

GRAND UNION ORCHESTRA

SELECTED GRAND UNION MUSICIANS' PROFILES

“Grand Union Orchestra – storytelling through authenticity”
Rhythm Passport global music magazine

Zhu Xiao Meng, Shanghai. Gu zheng: Gu zheng (Chinese harp) virtuoso Zhu was born in Shanghai and graduated from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and played the gu zheng with the Shanghai Film Orchestra before moving to Britain. She has been active on the London Chinese music scene for years, and is one of the most prestigious, respected and well-known Chinese musicians in the UK. She has been a regular member of the Grand Union Orchestra and its workshop teams for over 20 years.



Claude Deppa (South Africa) Trumpet, African percussion. : Claude built on his boyhood experience as a brass band trumpeter and drummer, and has developed into one of the UK's most influential jazz musicians. He is well known for his work with other expatriate South African bands and also composes and directs his own bands. Claude also leads the brass section of Kinetika who perform music for carnival processions. He has been with the Grand Union Orchestra since 1984, and is an inspirational teacher and workshop leader.



Yousuf Ali Khan, Bangladesh. Tabla, Dholak, Voice: Yousuf comes from the same famous dynasty of musicians as Ali Akhbar Khan, and began playing tabla at the age of five, later studying in Calcutta. He came to England in 1980 at the invitation of Leicester music service, to help set up South Asian music teaching. He has worked extensively as a music teacher/workshop leader and performer ever since. An internationally-known performer and accompanist for Bangladeshi and Indian musicians visiting the UK, he has worked with GUO for over 20 years.



Louise Elliott, Australia. Tenor Saxophone, Flute: Louise was originally known for her work with Australian cult rock outfits Laughing Clowns and Ed Kuepper. She has worked with distinguished African & South American musicians, including Mervyn Africa and the late Clifford Jarvis and 'Prophets of Jazz', performed with British jazz guitarist Deirdre Cartwright and recorded with Annie Whitehead and Jah Wobble. Louise joined GUO in 1984. Her own ensemble The Jazzhearts, was described as an "African-inspired jazz explosion". Her compositions were premiered at Brighton Festival in 2006 and she often plays at Ronnie Scott's.



Shanti Jayansinha, Sri Lanka/Scotland. Trumpet, Flugelhorn, Cello: A member of the Grand Union Orchestra since 1987, he has played with bands led by Alex Wilson, Tim Garland, Monica Vasconcelos, Snowboy, Etheridge's Zappatistas, Brand New Heavies, Bobby Watson, Ruben Gonzalas, Mike Westbrook Orchestra, and the London Jazz Orchestra. He works extensively in the jazz and world music fields and in the Latin music scene with acclaimed artists like Guillermo Rubalcaba and Frank Emilio Flynn. In New York Shanti played in a duo with Chocolate Armentero and joined Orquesta Broadway on stage.



Carlos Fuentes, Chile. Latin Percussion, Berimbau: Chilean born, Carlos has performed and toured extensively throughout the UK and Europe with many different Latin, Brazilian, jazz and world music projects. He has collaborated with a number of artists including Airto Moreira, John Williams, Yasmin Levy, Joanna Eden, Juan De Marcos (Buena Vista Social Club) and others. His vast teaching experience embraces work for Trinity Laban and Goldsmith's College, delivering a range of workshops and tutoring individually. He currently leads the percussion course at Tech Music School in London.



Gerry Hunt, England. Guitar, saxophones Gerry has been a member of the Grand Union Orchestra since the beginning. His vast repertoire of work includes playing for Robin Jones's King Salsa, the Latin Jazz Sextet, Loose Tubes, Carol Grimes, Roberto Pla's Latin Jazz Ensemble, Davide Mantovani's Quintet, Abdelkader Saadoun's rai-rock group and the Medusa Saxophone Quartet. Gerry currently fronts his own band The Groove Robbers performing around London. He is an experienced teacher and workshop leader and has also worked for the National Theatre and various organisations as musical director.



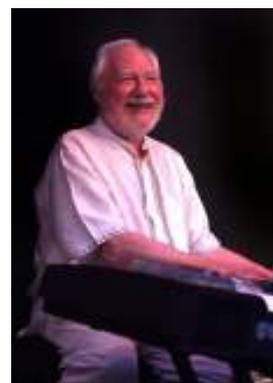
Andres Lafone, Uruguay. Bass guitar. Born in Uruguay but resident in UK for many years, Andy studied bass guitar, composition, guitar and double bass at Guildhall School of Music. He has recorded over 30 albums and appeared at all the major Jazz/World Music Festivals in Europe and other parts of the world including China, Japan, USA, Latin America and South Africa. He is the producer of several albums, and achieved chart 'hits' in Spain and Italy with his compositions 'Cada Vez' and 'Aquela Esquina'. He has also written music for theatre companies, including play 'Maybe Tomorrow' for Kazzum Arts and 'El Pan de Maria' for Tierra Theatre.



