



Musical Times



A chronology of selected highlights, five years at a time, celebrating the Ulster Orchestra's history.

A new edition will be available at each of the UO's Friday season concerts in this 50th anniversary season.

This week: 1960s and orchestral life before the UO

Before the Ulster Orchestra launches in 1966, Belfast and key regional centres are served by the part-time City of Belfast Orchestra (CBO) – managed and funded by CEMA (the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, forerunner of the current Arts Council of NI), in association with Belfast Corporation.

Founded by CEMA in 1950 and described as 'approximately 70 strong', the CBO's Principal Conductor from 1955 onwards is the distinctive white-headed Maurice Miles. The players, a mix of semi-professional and professional players, rely on the availability of musicians from the BBC Northern Ireland Light Orchestra and the band of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. David Adams, leader of the BBCNILO, is also leader of the CBO.

1961 BBC Symphony Orchestra, cond. Rudolf Schwarz, gives two Ulster Hall concerts.

1962 BBC Home Service live relay from Ulster Hall: CBO / Maurice Miles, Moura Lympny, piano.

1963 CEMA becomes the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

1964 BBC Symphony Orchestra, cond. Colin Davis, gives two Ulster Hall concerts.

Michael Emmerson appointed first Director of the QUB-based Belfast Festival.

'We want a full-time orchestra' banner appears on the Ulster Hall organ before the first CBO concert of the 64/65 season (with pianist Shura Cherkassky).

CBO 64/65 season: ten concerts (two in Ballymena) plus six with the Belfast Philharmonic Society Chorus, and six Schools' Concerts (two in Ballymena). The strings give 14 Schools' Concerts (two each in Ballymoney and Carrickfergus). Soloists include oboist Leon Goossens, soprano Florence Innis (a pupil of Frank Capper at the beginning of her career), violinist Ralph Holmes and pianists Michael Roll, John Lill and Stephen Bishop.

Music includes Howard Ferguson's Piano Concerto, commissioned by CEMA(NI) for the 1951 Festival of Britain, and premières of Raymond Warren's First Symphony (Belfast Festival) and Kurt Roger's Concerto for Two Horns.

BBC Music Programme broadcasts during daytime on Third Programme frequency.

1965 BBC Music Programme now full-time (changing to BBC Radio 3 two years later).

David Curry retires after 16 years as Principal Conductor of the BBC Northern Ireland Light Orchestra. Terence Lovett succeeds him; players' part-time contracts

replaced with full-time ones; playing strength increases from 21 to 30. The orchestra renamed BBC Northern Ireland Orchestra.

Result: CBO 65/66 season concerts reduced 'because members of the BBCNIO will not be available as often as previously, owing to heavier broadcasting commitments'.

Belfast Festival features three orchestras: CBO, BBC NIO and the RTÉ Symphony Orchestra. Festival's Composer of the Year is Seán Ó Riada.

1966 ACNI Chairman Capt. Peter Montgomery, a musician and conductor, and ACNI Director Michael Whewell negotiate increased Arts Council monies to set up its own orchestra – the Ulster Orchestra. Donald Froud appointed as the first UO Manager. Principal Conductor Maurice Miles; leader János Fürst.

Inauguration Concert: the Lord Mayor and Corporation of Belfast hosts a reception in the City Hall, Belfast on Wednesday, 28 September 1966. Concert (45 minutes) of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Grainger and Rossini, broadcast live on the BBC Home Service.

