Jean Sibelius.

Our soloist Ellen Baumring-Gledhill, the runner-up in our 2022 ERSO Soloist of the year competition, gave an amazing performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto and the evening concluded with Schubert's "Great" C major symphony, prefaced by insightful commentary from conductor Chris Stark and excerpts conducted by Olivia Tait.

November Camden children's workshop

Our November "Dance!" workshop saw ERSO working with the children from the Camden Training Orchestra, the most junior orchestral ensemble offered by the Camden Music Service's Saturday Centre. This entry level group is the children's first experience of regular weekend music-making at the Saturday Centre and provides a pathway for children to progress towards the higher levels of ensembles on offer from the Music Service. It was agreed with the Camden Music Service that it would be extremely beneficial to the children to spend a full afternoon working with ERSO. We were delighted to be joined by 22 young people, the majority of the Training Orchestra players, who ranged from beginners up to children who are around Grade 4, and who were in years 5 to 9.

We carefully selected three very different pieces of music which complemented the "Dance!" theme and which were at an appropriate level of difficulty for the young players. At ERSO we are committed to diversifying the repertoire we play to include more works by women and BAME composer and the workshop programme reflected this:

- three 18th century minuets by Charles Ignatius Sancho (the first published Black British composer) which were arranged for the Training Orchestra by our conductor Chris Stark.
- The BBC 10-piece arrangement of the well-known "Waltz of the Flowers" by Tchaikovsky. The BBC 10-piece arrangements are a valuable resource for events of this type as they enable each child to play their part at Beginner, Intermediate or Grade 4-5 level so that each child can be comfortable with the level of difficulty in their music
- the BBC 10-piece arrangement of the "Juba Dance" from the First Symphony by Florence Price (the first noted African American female composer to gain national status in the United States).

Conducting was shared between our professional Principal Conductor Chris Stark, best known for best known as co-founder and Principal Conductor of RPS Award-winning Multi-Story Orchestra,

our Assistant Conductor Olivia Tait who is currently working as a Conducting Fellow at St Martin-in-the-Fields and the Training Orchestra's conductor Ian Brookman, so that the children had exposure to a variety of conductors.

We broke into sectional groups for a part of the afternoon so that the young players could learn more about their parts and their instruments in detail from our young professional section leaders (recruited through our ERSO Talent Programme to lead the string and brass sections), our professional leader, conductor and assistant conductor.

The afternoon was carefully planned in conjunction with Camden Music to ensure that the children were playing for an appropriate amount of time and had suitable breaks, and to make sure that there was sufficient variety in what was happening to keep their interest.

A key part of all of our children's projects is to ensure that the young musicians feel well supported and able to enjoy both the rehearsal and the performance. To ensure this, each child was assigned an adult buddy who sat next to them and played from the exact same part to help make it clearer where we were in the music. The buddy was also able to advise on musical issues, answer questions and ensure that they feel supported and able to enjoy the rehearsal and concert experience.

We liaised with the Camden Music Service to ensure that we understood which children needed extra support due to special needs. Three children needed specific support and we made sure that we paired them with experienced adults who could make sure they were well supported.

Safeguarding is always a key part of the planning process for all of our projects with children. All ERSO players were briefed on our safeguarding policies, which we ensure fit with Camden Music Service's safeguarding policies, and we ensured that we have at least 2 players with enhanced DBS checks in each rehearsal plus others as back-ups.

We are committed to ensuring that our events with Camden children are accessible to children from lower income families and so the workshop and entry to the informal concert was free for all participants and audience members.

The workshop ended with a free, informal play through for the children's families. Our conductors introduced the music to give context and the children performed incredibly well and were met with cheers from their proud parents. As the workshop took place early in the academic year, it was the first concert for some of the children and we hope that this exciting opportunity will reinforce their enthusiasm for their instruments and playing in orchestral ensembles.

Outcome of the workshop

The event was very successful - the children who performed with us and their families gave extremely positive feedback, as did the senior team at the Camden Music Service.

