



# ECCO: 15 YEARS REVIEW

## 2009-2024

Produced to recognise and celebrate the impact of this unique project  
(summary version)

**[www.musikomisika.org/ecco](http://www.musikomisika.org/ecco)**



# ECCO development 2009 to 2024



Sept 2009:  
ECCO founded  
at Kensal Rise  
Primary School



Summer 2015:  
ECCO Tour to Dorset

May 2012:  
ECCO Stonydown  
formed in  
Walthamstow

Sept 2013:  
ECCO North London  
project launches  
school ensembles in  
Haringey, Enfield and  
Barnet with borough  
music hubs

June 2021:  
World Music Academy  
App launches with  
home learning content  
for ECCO



June 2023:  
ECCO performs  
at Lyric Studio,  
welcoming guests,  
the Devon Youth Folk  
Ensemble



Nov 2011:  
ECCO Tour of London,  
visiting schools across  
north London, performing  
to around 600 children and  
adults



June 2012:  
ECCO Kensal Rise

May 2015:  
ECCO Kensal Rise and  
ECCO Stonydown merge  
and make their home at the  
Lyric Hammersmith

Sept 2012:  
ECCO Kensal Rise moves  
to community premises  
(Hazel Road then Beethoven  
Centre)

April 2020:  
ECCO goes online for a year due to  
Covid-19 Pandemic. Home visits  
to the ECCO players to deliver  
resources for music technology  
(laptops, audio interfaces,  
microphones and hand-held video  
cameras), to enable creative  
projects to continue.



Summer 2017:  
ECCO Tour to Wales

Jan 2021:  
ECCO Young Leaders  
launched

October 2021:  
ECCO Young  
Leader tutor work  
placements start

July 2024:  
ECCO  
celebrates 15  
years at the  
Voces Festival



Photo credits: Musiko Musika, Harriet Armstrong, Kevin Hayes

## An individual account of the impact of ECCO

“Being at orchestra every Saturday has been a pleasure, and has often been the highlight of my whole week...

...The community that you have built with the ECCO is something entirely unique, and I have yet to find an activity that provides me with a sense of fulfilment like orchestra has. Listening to your story, and the wisdom you impart on us every week is invaluable. I believe that it is in part what encouraged my interest in politics and equality which is going to shape my future career...

...When I moved from Year 6 to secondary school, I did not have the smoothest transition, but I remember being so excited for orchestra every week. That’s the power that ECCO has. The lessons you have taught me are invaluable and the experiences that you have provided me with will stay with me for life...



**...At orchestra I feel understood and supported in everything I do in and out of ECCO.”**

*ECCO performance at the Voces Festival 2021  
Photo credit Musiko Musika*

# Ethnic Contemporary Classical Orchestra - ECCO

## Our story

ECCO grew out of the Musiko Musika initiative at Kensal Rise Primary School "Our Music, Our Life, Our Future" with an exceptional level of support from the school's then Head, Mrs Joyce Page.



*ECCO 15th anniversary concert July 2024  
Photo credit Julio Etchart*

That project's vision and objective:

The vision for this project is that we nurture and grow the spiritual, intellectual, emotional and social being of each of the participants in order for them to realise their own potential as human beings. In doing so our objective is to embed within the community a structure and social framework that supports and empowers the individual in their struggle for excellence and achievement.

That structure and social framework will be the orchestra.

The ECCO continues to evolve, but our underlying vision and aims remain. Since 2009 the ECCO project has reached over 300 children and young people.

Concerts have taken place in many different locations and types of venues including St Paul's Church Covent Garden, St Ethelburga's Church, Bishopsgate

the South Bank Centre, Lyric Hammersmith  
Tours to Dorset, Wales and Andover have taken the ECCO to rural communities around the country.

## **ECCO Case Studies: A**

### ***Progression routes and career pathways***

'A' is a young musician who has been part of the ECCO shortly after the orchestra was first formed. They started on the violin and over time have embraced the wide extent of the instruments on offer, specialising in Latin American stringed instruments – charango and cuatro, they have also been learning about music technology and PA for live sound with ECCO, at home and their church. When they were considering applying to study theatre production after leaving school they quietly sought advice from a member of our team with a background in theatre on what might be involved and how to approach the interview.



*Former ECCO young musician performing with the Musiko Musika team  
Photo credit Andy Paradise for A New Direction*

Having been offered places to study we then helped them navigate the decision making around whether to accept a conditional offer to study at Guildhall School of Music & Drama or an unconditional offer at a less prestigious institution. This was not a simple choice for the young person, who felt cautious about the risk of a conditional offer in spite of their predicted grades being well aligned with the GSMD offer. It wasn't until we outlined the international reputation of GSMD to the young person and their parent that the opportunity GSMD presented became really clear.

'A' is thriving at GSMD, now in their third year and still very much part of the ECCO community, rehearsing with us and now working in a paid position on the ECCO Young Leaders project.

## Music : Community : Diversity in ECCO

### The **extent of the ECCO repertoire:**

133 separate items of repertoire originating from Europe (including UK), Asia, South America, and encompassing many styles and genres, time periods and origins.