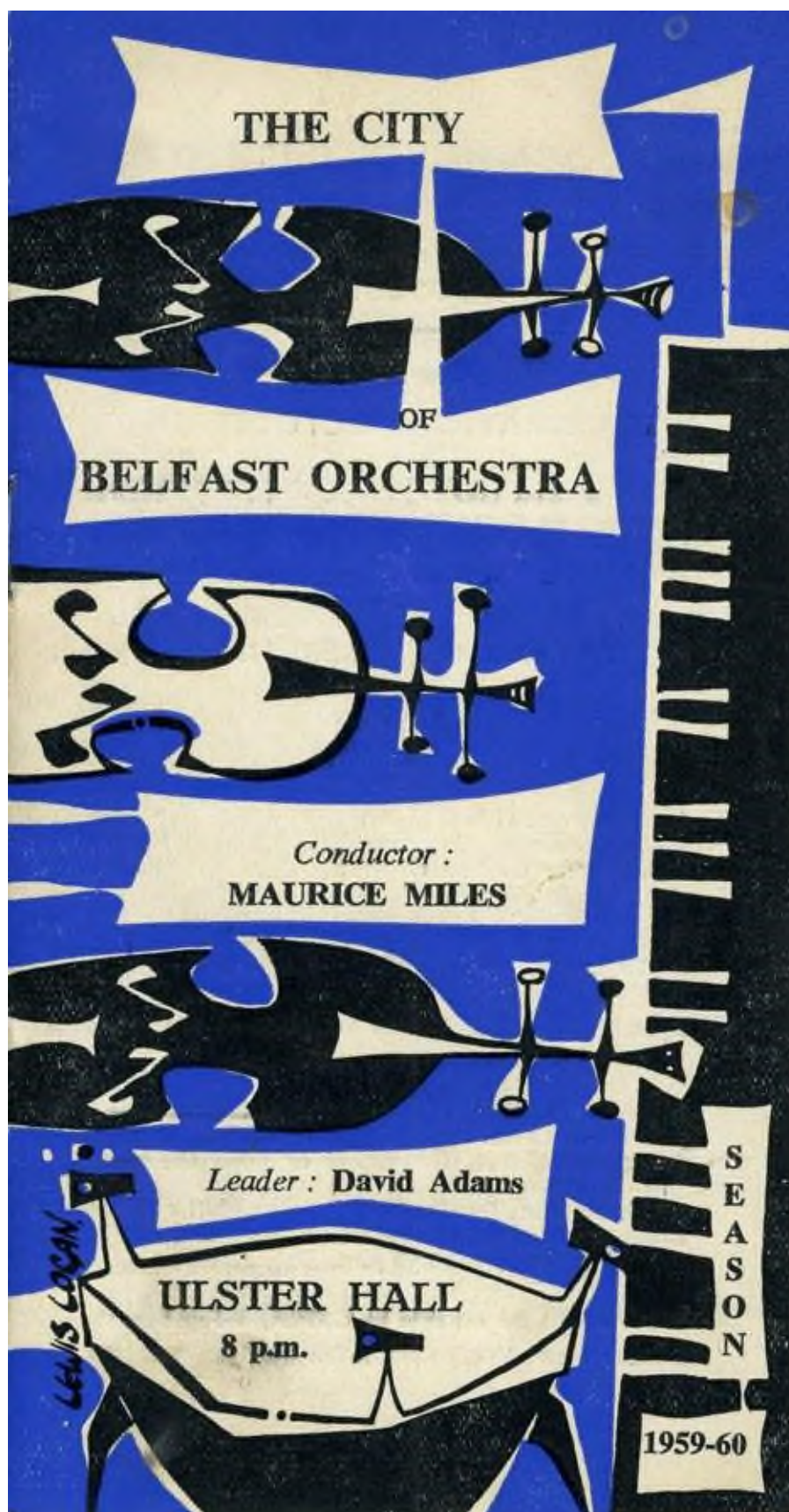
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Next week: 1966-1971

Three illustrations relevant to the above pages (see also byersmusic.com):



Season brochure 1959/60. Graphic design by Lewis Logan.



