



Odyssey Ensemble for Refugees

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 August 2025

Registered Charity Number 1208621

Odyssey Ensemble for Refugees is a
Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered by the
Charity Commission for England and Wales.

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Registered Charity Number 1208621

Principal Address 164 Marlborough Road, Oxford OX1 4LT

Trustees Peter William Mawditt
Elizabeth Victoria Marthinet-Payne
Gloria Leccese-Debney
Jane Deborah Whitfield
Morag Elizabeth Gillespie (resigned on 20 October 2025)
Natasha Treunen (resigned on 20 October 2025)

Names of key staff or advisors Josh Asokan (Director)

Bookkeepers JMC Bookkeeping

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 August 2025

The trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 August 2025

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which was registered on 11 June 2024.

Governing Document

The charity has a Constitution (Governing Document), dated 20 July 2024.

Appointment of Trustees

The charity's policy on the appointment of trustees is to be found in the Constitution. The founding trustees have agreed role descriptions for their activities within the organisation. New trustees are appointed based on their relevant skills and experience for the organisation. Nominations are discussed and appointed by the board of trustees.

In accordance with the Governing Document, the charity requires a minimum of three trustees. The charity has maintained this minimum throughout the reporting period.

Trustees are appointed in line with the Governing Document and serve fixed terms as specified in that document. Initial terms for the founding trustees were set out at registration and future appointments continue to follow these provisions.

Two trustees, Morag Gillespie and Natasha Treunen, resigned during the year in accordance with clause 12 of the Governing Document. The board of trustees remained quorate throughout.

Organisational Structure

The charity's affairs were managed throughout the period by its Director, Josh Asokan.

The trustees exercised their power of delegation under clause 14 of the Governing Document, engaging a freelance grant application writer and a bookkeeper for grant-writing and financial administration.

As set out in the Governing Document, the charity's only members are its trustees.

Bankers

The orchestra's bankers are Lloyds Bank PLC, 25 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HN

Risk management approach

The Trustees regularly review the charity's key risks at their monthly board meetings. This includes financial, operational, safeguarding and compliance risks. Controls and policies are in place to manage these.

The most significant risks relate to financial sustainability and ensuring we have sufficient team capacity to plan and deliver our strategy which is expected for a new charity. Mitigation includes regular financial oversight and careful planning.

The Trustees maintained the registers and records required by clauses 23-25 of the Governing Document and ensured conflicts were managed in accordance with clause 7.

The Trustees are satisfied that appropriate measures are in place and that risks are being managed proportionately.

Policies

Conflict of interest: charity policy requires trustees to declare any personal, professional, or financial interests that could influence their decisions and to manage or remove those conflicts to act solely in the charity's best interest. Key elements include a regular process for declaring interests at meetings, recording these interests, and having a rule that the conflicted trustee must not participate in discussions or votes on the matter.

Safeguarding and child protection: This is important since the charity engages with refugee children and young adults in its artistic production and with community engagement programs involving school children and young adults. The policy was last reviewed on 7 March 2025

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Charitable objectives (from governing document):

The objects of the CIO are:

(a) To promote human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations conventions and declarations) of asylum seekers and refugees throughout the world through the medium of music and creative arts by:

- (i) raising awareness of human rights issues.
- (ii) promoting public support for human rights; and
- (iii) promoting respect for human rights among individuals and corporations.

In furtherance of this object but not otherwise, the trustees shall have power to engage in political activity provided that the trustees are satisfied that the proposed activities will further the purposes of the CIO to an extent justified by the resources committed and the activity is not the dominant means by which the CIO carries out its objects.

(b) The advancement of the arts through providing a platform for and enabling asylum seekers and refugees in the United Kingdom to tell their stories through music in conjunction with other creative arts including, but not limited to, literature, dance, drama, and the visual arts.

(c) The advancement of education of the public in general and to raise awareness about asylum seekers and refugees, through conveying stories and accurate information relating to forced migration, primarily in public events including, but not limited to, concerts, recitals, music workshops, open rehearsals, lectures, and discussion forums.

Only activities permitted under the charity's objects were carried out during the reporting period.

Public benefit statement

This was the charity's first year operating under its adopted Constitution dated 20 December 2023, which was registered by the Charity Commission on 11 June 2024.

The trustees are satisfied that Odyssey Ensemble for Refugees met its charitable objectives across the season, and that it was successful in discharging its aims and activities for the public benefit (according to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit).

Chair's Report

We live in a time marked by heightened — and often divisive — rhetoric about those seeking refuge on our shores. Such words can fuel fear and hostility. Yet music and the creative arts have the power to tell deeper truths, to awaken empathy, and to remind us of our shared humanity. It is from this conviction that the vision for Odyssey Ensemble was born.