Abass Dodoo, Ghana, African drums. Abass was born in Nsawam into a renowned family of drummers, dancers and healers. Before his sixth birthday he was inspired to play the drum by his grandmother who taught him drumming by singing traditional rhythms. Apart from running numerous workshops and masterclasses Abass has toured legendary jazz venues and festivals around the globe and has been involved in countless recordings. He runs educational workshops for people of all ages and abilities to participate in – jazz rhythms and improvisation as well as authentic Ghanaian music and dance.



Tony Haynes, England, GUO composer/director. Originally self-taught, Tony studied music at Oxford and Nottingham Universities. The turning point in his career came when he became Musical Director of Nottingham Playhouse in 1968 and Liverpool Everyman from 1970. Throughout the 1970s he wrote music for all the major regional repertory theatres, including the RSC. He co-founded Grand Union in 1982, and as general artistic director has composed most of its music, which has been extensively toured, recorded and broadcast.



His many full-length touring shows for Grand Union include Strange Migration, The Song of Many Tongues, Songlines, The Rhythm of Tides, Now Comes the Dragon's Hour, Where the Rivers Meet, Doctor Carnival, If Paradise, and The Golden Road, the Unforgiving Sea (commissioned by BBC Radio 3 for Grand Union Orchestra with the BBC Concert Orchestra.) Features on his work and that of the GUO are broadcast regularly by UK national radio and TV. He has also produced similar projects worldwide, notably in Lisbon, Paris, Bangladesh and Melbourne. Tony's regular blog, gives a detailed insight into Grand Union's musicians, repertoire and the context and background to the shows. <https://tonyhaynesmusic.wordpress.com/>

The Grand Union Orchestra website has full details of all our work
<http://grandunion.org.uk>

These articles describe Grand Union's artistic and educational practice:
<https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/article/new-attitudes-music-making>
<https://musiceducation.global/grand-union-orchestra-nurturing-the-second-generation/>
<http://grandunion.org.uk/perch/resources/music-teacher-magazine-june-19.pdf>

20 minute video of highlights from our last Hackney Empire show, Undream'd Shores:
<https://youtu.be/CIG45mYj2Dg>

RECENT GRAND UNION ORCHESTRA PROJECTS AND RESPONSES



“The Grand Union vision is music that represents [East London’s] demographics, music that blends different cultures in a powerful way and represents the society around it.” (Roman Road)



“**Grand Union Orchestra** stands strong in its ambition to reach the widest of audiences through its music.” (Bethnal Greeners Series)

“Grand Union Orchestra has spent decades playing and personifying an ethic of joyous cooperation onstage. They’re a living rebuttal to British insularity” (MisFit City)



“Mainstream the **Grand Union Youth Orchestra** is not. Difference is to be celebrated here, not shied away from, it is rooted in the orchestra’s history and its current creative output. What makes [it] so unique is that it encourages complete creativity. It is certainly an exhilarating environment to learn in.” (Music Teacher Magazine – June 2019)

“Without playing in the Grand Union Youth Orchestra I wouldn’t be half the musician I am today” (Kei Patrick, GUYO founder-member)





“The **Grand Union Orchestra All Stars**.....brought the spirit of New Orleans from over 100 years ago [to Trinity Buoy Wharf] tinged with a strong Asian flavour that would literally blow your minds. I have never heard anything like it ever; I LOVED it! There were tracks that had reggae vibes, tracks that were perfectly suited to a film score and tracks composed by a member of the orchestra. I can't put into words just how talented all of the musicians were; I left feeling rather envious of the skills!” (Squibb Vicious)

“it was happy, buoyant jazz that felt like it was really celebrating something, and I loved how global the band were!” (Loving Living London)

Uncharted Crossings

‘Had an incredible evening w/ @carolewilliams watching @Grand_union Orchestra's Uncharted Crossings @ShoreditchTH. Diversity, varied musical traditions, ideas, collaboration & passion all on stage celebrating & responding to the legacy of Windrush’.
(Philip Glanville @mayorofhackney Mayor, London Borough of Hackney)

‘Pleased’ doesn’t even begin to describe how much I enjoyed the show. I’m still buzzing. I was transported back in time to the first live performance of Sweet Honey in the Rock I attended’.
(Cllr Carole Williams @carolewilliams Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills & Human Resources.)

“Grand Union Orchestra.....a group of exceptional artists in London making original cross-cultural music. They are a band that celebrate diversity as an emphatic theatrical art form and use music to overcome prejudicial gaps.”
(Rhythm Passport - July 2019)



“It’s powerful stuff and comes from a place of passion, integrity and protest. Again and again, the show delivers gut-punching, heart-wrenching messages about politicians’ self-interest, media headlines, corporate lobbying and national guilt... the musical performances match the clarity, scope and ambition of the vision.”
(Cathy Clethero, Music-Ed UK reviewing Song of Contagion)