

In celebration of the National Day of Romania.

An explosive, high-spirited performance of:

Romanian Christmas Customs

Sunday, 30 November, 11:40 – Covent Garden Market, London.

Monday, 1 December, 11:00 – Observatory Shopping Centre, Slough.

Monday, 1 December, 18:00 – Royal Automobile Club, London.

organised by



**EMBASSY OF
ROMANIA
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**ROMANIAN
CULTURAL
INSTITUTE**

with kind support from

Westminster City Council
Covent Garden London
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Romanian Christmas Customs



The Colinda Ensemble

Established in 1975 by Cezar Neacsu, in the village of Matau in the fields of Southern Romania, the Colinda Ensemble brings together 39 professional and amateur peasant artists, aged from 11 to 75. They are joined by singer Teodora Paunescu-Tuca. The group performs traditional Romanian Christmas carols which bring to life ancient rituals & mythic characters such as the Bear and the Goat, reminiscing demonic gods originated in Romanian folklore. They wear traditional peasant costumes & striking ritual masks.

Christmas Carols

On Christmas Eve, from midnight until dawn, the streets are bursting with Romanian carolers' voices singing traditional Christmas carols. They go wassailing from door to door and under lit windows, wishing health and joy to their hosts, from which they receive gifts like money or nuts, apples and pretzels.



The Goat

A woman wearing a wooden mask and a brightly coloured costume cavorts and twirls, clattering its wooden jaws to the rhythm of the pipes. Goat's lively performance is meant to scare away the fear and curses.



The Bear

A young masked man wearing the coat of a bear is followed by a procession of costumed children and adults who sing: Dance well, you old bear / Because I give you bread and olives. The bear stomps his feet to the beat of drums and pipes. His dance symbolises the death of the old year and the birth of the new one.



The Star

To announce the birth of Christ, children make a star from paper with Jesus icon in the centre. While holding the star they sing: *The star has appeared on high / Like a big secret in the sky / The star is bright / May all your wishes turn out right.*



Plugusorul

On the New Year's Eve, teenagers and children bearing whips, bells, pipes and a little plough go wassailing wishing a fruitful harvest to those who open their doors to them. The plough is a symbol of fertile fields in the New Year.

Sorcova

On the morning of 1st January, children go from house to house with Sorcova, a bouquet of flowers and multicoloured ribbons, which they touch lightly on the shoulders of the house holder, bestowing wealth and good luck: *Sorcova, the merry Sorcova / Long may you live / Long may you flourish / Like apple trees / Like pear trees / In midsummer / Like the rich autumn / Overflowing with abundance / Hard as steel / Fast as an arrow / For many years to come / Happy New Year!*