Odyssey Ensemble is a newly founded charity with a mission to amplify refugee stories through music, inspire empathy and respect for human dignity, and foster positive social change. Having moved from vision to proof of concept with our early performances in 2023, we are now emerging as a charity that delivers with creativity, professionalism and passion.

This year has shown what is possible when gifted performers, dedicated creatives and committed supporters come together. Many highly talented artists — and many working diligently behind the scenes — have helped bring our mission to life. We are deeply grateful for the opportunities that have opened to us and for the partnerships that continue to grow.

At the heart of all we do remains our belief that every person should be treated with dignity and respect. Looking ahead, we will continue to showcase refugee journeys of migration — from despair and loss to hope and renewal. We will create spaces where tension can soften, where people can reflect and connect, and where bridges of understanding can be built. We believe that Odyssey Ensemble can play an increasingly vital role in this endeavour.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Key achievements during the year

In the past first full year operating as a charity, we have established our national presence by:

- Hosting a series of public performances, engaging with audience perception of refugees and asylum-seekers
- Benefiting from publicity through national broadcasts
- Building connections through a network of advisors, advocates and partners

In addition, foundational work has been undertaken to

- Develop methodologies to assess our impact
- Secure some foundational grant and philanthropic seed funding
- Establish financial administrative support

Performance Activities

Odyssey Ensemble's first major public performance took place on 24 May 2025 in Kings Place, Kings Cross, London. The concert sold out weeks before the event with 43% of audiences new to the venue. 6 refugee poets, 4 refugee-led films, and 15 musical co-creators were commissioned alongside 18 professional musicians featured.

Media coverage for the performance included live performances and recorded interviews on BBC Radio 3, BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio London

A collaborative event "Exploring Migration Through Sound" was held in November 2024 at the Story Museum Oxford in partnership with the Centre on Migration Policy and Society at the University of Oxford, featuring recorded sounds of migration.

Refugee Collaboration and Mentoring

Co-creation of artistic works with refugees to spotlight their stories is at the heart of what we do. We have run music and poetry workshops this year for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and care leavers in Oxford in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council. The celebrated poet Kate Clanchy MBE also facilitates mentoring sessions for refugees interesting in writing poetry to go with music.

Works created in these workshops and mentoring sessions form the basis of new compositions featured in our performances. We hope to expand our provision of these workshops beyond Oxford.

Four refugee-led films were commissioned for our Kings Place performance in May 2025 and plans for the next year, which are already underway, include collaboration with and mentoring of refugee filmmakers whose work will be featured alongside the orchestra,

Outcomes and impact

This year, Odyssey Ensemble continued to amplify refugee voices through music, performance and collaborative creativity. We supported refugee musicians to develop their skills, build confidence and share their stories with the public. Through workshops, mentoring and public performances, participants gained new opportunities for artistic expression and community connection.

Our concerts brought together diverse audiences, fostering understanding and celebrating the richness that refugee artists contribute to cultural life. Our impact reflects the dedication of our musicians, partners and supporters—helping create a platform where talent is nurtured and stories are heard.

Feedback from beneficiaries or stakeholders

"We talk about refugees like they're statistics. But tonight gave them a face, a soul, and a story. I'll never forget it." - Audience Member

"This wasn't just writing—it was breathing. That's what it felt like. A way to say, 'I'm here, I survived, and I still dream.'" - Refugee Filmmaker

"The poems were beautiful, moving and evocative, speaking often of the trials, pains and heartbreak which the poets had themselves encountered on their long and arduous journeys to safety here in the UK. The gently nuanced and subdued character of the music matched the poetry perfectly, never intruding yet providing colour, mood and atmosphere. Altogether, this was a very memorable and intensely moving performance." - Reviewer (Music Critic)

"You gave me a microphone. And in that moment, it wasn't about the pain. It was about the power of being seen." - Refugee Poet

"The combination of sound and poetry added a layer of understanding you can't reach with words alone." - Audience Member

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial Risks

The trustees regularly review financial risks, focusing on:

- Dependence on grant funding and donations, which can fluctuate from year to year.
- Project delivery costs, particularly for performances and artist support.
- Cash-flow pressures, linked to the timing of funder payments and project expenditure.

Board meetings were held regularly, once a month. The Director of the charity kept the trustees regularly informed of the organisation's financial position and forecasts, allowing financial risk to be assessed on an ongoing basis.

Reserves Policy

In this first year, and with no pool of reserves available, the Board of Trustees and the management have a policy to build reserves steadily across the first few years of our charitable status. The aim is to try to build reserves to the level equivalent to at least the estimated expenditure required to cover the charity's core operational costs and planned projects for a 6-month period.

