

The London Vegetable Orchestra

MUSIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

By **Patrick Johns**, MTA Podcast Host

As you may now have seen in the recent announcement from Caroline Robinson, the after-dinner entertainment for the MTA Conference has been confirmed, and I have to confess to being involved.

Yes, the London Vegetable Orchestra will be performing, and it's a group I've played with since 2018. I should probably explain...

As the name suggests, the group performs music exclusively on vegetables, unless you want to be extremely pedantic – as I usually am – and note that the butternut squash on which I blast out tuba-esque basslines is – botanically speaking – a berry. (I can think of one former MTA president who will be particularly pleased at that pedantry.)

The group was founded in 2010, when Tyrrell's crisps contacted the UK's last remaining professional recorder-maker, Tim Cranmore, and asked if he'd be able to make an instrument out of a potato for an advert. As all good freelancers do, Tim said 'Yes', and worried about the details later!

He attempted – successfully, thank goodness! – to turn a carrot into a recorder, and then placed an advert in the Royal Academy of Music, looking for open-minded students to join him in playing vegetable instruments. Through significant amounts of trial and error, the advert was made, but never released. However, several of the students decided, with Tim, that it had been so much fun that they should carry on, and the London Vegetable Orchestra (LVO) was born!

Since then, the LVO has performed all across the UK, and around the world, including educational and instrument-crafting workshops, more advertising campaigns, and – of course – live performances.

We've collaborated with pop star Mika, and appeared in an advertising project for LG, which reached 40 million hits worldwide. We've appeared many times on national TV, including This Morning, Ant and Dec's Saturday



Night Takeaway (performing with Gary Barlow), Room 101, The Chris McCausland Show, James Martin's Saturday Morning, BBC Breakfast, and Good Morning Britain, where we were joined by presenters Ed Balls and Ranvir Singh for an impromptu performance!

In November 2024, we collaborated with Ginsters Pasties for a West End show called 'The Farmonic Orchestra', and a month later, a video of our rendition of Jingle Bells (performed on BBC Radio 3), went viral on Instagram, quickly gaining over 12 million views!

We were subsequently invited by King Charles III to perform at a reception at Windsor Castle on 3rd April 2025, and during the reception, the King joined us for an impromptu

performance of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, with His Majesty playing the carrot! Footage of this was shown on news channels worldwide, including shows such as Jimmy Kimmel (USA) and Have I Got News for You (UK), plus the magazine Private Eye. Seasonal sponsorship with Morrisons supermarket followed, superseded in early 2026 by a collaboration with HelloFresh, and La Voix.

We now have over 39,000 followers, and our videos are watched on Instagram and TikTok by thousands of veg-loving musical connoisseurs across the globe every day.

I'm so happy to bring our vegetable silliness to the MTA conference! And yes, we can eat the instruments afterwards!