"Thank you so much for this project, and all the projects you bring to us - we are very grateful."
Head of Camden Music Service

We always evaluate the success of each of our children's concert with the participants and their families and ensure that the findings are applied to future projects. We were delighted that the feedback showed that the children who performed with us greatly enjoyed their afternoon, and that their families were extremely grateful for their children to have had the chance to take part in *"such an inspiring and wonderful"* event.

There was great enthusiasm from both the children and their parents regarding the diversity of the music and the mix of well-known and new music, and much appreciation that the history behind the music had been explained so well by the conductors.

The children all commented extremely positively about performing and working together with the adult musicians as a full orchestra and in the sectional rehearsals. They told us: *"It was fun!"*; *"Playing with professional musicians was the best thing."*; *"I loved the waltz of the flowers"*; *"The sectionals really helped, and the conductors were really nice"*; *"It seemed to fly by!"*

When asked if we could improve the experience we were repeatedly told *"No!"* and by one child: *"I think it's all perfect"*.

The parents commented on the quality and number of adult performers supporting the children and the impressive resultant performance. A few said that their child had been a bit nervous about taking part in the workshop, but that they had really enjoyed it. One child sent their mum a message in the afternoon saying how great it was and another said to his parents that he was happy he took part and *"it was a fantastic day"*.

When asked what the best part of the event had been, parents said: *"The smiles on all of the children's faces"*; *"Seeing my son so engaged"*; *"The children having the chance to play with experienced musicians"*; *"Kids learning tips and techniques from the adults"*; *"It's great to see the experienced musicians sharing their knowledge and skill with the children."*

When asked what we could do next time to make a similar event better parents told us: *Nothing! Make it longer! More of the same! Plan this event again! Do it more frequently!*

The event achieved our anticipated outcomes:

- the children had the chance to hear how their instruments could sound with practice and what it would be like to play within a larger, more advanced ensemble through sitting side-by-side with ERSO. We know from our work with Camden Music that *"offering these performing opportunities with inspiring adult players has led to improved attendance, group retention and recruitment."*
- The experience helped to develop the children's skills as orchestral musicians through working with the ERSO adult musicians and more experienced professional conductors. They experienced a wide variety of music styles and had the chance to be part of a large and more advanced ensemble which we hope will inspire them to continue to progress with their music.

January Camden children's workshop

In our January "A Piece in a Day" workshop we worked with the children from the Camden Sinfonia, the next level orchestral ensembles offered by the Camden Music Service's Saturday Centre. The Camden Sinfonia currently has 33 members aged 12 – 18, ranging from grade 5 to 8 and we were delighted to welcome 27 of the Sinfonia players - the majority of the members - to our workshop.

This all-day event gave the Sinfonia players the opportunity to work with ERSO on music that was more challenging for the young musicians than their usual repertoire and to play something that the Sinfonia would not be able to attempt on their own due to key missing instruments (e.g., bassoons, violas and doubles basses). Working with the Sinfonia's conductor and the Camden Music senior team, we considered a variety of pieces to ensure that we selected something exciting and inspiring for the children to play with ERSO.

We are committed to diversifying our repertoire to include more works by women and BAME composers and selected the Mississippi River Suite by Florence Price, who was the first noted African American female composer to gain national status in the United States.

Arrangements were similar to those for the November workshops in terms of: safeguarding; sharing conducting; spitting out into sectional groups for art of the day; assigning adult buddies and identifying children who required specific support.

Outcome of the workshop

The event was very successful - the children who performed with us and their families gave extremely positive feedback, as did the senior team at the Camden Music Service.

