

London Philharmonic Orchestra Sustainability Report

Introduction:

The London Philharmonic Orchestra is a registered charity (238045). We are committed to achieving a range of positive change through the music we perform, the artists who perform it, and by being responsible across our operations as both an employer and a contributor to wider society. We are conscious of the ability of arts and cultural organisations to punch above their weight through their public profile and programmes, and take seriously our power to advocate for, influence and affect change, not just within our art form but within society at large. We monitor our programmes for impact across multiple metrics, often on a detailed project-by-project basis. However, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs or 'Global Goals') established in 2015 provide a framework for articulating our impact in the round and are employed for that purpose in this report.

Analysis of our programme suggests that the Orchestra's work contributes directly to six of the UNSDGs, covering the areas of good health and wellbeing; quality education; gender equality; decent work & economic growth; reduced inequalities; and climate action. Whilst celebrating our progress in these arenas we acknowledge that we and our sector are on a journey and have a significant distance still to travel. These Global Goals offer a helpful framework not just for reporting but also to consult for the purposes of artistic and business decision-making as we work to make our own contribution to an improved world for all for 2030 and beyond.

Goal 3: Good Health & Wellbeing



Goal Summary: Ensure healthy lives and support wellbeing for all at all ages.

Research by Goldsmiths College, University of London, suggests that experiencing live music for 20 minutes once a fortnight can increase self-reporting of wellbeing by up to 21%, and that people who do so are more likely to experience "happiness, contentment, productivity and self-esteem at the highest level", potentially leading to increased life expectancy¹. Meanwhile over two thirds (67%) of British people surveyed said that experiencing live music makes them feel happier than simply listening at home. This suggests that the shared experience of coming together with other people to listen is an important contributor to the wellbeing boost.²

The Orchestra's public performance programme, comprising around 150 live concerts every year to a live audience approaching 250,000 people clearly contributes to this important outcome. We offer a wide range of concerts from full symphonic programmes of music across four centuries to late night events, chamber music and opera. We work to attract audiences by offering a mix of traditional concert performance alongside innovative programming including recent collaborations with dance, circus skills and theatrical direction. Whilst our home is in London people across the UK have the opportunity to see the Orchestra live. These opportunities include our residencies in Eastbourne, Brighton, Saffron Walden and Glyndebourne, and concerts in major cities and at local festivals. We also tour extensively on the international stage. In fact in our 2024/25 Season fewer than a third of performances are in London.

Our targeted initiatives go further, delivering deeper, more focused impact. For example, 87% of participants in our OrchLab programme for disabled people in care settings reported feeling an increased sense of wellbeing after completing a year-long series of workshops with musicians from the LPO and our partners,

Drake Music. Meanwhile, 100% of parents of children participating in our Open Sound Ensemble for teenagers with special educational needs and disabilities reported an improvement in wellbeing for both themselves and their children.



Goal 4: Quality Education



Goal Summary: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Music education is a vital part of the Orchestra's offer. It is mission-critical for the Orchestra in that it enthuses, develops and nurtures the talents that will be the future of the industry.

More broadly, however, a musical education provides a range of benefits across the cognitive spectrum. Studies, for example by the Kaufman Music Center have demonstrated that participation in musical learning improves performance in STEM subjects which are often positioned in opposition to arts subjects rather

than as complementary disciplines⁴. Moreover, musical creation, interpretation and enjoyment creates a safe space for dialogue and empathy, and to appreciate the full range of the world's cultural diversity.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra runs a comprehensive programme of music education work speaking to these goals:

- First access programmes include our *BrightSparks* Schools concerts which reach over ten thousand 5-16 year-olds every year. They provide inspirational introductions to the youngest children to the sound of the full orchestra and hone the specialist skills and knowledge of teenage students preparing for public examinations in music. They take place in major concert venues such as London's Royal Festival Hall and Eastbourne's Congress Theatre, helping to build cultural capital amongst young people from all backgrounds.
- We develop the music education workforce, running INSET sessions for teachers which leave a legacy in schools of their interaction with us. In partnership with Music Education Hubs we choose the schools which will most benefit from intensive projects. Meanwhile all schools attending our *BrightSparks* concerts have access to training in advance of the events.
- Along with sector colleagues we seek to plug the gap in music and cultural education provision which has grown inexorably since 2010. Entries for arts subjects at GCSE and A-Level have fallen by 47% and 31% respectively over the last fifteen years and the number of state school music teachers has declined by over a quarter⁵. Meanwhile there are 20,000 fewer school orchestras, bands, choirs and ensembles in UK state schools than there were in 2017.⁶
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- Our FUNharmonics concerts reach over 5,000 people, introducing music to young people and their families and supporting and normalising cultural participation as a part of home life and growing up.