January 1965

ARTS COUNCIL
OF NORTHERN IRELAND
in association with the
BELFAST CORPORATION

presents the

**CITY OF
BELFAST
ORCHESTRA**

**FRIDAY
POPULAR
CONCERTS**

**JANUARY TWENTY-NINTH
ULSTER HALL - 8 P.M.**

**SEASON
1964-65**





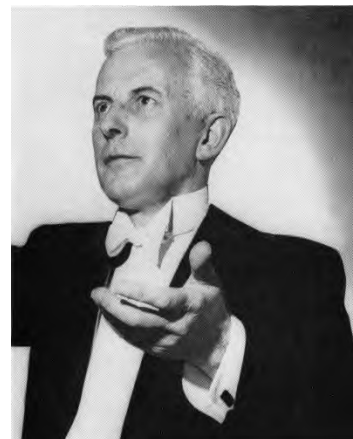
Musical Times



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This week: The UO's earliest years: 1966-1971

Maurice Miles, pictured on the right, for 10 years the City of Belfast Orchestra's conductor, was the UO's first Principal Conductor. Many players came from Dublin, including pupils of Professor Jaroslav Vanecek – like János Fürst, the UO's first leader.



- 1966** Inauguration Concert (45 minutes) hosted by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of Belfast on Wed, 28 Sept., in Belfast City Hall.
First public concert in the Girls' High School, Derry/Londonderry, Fri. 30 Sept.
First Lunchtime Concert, Tues. 4 Oct., in the War Memorial Hall, Waring Street, Belfast.

Concert programmes include: 'This is the inaugural season of the Ulster Orchestra – an orchestra of thirty-eight players formed by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The object of the Council in forming the Orchestra is to bring the highest standards of music to every town in the Province. It is the first time that Ulster has had a fully professional orchestra "on the road".'

After concerts in Derry, Belfast, Newry, Strabane, Banbridge, Larne, Cookstown, Coleraine, Enniskillen and Dungannon, the opening concert of the Belfast main season on Fri. 21 Oct in the Ulster Hall features John Ogdon playing Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto.

Belfast concert on 2 Dec. features cellist Paul Tortelier with his violinist son Yan Pascal and daughter pianist Maria de la Pau.

Invitation to concert-goers to join the Ulster Orchestra Association. Also a plea for people to buy 'series' tickets and to make a direct donation to the UO. 'The Orchestra's aim must be to consolidate its income; if possible, even to build reserves of capital, in order to ensure the highest of professional and international standards.'

- 1967** 21 Jan., Whitla Hall, QUB, Malcolm Williamson plays his Piano Concerto No.2
21 Feb, soprano Florence Innis sings Mozart's *Exsultate jubilate*, K.165, at a Wellington Hall Lunchtime Concert.
Season guest conductors include Sergiu Comissiona, Edgar Cosma, Kenneth Montgomery and Alun Francis.

Advertisement for a writer of programme notes produces 'two dozen or so' applicants. Four ('three from Ulster') were shortlisted and Anne McConnell, a former pupil of Princess Gardens, is selected.

A Saturday concert of *Modern Music and Modern Jazz* with the John Dankworth Trio and Cleo Laine includes Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*.

30 June – Athlone Festival with tenor Louis Browne.

2 July – RDS, Ballsbridge, concert with pianist John Ogdon.

Maurice Miles resigns after first season; no replacement for 67/68; Regional concerts considerably reduced due to costs. Average attendance of 1,000 at 14 Ulster Hall concerts (66/67 season)

1968 Sergiu Commissiona appointed Principal Conductor. Stays for one season.
Janos Fürst appointed Assistant Conductor.
Raymond Warren appointed Resident Composer.
Civil Rights marches begin.

1969 Edgar Cosma appointed as Principal Conductor.



British troops deployed in NI after rioting and bombing.

Sizeable UO deficit for 1968/69. The Ministry of Finance finds that the UO has been underfunded from the outset. Musicians' salaries had been underestimated. 'It is a fairly safe forecast that this state of affairs will be with us for as far ahead as one can envisage'. 'Outside engagements were uncommonly rare', so one solution might be 'to induce the BBC to wind up its regional orchestra in Northern Ireland and to rely on the Ulster Orchestra for a number of broadcasts'.

June: UO's Anti-Proms season in Belfast's Wellington Hall – no standing!
UO October tour of the North of England and Scotland.

1970 Backdrop of rioting and shootings.
Jan-Mar – Beethoven Bicentenary Concerts
Apr – UO at North-West Arts Festival
November – Concert for RDS in Dublin with proceeds to Dublin and Belfast Housing Societies.