The children all commented extremely positively about performing and working together with the adult musicians as a full orchestra and in the sectional rehearsals. They told us: *"The ERSO players were friendly and helpful. The piece sounded really nice, and it was enjoyable to be a part of it! The whole rehearsal was very fun - everything was great!"*

When asked what they had enjoyed most, replies included: *Meeting new people and performing together. Working on the music together. The challenges in the music. Everything! Being with friends. The music we played was great! Making friends and playing the music."*

There was great enthusiasm from both the children and their parents about playing regarding the choice of the piece, commenting: *"Great programme choice - an under recognised piece that was accessible for the younger performers. The beautiful blending of the piece and the suspenseful contrast of the music kept us wanting more. Never a dull moment. The feelings of the composer beautifully reflected through her art and musical harmony."*

Parents were delighted that their children had *"the experience of playing alongside the adult musicians in a high-quality orchestra and learning new music. Thank you for giving our child this opportunity. The best part is to watch them perform at the end of the workshop. Great opportunity for children to learn music skills and new composers. Thank you everyone. Amazing achievement. It was wonderful. "*

When asked if we could improve the experience we were told: *"I thought it was amazing, couldn't fault it. Nothing - winning formula already! Nothing - perfect as it is. We would love to see these initiatives more often. Nothing, everything was perfectly organised. Keep up the great work!"*

The event achieved our anticipated outcomes, and we hope that having the chance to work on much more challenging repertoire as part of a large and more advanced ensemble will inspire them to continue to progress with their music and continue to reap the many associated benefits.

February concert

In our February concert we show-cased talented young soloist, Penny Cairney-Leeming, who was one of the runner-s up in the 2022 ERSO Soloist of the Year competition, She gave an assured and impressive performance of Chaminade's Flute Concertino, expertly conducted by Assistant Conductor Olivia Tait. Conductor Christopher Stark helped our appreciative audience to explore Walton's epic 1st Symphony through commentary and excerpts, followed by a full performance of this incredibly challenging work, which was warmly received by our audience.

June concert

Our soloist June Lee was the winner of the 2023 ERSO Soloist of the Year competition. She delighted the audience with her bravura performance of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, which was thunderously applauded.

The evening opened with Louise Farrenc Overture 2, expertly conducted by Assistant Conductor Olivia Tait who also led the orchestra in the short excerpts of Sibelius 6 accompanied by expert - and

amusing - commentary from conductor Christopher Stark. The evening concluded with a full performance of the symphony which was clearly greatly enjoyed by our lovely audience.

The ERSO Talent Programme

The ERSO Talent Programme was developed in 2017 to bring together all our work with young career musicians. The Help Musicians UK's 2017 Study into musicians' mental health identified precarious finances and work insecurity as top concerns, especially for those new to the profession. The Covid-19 pandemic has placed even greater strain upon young musicians at the start of their careers due to reduced training, development and work opportunities over the last few years. The 2019 report "Help Building Sustainable Careers in Classical Music" commissions by Help Musicians UK stated:

It is apparent that those first formative years of professional life can be the most challenging for musicians who must juggle auditions, developing networks, continuous practice, learning of repertoire and building up a wide range of non-music skills from project management to finance to marketing.

The ERSO Talent Programme's purpose is to help young musicians to bridge the gap between formal training and a musical career through the provision of valuable professional experience and mentoring.

In recent years the ERSO Talent Programme has provided opportunities for emerging orchestral musicians, soloist, conductors and composers. In the 2021-2 season the Talent Programme focused upon:

At 90th Birthday celebration for ERSO, a parent of one of the participating children asked us why, in this modern day, our "front row in charge" was made up of four male conductors and a male leader. We recalled that in 2018, when we held auditions for postgraduate conducting students for our Behind the Baton concert, we all of the candidates recommended were male.

We had long wanted to revive the successful assistant conductor role that we had under Peter Stark (which notably included Andrew Gourlay, who went on to great things) and decided to re-create the Assistant Conductor role explicitly as an opportunity for a female conductor.