- Since 2017 our trailblazing Junior Artists mentorship scheme has been helping to level the playing field in our industry for talented musicians who are under-represented in the profession because of their race, gender, disability, neurodiversity or socio-economic background. Meanwhile Junior Artists Overture, Foyle Future Firsts, LPO Young Composers and our Fellow Conductors programme help build vocational skills for emerging talents.

- We support musical learners with days of orchestral skills-building, again in partnership with Music Education Hubs. Our Overture Days in London, Eastbourne and Worthing are tailored for young people aged 10-14 who are undergoing the transition from primary to secondary education and benefit from the inspiration of playing with peers and musicians from the LPO community. There is a focus for these events on musicians from backgrounds that are under-represented in the UK orchestra music industry.
- The Orchestra's carefully-curated seasons provide an opportunity for life-long learning and a forum for opening up debate about the most important issues facing the world. Recent seasons have focused on issues including immigration, creativity, memory and memorialisation and the Climate Crisis.
- The diversity of our programme promotes exploration, understanding and tolerance of a range of cultures. Events such as our performances of Ravi Shankar's opera *Sukanya* (2017 and 2020), Tan Dun's *Buddha Passion* and *The Chevalier Project* with Concert Theatre Works (both 2023) and 2025's evening with Amjad Ali Khan demonstrate that we offer music for a wide range of audience segments who can see themselves in our performances.

Goal 5: Gender Equality:



Goal Summary: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra acknowledges the historic exclusion of female players, composers and conductors from the classical music industry. Today, along with colleagues in the sector, it is determined to move the dial to ensure that gender under-representation in music is consigned to the past. When the London Philharmonic Orchestra appointed Karina Canellakis as Principal Guest Conductor in 2020 it was the first of the capital's symphony orchestras to appoint a female to a titled conductor position.

- During both the 2024/25 and 2025/26 seasons one in four of the Orchestra's concerts feature a female conductor.
- Our Inclusivity & Relevance plan commits to parity between commissions for new music from male and female composers across the period 2022 to 2027. We continue to play the extant repertoire of historic female composers, helping to establish it within the repertoire. In the 2025/26 London season we will perform nine pieces by women including both world premieres and extant works.

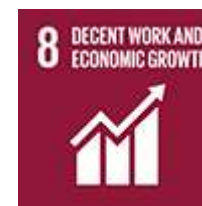


- For the first time in 2023/24 none of the emerging music creators on our Young Composers Scheme identified as male.
- As part of our Junior Artists programme we seek better representation of female musicians performing on instruments such as brass and percussion, which have traditionally been male dominated. The scheme also aims to

ensure that classical music is accessible to those identifying as non-binary and that there is equity of access and opportunity for people of all genders.

- Our Fellow Conductors programme has so far offered three emerging female conductors a year of mentoring opportunities with the Orchestra along with podium time in rehearsals and concerts.
- 47% of the Orchestra's playing membership is female, although we continue to work to address gender imbalances in the Principal positions. The Orchestra has recently created a code of conduct for all musicians which includes measures to reduce opportunity for gender-based bias or discrimination within the workplace.
- 56% of the Company's Board, including the Chair, is female, along with 75% of the senior management team. The Company's office-based roles work on a hybrid office system and there is openness to appropriate flexible start and finish times to help those with young families to maintain and build their careers.

Goal 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth



Goal Summary: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The United Kingdom has the third largest music market in the world and the industry is a significant employer which provided work for 216,000 people in 2023, the most recent year for which figures are available⁹. As well as conferring benefits that contribute across a range of the Global Goals, the art form, including orchestral music, provides work and economic opportunity for a diverse range of skilled practitioners including instrumentalists, composers, conductors, soloists, educationalists, stage managers, and administrators.

- We offer work to more than 500 musicians every year, supporting our 71 members as well as an array of the UK's rich pool of freelance musical talent. They include players, composers, arrangers, music educationalists and workshop leaders.
- We sustain the livelihood of musicians who contribute not only to our own work but across London's vibrant musical scene through portfolio careers which including chamber music, session work and teaching.
- We protect the rights of freelance musicians, seeking to fill the diary and provide sufficient work for them not to suffer from the stress associated with precarity. The LPO offers around **550 sessions** of work every year.
- We innovate to provide new income streams for musicians. They share in royalties from our cooperative CD label which is celebrating its 20th anniversary and a catalogue of over 100 releases. More recently they have benefitted from payments associated with concerts that are recorded for online streaming and from recording the soundtracks for video games.
- We have gender parity within the orchestral membership and are proactively working to ensure that people from under-represented backgrounds have the opportunity to work within our company.

orchestral music can be enjoyed by as many people as possible – whether as producers or consumers of the product.