1971 Escalating violence. Meanwhile:
March – UO at RDS, Dublin, for Haydn's *Creation*.
May – UO accompanies Ulster Choirs' Festival (part of Ulster '71 festival)
June – UO at Castletown House, Dublin,
with clarinettist Gervase de Peyer and violinist Yan Pascal Tortelier.
October – Scottish tour by UO.
November – James Galway plays Mozart and Jolivet concertos.

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Next time (21 Oct.): 1972-1976



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This week: 1972-1976

1972 Roland Stanbridge succeeds Meyer Stelow as Leader.

Concerts proceed despite The Troubles. Composers' Competition launched - the Ulster Orchestra 1972 Awards - with 'a modest cash prize and the free copying of orchestral parts - itself a costly process'. Awards presented and winning works performed, Wellington Hall, 9 September 1972.

Trevor Moore *The Wanderings of Oirra* (Under 18, 1st prize)

Maurice Hodges *Scherzo* (Under 18, 2nd prize)

Alan Murdock *Path to Peace* (Over 18, 1st prize)

Alec Macdonald *Threnoidia An Abercorn Memorial* (Over 18, 2nd prize)

May: NI Opera Trust with UO – Verdi *Macbeth* and Donizetti *L'Elisir d'amore* – In late April, a bomb at the side of the Europa Hotel seriously damaged the Grand Opera House. At short notice, NIOT's productions were transferred to the Grove Theatre, Shore Road.

Sept: English tour incl. Colchester, Croydon, Nottingham and Bedford. Edgar Cosma, Béla de Csilléry and Alun Francis shared the conducting honours.

1973 Marion Turner succeeds Roland Stanbridge as Leader.

'At the request of the Northern Ireland Arts Council, preliminary discussions have taken place on the possibility of a merger between the BBC Northern Ireland Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra. The new orchestra, it is suggested, might employ between 50 and 60 players and would be jointly financed. It would divide its time between broadcasting and giving public concerts.' Nothing came of the discussions.

June: Summer Proms at Balmoral and out and about, including Castletown House, Co Kildare and Buncrana, Co Donegal.

11-31 Oct: Extensive English-Scottish tour, incl. Stirling, Stranraer, Carlisle, Newcastle, Grimsby, Leicester, Lancaster and Manchester.

1974 Soprano soloist for Viennese concerts was Norma Burrowes.

Dennis Benson replaces Marion Turner as Leader.

Summer Proms now beginning in mid-May.

23 May: Ulster Museum concert transferred to Harty Room, QUB, because of the Ulster Workers' Strike. "The Management of the Ulster Orchestra wishes to express its deep appreciation and gratitude to the Queen's University Music Department for giving a home to this concert at the last minute; to the conductor, soloist and

musicians who have persevered through great difficulties to prepare and present this concert; and to all who have helped and encouraged in any way – not least the audience.”

24 May: Ulster Museum concert cancelled.

21 June: Edgar Cosma’s last concert as Principal Conductor.

Alun Francis appointed Resident Conductor and Artistic Director.

27, 28 July: UO at Killarney Bach Festival.

1975 Viennese Concerts with Canticle, director Brian Hunter.

Pan Hon Lee appointed as Leader

8 Oct: UO’s ‘first appearance in London’, Queen Elizabeth Hall, for the Redcliffe Concerts of British Music. Alun Francis conductor, Raphael Sommer, cello. Programme includes Gerard Schurmann’s Variants and Francis Routh’s Cello Concerto

1976 8 Oct. Tenth Anniversary Concert. New work by Alun Francis: ‘written in the summer of this year in London and Tehran’ (in May, Francis had been appointed Music Director of Tehran Opera). ‘He has dedicated this work to all the people of Ulster.’

