

A TRULY ULSTER ORCHESTRA

MUSIC SURVEY

When the idea of a new full-time professional orchestra for Northern Ireland was mooted a year or two ago many doubts were expressed about the possibility of recruiting, let alone supporting, such a body of players.

The boldness of imagination and the energy of execution shown by the Arts Council in being able to provide us now with an orchestra of our own speak well for the future of music here.

Thirty seven concerts have been planned for the next three months, with no fewer than twenty-one to be given in centres outside Belfast. This latter fact, emphasised by Derry being the venue for the opening public concert, make this indeed an Ulster Orchestra, and it should no longer be possible for towns outside Belfast to feel that the capital city receives more favourable treatment than the rest of the province.

The biographical sketches of the personnel of the new orchestra suggest that we have a skilled and experienced corps of players who by virtue of playing together consistently at concerts and rehearsals week by week should soon be moulded into an ensemble with a sense of unity and direction.

In the arts as in any other aspect of life we desperately need to keep our sights high. The continual influx of new blood and new ideas is imperative and it is a welcome plan to introduce guest conductors of the calibre of Walter Susskind.

The orchestra will have its formal inauguration in the City Hall, Belfast, on Wednesday evening when; it will play a short programme which can be heard on the BBC Home Service.

The opening public concert in Derry on Friday evening will have Zara Nelsova as soloist in Haydn's Cello Concerto in D, and will include Schubert's Sixth Symphony.

The first Belfast concert will be given at lunchtime on Tuesday, October 4, in the War Memorial Hall, and the first of the Ulster Hall evening concerts on Friday, October 21.

Concerts for schools will be given regularly throughout the province, and these with the rest of the ambitious plans already made for this year, should and must be given the widest support to ensure that the Arts Council's achievements are recognised by the public's response.

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