### The **range of instrumentation** of ECCO has included:

violin, viola, cello

Kala U Bass

guitar, charango, cuatro, ukulele, electric guitar

trumpet, sikus (panpipes), flute, clarinet, saxophone

keyboard and piano

tambora costeña, tambora Dominicana, bombo leguero, bombo criollo, cajón, guiro, chajchas, claves, campana, maracas

Cubanas, mirdungam, tañador, cajita Peruano

Native Instruments' Maschine, Lumi keys, electric cajón, electric violin and Yamaha drum pads

### **Projects have included:**

Luchín – a link project with Chile inspired by the work of Chilean songwriter Victor Jara

ECCO Online – during the pandemic ECCO went online for a whole year

Recording at West One Studios

WMA App, enabling ECCO players to access practice and rehearsal materials easily at home through audio and videos produced by Musiko Musika

ECCO Young Leaders, ECCO Electric Band, ECCO First Steps and ECCO Dynamo, all increasing opportunities and progression pathways

ECCO London and summer courses reaching ECCO players in their communities and schools

## **ECCO Case Studies: B**

### ***A supportive and inclusive environment for all***

'B' is a young musician who came to ECCO through participating in one of our other programmes. They have a learning disability and have attended an SEN school throughout their education and have experience of the care system. At the time when we first encountered 'B' they were very shy in social situations and very unconfident about their own abilities, anxious about trying anything new.

A member of our team established a trusting relationship with 'B' and suggested to 'B' and their carer that they try out ECCO – our team member seeing an opportunity for them to develop their musical and social skills further within the supportive framework of ECCO.



'B' has flourished in the environment of ECCO, developing their skills as a percussionist which has enabled them to also take on important musical roles within their church. They are relaxed and confident in the sessions and fully integrated into the social and musical community of ECCO. Last year they were one of three ECCO young musicians invited to perform alongside our band in the Voces Festival Concert.

*ECCO 15th anniversary concert July 2024*  
*Photo credit Julio Etchart*

## Music : Community : Diversity in ECCO

With its focus on social and cultural inclusion currently **84%** of the young musicians involved are **from backgrounds other than white European** and the ensemble also **includes and promotes opportunities for young people with SEN.**



*ECCO ensemble at the Lyric Hammersmith June 2024  
Photo credit Musiko Musika*

### ECCO Family Survey 2024

The socio-economic profile of ECCO families shows 41% are in lower/ intermediate occupations/ full time education.

71% of ECCO families expressed that the impact of the cost of living crisis meant 'things are much more difficult/ things are a bit more difficult'

24% said that they or someone in their family household self-identify as experiencing mental health challenges



## Extracts from Ecco Qualitative Impact Report (Dr Mabel Encinas, June 2024)

### Co-learning and collective ethos: apprenticeship

Ecco is a collaborative project, a community of young people, supported by adults, engaged in producing music. The context created by the orchestra has an apprenticeship format, in which participants learn through hands-on experience.

Playing becomes a serious business in which they seem committed to participate. A mother shared that she never had to encourage her daughter to practice, because she does it by herself; other parents expressed that their children were focused on practicing, exploring, and creating music. Most of the members of the orchestra play more than one instrument (violin, charango, cuatro, and pan pipes, for example) and they also sing. Each participant has a meaningful contribution. Playing the instrument is not only about them as individuals. It is about all of them: the orchestra.

All in all, the model of being a member of the orchestra could be characterised as legitimate peripheral participation (LPP), because newcomers become experienced members and eventually old timers of this collaborative project (Lave & Wenger 1991). Each player's role is needed and they have to pay attention to play their part in the orchestra in the best possible way.

**Ecco's collective ethos is characterised by commitment to the task, enjoyment, and care to support the development of the young musicians that participate and make it be. Ecco is a big family.**

## ECCO is important to the young musicians who take part because...

"It's like a family. It provides an atmosphere of professionalism and growth. It's all about the colours and beauty of music from all around the world."

*David*

"It is a safe space where we can all come and do something we enjoy separate from everyday stresses."

*Chanté*

"Every week when I come in I see everyone smiling to everyone, it's facts. It also can calm you down when you listen to music."

*Francesco*

"It opens doors for me to learn different cultures of music and ways of making/ producing music as well."

*Sebastián*

"It allows younger people to have a community and connect with music."

*Maxie*

"It celebrates different cultures and has a diverse mix of music and has people from all around the world. ECCO also has a range of interesting instruments which helps us discover more."

*Vivian*

## **ECCO Case Studies: C**

### ***Adapting to the needs of young people***

'C' has a very challenging home life due to the mental health circumstances of their mother, a single parent. As a result 'C' themselves also experiences their own issues with anxiety as well as contending with physical health problems alongside supporting their parent.



*ECCO session at the Lyric Hammersmith  
Photo credit Musiko Musika*

The ECCO team adapt communications and support to accommodate the family situation and to ensure that 'C' can take part as fully as they can in all ECCO activities, for example discussing and arranging personalised travel arrangements to/ from concerts.

'C's mother recognises and greatly appreciates the role that ECCO has in the life of their child, believing that ECCO has a key role in her child's life and helping make things manageable: "I am completely blown away and speechless. I do not know how to thank you and the whole of ECCO for everything you have given C. I actually don't have the words. From the bottom of my heart, thank you"



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