Significant donations, grants, or legacies

Odyssey Ensemble for Refugees is grateful to have received a National Lottery Performance Grant from Arts Council England, two major gifts from anonymous donors, and support from our loyal regular givers who have enabled the continuing development of our work during the year.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIOD

Strategic Goals

Over the coming year, Odyssey Ensemble will:

- Expand our national presence and reach through performance and events.
- Build partnerships with artists, venues, and like-minded organisations.
- Develop a sustainable funding model to support a professional team beyond our Founder/Artistic Director, with a level of reserves enabling future performances and projects to be planned and booked.

Any future committees will operate in accordance with the delegation provisions in clause 14 of the Governing Document.

Key Events during the year

- **BBC Radio 4 Feature (11 September 2025):** Behind-the-scenes of our May concert, available permanently on BBC Sounds.
- **'Friends of Odyssey Ensemble' Event:** Donor-hosted gathering to raise awareness, featuring a refugee poet and Director Josh Asokan.
- **Season Opening Concert (25 October 2025):** At Smith Square Hall, featuring refugee-led artwork and a panel discussion on refugee journeys.
- **Recording with Dame Emma Thompson (20 November 2025):** Music by our composer-in-residence, poetry readings, and a panel discussion, with potential for further collaboration.
- **Ayoub Sisters Collaboration (January 2026):** Performances at Cadogan Hall, London and Stoller Hall, Manchester.

Financial Sustainability

We are in the process of establishing an appropriately skilled fundraising committee, as well as continuing to cultivate philanthropic support and targeted grant opportunities to secure ongoing stability for the charity.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES’ RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees of Odyssey Ensemble are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with UK charity law and the Charities SORP.

We must ensure that the accounts give a true and fair view of the charity’s income, expenditure and financial position. In doing so, the trustees:

- choose suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- make reasonable and prudent judgements
- prepare the accounts on a going-concern basis unless it is inappropriate to do so.

The trustees are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records, safeguarding the charity’s assets, and taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud or other irregularities.

The trustees are satisfied that the statements made herein represent a true and fair view of the financial position of the Charity and that it can continue as a going concern.

SIGNATURE

This report was approved by the Trustees at a duly convened meeting on 5 December 2025 in accordance with clause 15 of the Governing Document, and signed on their behalf by:



.....
Name: Peter Mawditt
Position: Chair of Trustees
Date: 8 December 2025

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES ON THE UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 August 2025

I report on the accounts of Odyssey Ensemble for Refugees for the year ended 31 August 2025.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts, you consider that the audit requirement of section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) does not apply and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts under section 145 of the Act, to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act, and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Acthave not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



.....
Mrs Elizabeth Edwards
Accounting Services
28 Lowther Avenue
Blackpool
FY2 9PE

Date: 8 December 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 August 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2025 Total £
Incoming resources				
Donations Received		13,878	45,320	59,199
		0	0	0
Total incoming resources		13,878	45,320	59,199
Resources expended				
Charitable Activities		360	22,105	22,465
Staff Costs		3,929	12,000	15,929
Governance Costs	2	5,887	1,014	6,901
Total resources expended		10,176	35,119	45,296
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year		3,702	10,201	13,903
Total funds brought forward		0	0	0
Total funds carried forward		3,702	10,201	13,903

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 August 2025

	Notes	31 August 2025 £
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand		13,903
Debtors		0
Total Current Assets		13,903
Current Liabilities		
Creditor amounts falling due within one year		0
Net Current Assets		13,903
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets		0
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		13,903
Non-Current Liabilities		
Creditor amounts falling due after more than one year		0
Net assets		13,903
Funds		
Restricted Funds	3	10,201
Unrestricted Funds	4	3,702
Total funds		13,903

Approved by the trustees on 8 December 2025 and signed on their behalf



Name: Peter Mawditt

Position: Chair of Trustees

Date: 8 December 2025

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 August 2025**1. Accounting Policies**

Basis of preparing the financial statements The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. Income All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably. Expenditure Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year-end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure. Taxation The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities. Fund accounting Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees. Restricted funds can only be used for restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for restricted purposes. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. Governance Costs

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025 Total
	£	£	£
Bank Fees	46	0	46
Conference Fees	350	0	350
Funding Bids	2,250	0	2,250
Consulting	500	0	500
IT Software and Consumables	576	0	576
Printing & Stationery	2,073	660	2,733
Impact Assessment Costs	0	354	354
Training & Workshops	92	0	92
Total	5,887	1,014	6,901

3. Unrestricted Funds

	At 1st Sep 2024	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Total
	£	£	£	£
	0	13,878	(10,176)	3,702
Total	0	13,878	(10,176)	3,702

4. Restricted Funds

	At 1st Sep 2024	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	2025 Total
	£	£	£	£
Restricted Kings Place May 2025	0	17,820	(19,255)	(1,435)
Restricted Arts Council Oct 2025	0	0	(3,865)	(3,865)
Restricted Stewardship Funds	0	27,500	(12,000)	15,500
Total	0	45,320	(35,119)	10,201