We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion and have since 2017 operated a Steering Committee of internal advocates and external experts who meet quarterly to assess and further develop our progress in this area. They are currently stewarding a five-year Inclusivity & Relevance Plan that was developed in 2022. Initiatives in this space which are not already mentioned within this report include the following:



- Alongside our sector colleagues and Black Lives in Music we have contributed to the development of a ten-point plan which aims to reform recruitment to orchestral positions over the coming years by removing opportunities for bias and group-think from recruitment pathways.

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities



Goal Summary: Reduce inequality within & among countries

Much of the activity outlined above in relation to other global goals (health and wellbeing, education, gender equality, decent work) contribute in some measure to this over-arching objective to reduce inequalities, particularly within the UK and the communities in which we work. We are committed, however, to undertaking specific work in this space, and in particular to ensure that the benefits of

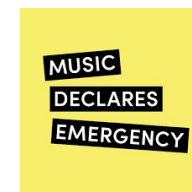
- We have implemented an audio-file only policy for the first round of orchestral auditions, ensuring that every candidate enters on a level playing field and that equity of opportunity is built into the process.
- We are a member of the Award-winning Recruiting Classical consortium which provides a safe space for orchestras to meet musicians who may not present for audition through the traditional channels.
- Just as we have set targets for commissioning of new work from female composers, we also have similar objectives to ensure that we commission at least one composer each year from a Global Majority background. We monitor our programming for representation, benchmarking it against our sector peers on an annual basis.
- We have recently completed the roster of projects in our Rising Talent strand of work with a new mentoring offer for conductors. This programme seeks out the very best emerging conductors internationally from backgrounds that are under-represented in the industry and aims to propel them forward in their careers in what has been, until recently an uneven playing field.
- We proactively seek out opportunities to meet with groups working with under-represented people and to co-create activity with them. We have a strong strand of work on the South Coast of England comprised of fourteen micro-partnerships with grassroots organisations to whom we offer the LPO as a resource to help them fulfil their own charitable objectives. These partnerships utilise the LPO's musicians to help and support people experiencing loneliness, battling with addiction, coping with mental health diagnoses, experiencing disability and those struggling with poverty and lack of access to opportunity. We have plans to expand our activity in this area with a suite of new partnerships in Dover, including work with refugees.

- We work to build cultural capital amongst groups that are under-represented in our audience. Over 50% of the young people attending our Schools Concerts are from the Global Majority.
- Our OrchLab Project, which takes music into care home settings and develops new assistive technology in the form of instruments that can be more easily played by disabled people, has been shortlisted in 2025 for a Digital Cultural Network Award in the Digital Inclusion category.
- We strive to make our art form affordable for audiences. It is possible to attend all of the concerts in our London season from as little as £7 (students, U-18s and those on Universal Credit). There are further discounts for selected concerts for Under-30s. The generosity of public and private funders and sponsors ensures that our Education & Community activity is mostly offered free of charge. We subsidise our Schools Concerts to incentivise attendance by state schools with all tickets available at just £3, allowing this event to fall within the budget of most London schools.

Goal 13: Climate Action



Goal Summary: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.



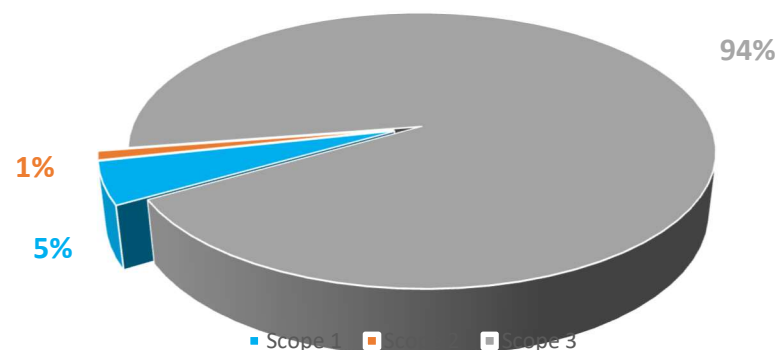
We acknowledge our own contribution to the climate crisis through both direct and indirect emissions of CO₂ or equivalents (CO₂e) and our responsibility to minimise these as part of the global drive towards net zero. Our charitable status and positive contribution to society as outlined against other Global Goals above means that there is necessarily a constant trade-off between carbon cost incurred and social good delivered. We are cognisant of this debate when developing plans, for example, for international touring.

Since the 2022/23 Season we have measured key areas of our impact using the Creative Climate Tools developed by Julie's Bicycle. Owing to unevenness, particularly in international touring activity, we are reporting on the basis of a three-year average. We have just reached the end of the first three-year period, which forms the basis for the information in this report. The reporting includes data on the carbon cost of musician and freight travel for tours, audience travel to venues, power consumption in our office and performance venues, and significant staff business travel.