Challenges facing emerging female conductors

The Royal Philharmonic Society said: *At our last count, only two British orchestras had a female principal conductor, and only six women conductors had titled roles amid the several hundred conductors on the staff of professional British orchestras. Furthermore, only 22 of the 371 conductors represented by British agents were female. That's 5.5%.*

People frequently cite this as being a 'grass roots' problem and that more needs doing to encourage women at early stages to take up conducting, stick with it, and develop the skills needed for the profession. At the Royal Philharmonic Society, we are proud to present the UK's foremost initiative to help women do just that. The RPS Women Conductors programme (or 'Wo Co' as it's often called for short), has helped over 500 women nationwide to further their conducting skills at different levels.

Given the RPS's prominent role in encouraging female conductors, we made contact and asked if they might already have identified promising young conductors for whom our role would provide an opportunity to transform their conducting. The RPS were delighted to recommend young female conductors working to a high level and for whom this opportunity would be beneficial. We invited candidates to interview and audition with ERSO and were delighted to be able to select Olivia Tait as

the most appropriate candidate. Olivia the Assistant Conductor recently graduated with a Masters in choral conducting from the Royal Academy of Music. Our role will help her to gain the orchestral experience she needs to help her move forward in her chosen career of opera conducting.

The Assistant Conductor role involves

- Attending rehearsals and observing our Principal Conductor Chris Stark conducting.
- Taking sectionals on a planned or ad-hoc basis to work on specific sections of music.
- Conducting part of each concert.
- Standing in for Chris if he cannot be at rehearsal.

Benefits to the role holder

The Assistant Conductor role is a 2-year role which provides valuable, paid experience to a young career conductor at the beginning of their career and makes a significant contribution to their prospects. Benefits include:

- Being mentored by Chris Stark, who is highly regarded and has extensive experience of working with professional orchestras, amateurs and in many genres of music.
- Getting feedback from Chris, John Crawford (our professional leader who is very experienced) and our section leaders and the committee.
- Getting regular hands-on experience working with a larger group of musicians than is often possible at a conservatoire in a variety of styles of music.
- Working with a high-quality amateur orchestra which is highly likely to be something that a working conductor will do in their career, and which can require different approaches than working with the trained professionals that they work with at their conservatoire.
- Learning about how best to plan and manage a concert programme and rehearsal schedule.

ERSO Soloist of the Year 2023

The ERSO Soloist of the Year competition began in 2018 and is an annual event which provides emerging soloists with the valuable and rare opportunity to rehearse and perform a concerto with a full symphony orchestra. The competition is open to players who have played in at least one concert with ERSO during the season, widening the eligibility to many music students, post-graduates and professional musicians at the start of their careers. Candidates audition for a panel of Committee members, our professional leader and conductor. All candidates are given feedback upon their auditions.

The panel selected four Finalists who shared a half day of rehearsal time with ERSO and Chris Stark after the orchestra had spent a half day rehearsing each of their chosen concerti. This was a huge opportunity as the young soloists were given the chance to work on a movement of their concerto with a full orchestra and receive valuable advice and insights from our professional conductor and leader which will help them to develop their performances in the future. The winner June Lee was awarded the invaluable opportunity of performing her concerto with ERSO in our June concert and also a £150 fee. Winning the competition and gaining this concerto experience is an extremely valuable to the winner's CV.

Reaching the Final of the competition also makes a significant difference to the young musicians – since the competition began over two thirds of the finalists have been engaged as soloists by ERSO which has helped to boost their CVs and led to extra work.

We ask participants for feedback about the competition and learnings are incorporated into the plans for future years.

Paid Section Leader roles

The Paid Section Leader scheme began in 2016 with the aim of supporting emerging orchestral players. These 2-year developmental positions (Deputy Leader, Principal 2nd Violin, Principal Cello and Brass Leader) have proved to be extremely successful and beneficial to the role holders.

The roles provide aspiring professional musicians with valuable experience of leading, coaching and managing their sections and they benefit from mentoring from our professional leader and conductor. The roles also give valuable arts administration experience through being a member of ERSO's Committee, helping to manage the running of the orchestra and contributing to the future plans for the orchestra including helping to plan and deliver our ERSO Talent Programme and education projects with children.

