ABOUT THE VERY SPECIAL ARTS ASSOCIATION OF LITHUANIA GUBOJA

VSA Lithuania GUBOJA is a non-governmental organisation founded in 1992. The organisation has its branches and partners in 10 towns and regions of Lithuania and abroad (the Netherlands, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Rusia etc.). It is a member of the International VSA (The International Organization on Arts and Disability) of the USA.

Objective of GUBOJA is to help the disabled young people and adults to develop their intercommunicative relations and practical abilities, make their lives more interesting and happy and the process of integration and adaptation more efficient and rapid. GUBOJA offers programs promoting participants’ self-sufficiency and independent living through the programs in the music, visual, performing and literary arts, participants are introduced to alternative ways of viewing the world.

Every year about 2000-4000 disabled and able people (of which about 1500 are youth) participate in the projects of GUBOJA (international and national festivals, workshop, exchange of good experience, seminars, summer camps, exhibitions, other events). Our organisation, in cooperation with concerned municipalities, has established 4 centres for engagement of the disabled in Vilnius, Alytus, Kupiskis, and Druskininkai, which annually provide various social services to about 120-200 disabled (about 100 youngsters), of which 10-20 are being employed. The biggest cultural event of VSA Lithuania "Guboja" is the annual national exhibition, fair and concert of the disabled Tau, Vilniau! (For you, Vilnius!) (organised from 2003 in Vilnius, Lithuania), in which annually about 2000 disabled and non-disabled people participate (of which 500-800 are youth people from all over Lithuania).

Since the very start of its activity, VSA Lithuania GUBOJA has paid great attention for individual improvement of the disabled children and young people gifted in music, and their creative cooperation with able professional musicians. For this purpose, national contest-festival of the young disabled music performers "Perliukai" ("The Pearls") was organised (I – 2005-2006, II – 2009-2010, III – 2013-2014, IV – 2017-2018). The disabled and able children and youngsters (5 - 29 years of age) from all over Lithuania took part in this national integrated educational event of young singers and instrumentalists. The event was aimed at improving the musical self-
expression and creativity of the disabled children and youngsters, selecting the best vocal and instrumental bands and soloists, creating conditions for their musical debuts and cooperation with able professional musicians. Such educational project was beneficial also for young able people gifted in music, who performed in prestigious halls, received consultations by music specialists and acquired diverse experience.

Since the very beginning, GUBOJA has been promoting and supporting musical groups of disabled people, assisting with their activities. Disabled people’s musical movement organised by VSA Lithuania GUBOJA was especially brightened up in 1995, when colour methodology which came from the Netherlands was applied first, allowing to mark notes and their equivalents on the instruments in respective colours. This approach helps people with disabilities to acknowledge sounds of musical world more easily, teaches them to play various musical instruments.

**THE NATIONAL COLOUR MUSIC ORCHESTRA**

Following the first applications of the innovative colour methodology, Viktorija Vitaite, Head of VSA Lithuania GUBOJA initiated the creation of the Lithuanian National Colour Music Orchestra in 1998, which was then based on regional groups within Lithuania, allowing large scale integration of people with disabilities from different areas across the country. Subsequently, Romualdas Bruzga was elected as Chief Conductor and Head of Art. Orchestra’s workshops, camps, traditional festivals and concerts are being held from 1999.

The National Colour Music Orchestra performs regularly in Lithuania, including at the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Lithuania, Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, but also abroad, in countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Russia.

At the moment the National Colour Music Orchestra has consists of 50 musicians, of which all have mental disabilities are between 18 and 50 years old. The musicians come from different cities and participate in regional activities - Colour music groups.

The Orchestra is constantly joined by people with vision, physical, complex or other disabilities for specific performances.
ASSISTANCE THAT IS NEEDED

In order to high quality standards of working with the integration of people with disabilities into the society, our organization would be delighted to receive some financial or material assistance.

The assistance could be in one of the following forms: financial (to cover the operational costs, e.g.: helping us to arrange event for disabled people), material (due to ageing equipment, new laptop computers and/or tablets could be of much help). We are happy to consider and discuss the form and size of support that could be provided for the NGO.

In case of any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, Viktorija Vitaite, Head of VSA Lithuania GUBOJA at viktorija@guboja.lt