Average annual emissions across the three-years 2022/23 – 2024/25 were 1,262 tonnes CO₂e. Just 6% of these emissions are in GHG reporting scopes 1 & 2. Scope 1 (5%) is accounted for by gas heating of the company's office (plus allowance for hybrid working by staff for 0.4 of a typical week) and by our diesel-fuelled instrument truck. Scope 2 emissions (1%) are solely electricity usage (again with the home working allowance applied).

94% of our emissions across the period fall into scope 3, over which the LPO has no direct ownership or control. We are by definition a touring organisation. Our most significant carbon emissions relate to the movement of musicians and their instruments (55% of all emissions across scopes 1 & 3) and the travel of our audiences to concerts (27% of our footprint). Live performance and touring are vital to the Orchestra's purpose and business model; as demonstrated elsewhere in this report, these activities deliver a wide range of social good across the sustainability matrix. We will continue to perform, tour and deliver on our charitable mission, while actively taking steps to minimise our carbon footprint wherever possible

LPO average emissions by scope
2022/3 - 2024/5



Mitigations for scopes 1 and 2 already applied include:

- Use of lighter (usually electric) vehicles for transport of small instruments around London.
- Awareness around energy conservation (e.g. lights, fans, computers and windows) in the office context)
- LPO truck uses Euro 5 diesel, the cleanest variant of this type of fuel.

Future plans currently include conversations with the landlord of the Orchestra's office space to move to a green electricity tariff. The LPO truck was last replaced in 2020. As it is a bespoke, adapted vehicle it would not be sustainable to discard it at this stage. The need for a cleaner vehicle will be factored into planning when it is time for the current model to be replaced.

We are working to address scope 3 emissions. This includes adjustments to ongoing policy, practical day-to-day measures and opportunities to use the Orchestra's public voice to amplify the climate message. These include:

- Theming our 2025/6 season *Harmony In Nature*. Alongside historic music inspired by the natural wonders the season features myriad works by today's voices responding to the climate crisis, stimulating debate, calling for action and celebrating the beauty of our planet.
- Gathering information on our footprint for Julie's Bicycle's Creative Carbon Tools, which feeds into ACE's Environmental Sustainability Report. Measuring our impact helps us benchmark and understand where strategic and cost-effective interventions can be made.
- Committing to avoid single international touring dates wherever possible; we have piloted multi-date residencies in Bruges, Tokyo and Hamburg to limit travel between cities.
- Proactively managing tour routings with our partners to avoid internal flights unless absolutely necessary, prioritise train travel in the UK and promote player car-pooling both through financial incentives and use of WhatsApp groups. We also ensure that hotels are booked as close as possible to venues to minimise emissions via transport.
- Serving a Green Rider to promoters engaging the Orchestra and artists performing with us. This sets out our actions in the space, raises awareness and encourages our partners to make similar commitments.
- Reducing the impact of printing with a suite of measures including digital ticketing, using FSC-certified printers and reducing the size of our season brochure by 30% since 2023.

- Joining local and national initiatives including the Lambeth Climate Partnership and Music Declares Emergency, and establishing a network of sustainability managers from ensembles and venues across the UK orchestral music sector to incubate best practice.
- Taking expert advice on our strategy through a pro bono relationship with SLR Consulting, global leaders in sustainability solutions.

Our activity in this area is driven and monitored by a Sustainability Working Group with representatives from each of the administrative departments, a lead Trustee and an Orchestra Player Director. This group drives sustainability within the workforce has produced a multi-point action plan seeking to motivate employees and freelance musicians by illustrating a mix of small individual actions that can be taken as well as larger goals.

There are some areas in which it will be challenging to further reduce environmental impact. For example the Southbank Centre, the primary concert venue for the LPO's self-promoted concerts, is extremely well served by public transport and the vast majority of patrons already travel there by these less-carbon intensive means. We will be reliant on innovation in greener energy and transport to reduce our impact here. We also have less influence on individual behaviour when we are presented by a venue or festival. We commit to working with these organisations where practicable to help them to achieve their own sustainability goals alongside our own.

¹ <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/8466283/going-to-concertscan-help-you-live-longer-stud>

² [Science says qiq-qiong can help you live longer and increases wellbeing - Virgin Media O2](#)

³ McCrary, J.M. *et al.* (2022) Association of Music Interventions With Health-Related Quality of Life. *JAMA Netw Open*. Available: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2790186>

⁴ See resources and references at [The Power of Music Education](#)

⁵ [The State of the Arts | Campaign for the Arts](#)

⁶ Barbara Keeley in Hansard: HC Deb 19 March 2024, vol. 747, col 906

⁷ [The State of the Arts | Campaign for the Arts](#)

⁸ Barbara Keeley in Hansard: HC Deb 19 March 2024, vol. 747, col 906

⁹ [This Is Music 2024 - UK Music](#) – UK Music Annual Report 2024