The Section Leaders are appointed through a rigorous process every 2 years on a rolling basis to preserve continuity of the team and enable new section leaders to learn from more experienced role holders. Shortlisted candidates are invited to auditions, designed to be similar to those for professional orchestras, which include prepared orchestral excerpts, sight-reading together with an interview to assess the candidates' suitability to undertake the organisation and coaching elements so integral to these roles. Each candidate is given formal feedback to help with their preparations for future auditions in their professional lives. As with all our projects, we continuously monitor the success of these roles through feedback from conductors, our Leader and the role holders.

The ERSO Section Leader roles provide valuable, paid experience to emerging professional musicians at the very beginning of their careers and makes a significant contribution to their prospects by boosting their CVs.

We were delighted to appoint a new team of Section Leaders in the most recent season.

Notes to the financial statements

1. Constitution of the scheme

Music Illuminated is a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts and is also registered as a charity. Accordingly, there is no share capital.

Music Illuminated is governed by a Memorandum and Articles incorporated on 17 December 1998, as amended by Special Resolution registered at Companies House on 20 May 2016.

2. Accounting policies

2.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention.

2.2. Income and expenditure

Direct income from musical activities, in the form of ticket and other sales and subscriptions, is included and accrued in the accounting period to which it relates.

Donations and grants are also accounted for in the period to which they relate. Donations and grants totalling £4,000 relating to projects in the 2023/24 season were received during 2022/23.

Payments representing basic rate tax reclaimed from HM Revenue & Customs under the Gift Aid scheme are accounted for in the period during which they were received.

Ticket sales and related expenditure in respect of the season starting after 31 August are carried forward to the following accounting period.

2.3 Donations by waived charges

The orchestra receives the benefit of much unpaid assistance, reduced charging rates and other benefits in kind. These benefits are not reflected in the accounts.

3. Tangible fixed assets.

During 2011/12, two violins with a value of approximately £2,000 were donated to the orchestra by a member, to be loaned to talented young players. These have now been given away and their value written off during 2022/23.

4. Taxation

No charge to direct taxation arises, because Music Illuminated is a registered charity and therefore exempt from corporation tax.

Report

Principal activities and review of activities

The principal activity of Music Illuminated is the provision of concerts and to provide a training orchestra of a high standard.

A summary of the results for the year is given on page 10 of the accounts.

Directors

Matthew Saunders, Fiona Cairney and Pui Wah Poon served as directors throughout the year.

Audit

Due to Music Illuminated's status as a small company, exemption from audit is requested. Voluntary audit may be sought in future years.

Independent Review

These accounts have been reviewed by Kathryn Ellis, ACA.

Director's signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Saunders', written over a horizontal line.

Matthew J Saunders

Income and expenditure for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

	£
<u>Turnover</u>	
Income from musical activities	3,597.38
Direct expenses	-1,468.99
Concert-related expenses	-20,925.76
Net deficit from musical activities	-18,797.37
Bank charges	-
Tangible assets written off	-2,000.00
Deficit before other income	-20,797.37
<u>Other income</u>	
Donations	28,478.41
Gift Aid	802.99
	29,281.40
Profit for year	8,484.03

Balance sheet as at 31 August 2023

	£
<u>Current assets</u>	
Cash at bank	37,508.86
Cash/cheques in hand	-
Receivables: loans to MIP due within one year	25,000.00
Debt reduction	-20,925.76
Opening balance at MIP	18,740.00
Debtors	22,814.24
	60,323.10
<u>Fixed assets</u>	
Tangible assets	-
<u>Current liabilities</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	-40.15
Donations and grants received in advance	-4,000.00
<u>Net assets</u>	56,282.95
Funded by: accumulated funds	47,798.92
Profit for period	8,484.03
	56,282.95

Audit Exemption Statement

For the period ending 31 August 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476;
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts;
- These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions and delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Director's signature



Matthew J Saunders