Compiled by David Byers ByersMusic.com

Next time (28 Oct.): 1977-1981

Some pics follow on the next four pages:

ULSTER ORCHESTRA



SUMMER CONCERTS IN BALMORAL



Alun Francis



Marion Turner, leader (1973)



Norma Burrowes, soprano Dec.73



1976



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This week: 1976-1981

- 1976 November: The UO joins with Opera Rara and the NI Opera Trust (NIOT) Chorus for Mercadante's opera *Virginia* at the Belfast Festival (then Queen's University Festival). Cast included Janet Price and John Tomlinson. Bootleg recordings available shortly afterwards!
- 13-17 December: Different Christmas Lunchtime Concerts each day. Conductors were Prof. David Greer, Leonard Pugh, Michael Swallow, Malcolm Fletcher and Donald Leggat.
- 1977 Bryden Thomson appointed Principal Conductor.
- April: NIOT with UO for three performances each of *Faust* and *Rigoletto*.
- 17 June: Norman Del Mar conducts UO for a Coronation Silver Jubilee concert.
- 8 October: Candy Devine narrates *Tubby the Tuba* for a UO Family Concert in the Wellington Hall
- November: Festival '77 opens (10th) with conductor Kenneth Montgomery and contralto Bernadette Greevy (Elgar's *Sea Pictures*), then (16th) Owain Arwel Hughes conducts Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with Belfast Phil, and closes (26th) with conductor Pinchas Steinberg and pianist John Lill in an all-Beethoven concert.
- 1978 Guest conductors included Ole Schmidt, Enrique Bátiz and Maurice Miles. Soloists include pianists Louis Kentner, Peter Katin, Míceál O'Rourke and John O'Connor, oboists Evelyn Barbirolli and Han de Vries, violinist Yossi Zivoni, cellists Heinrich Schiff and Mischa Maisky, and bassoonist George Zukerman.
- Studio Opera Group (SOG) with UO, conductor Havelock Nelson, in the Arts Theatre, Belfast, with (in May) Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl* and Rossini's *Cenerentola* (three performances of each) and (in October) Auber's *Fra Diavolo* (three perf.) and Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* (two perf.).
- November: UK première of Donizetti's *Gabriella di Vergy* for Opera Rara at Festival '78.
- 1979 Soloists include pianists Stephen Hough, Moura Lympany, Malcolm Binns, David Wilde and Cristina Ortiz; violinists Ralph Holmes, Erich Gruenberg and Dong-Suk Kang; organist Desmond Hunter, soprano Heather Harper; choirs, apart from the Belfast Phil and the Linenhall in Ballymena, included Canticle and the New Belmont Consort.
- April: NIOT in concert with Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* (Ulster Hall and Ballymena) and Verdi's *Aida* (Ulster Hall and Guildhall, Derry/Londonderry).

June: UO's first commercial recordings – LPs of music by Hamilton Harty for Chandos Records Ltd. Recordings sponsored by the Ulster Orchestra Association with financial assistance from the Northern Bank and the Arts Council of NI (ACNI). Bryden Thomson, conductor, with violinists Ralph Holmes and Pan Hon Lee.

October: With conductors Havelock Nelson and Michael McGuffin, the SOG presents *Don Giovanni* (three perf.) and a double bill of Vaughan Williams' *Riders to the Sea* and Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*.

November: BBC Television relays the Festival Opening Concert with conductor Kenneth Montgomery, violinist Ruggiero Ricci and soprano Yvonne Kenny. Includes Harty's *The Children of Lir*.

1980 February: After concerts in Mullingar, Killarney, Dublin, Cork and Wexford with violinist Geraldine O'Grady (but pianist John O'Connor in Dublin), the UO travels to London, St John's Smith Square, 29 Feb., for *A Sense of Ireland* festival, 'presenting the best of the Irish Arts, North and South'. Sheila Armstrong sings Berlioz's *Nuits d'été*. Programme also features John Kinsella's *The Wayfarer, Rhapsody on a poem of Patrick Pearse*.

1 June: Beginning of Musicians' Union nine-week strike by musicians in BBC Orchestras.

16 June: UO in Glasgow for Scottish National Orchestra Proms.

1 August: MU strike ends. BBC Northern Ireland Orchestra to be disbanded. BBC to contribute funding to an enlarged UO in return for a specified broadcast output and the employment of redundant BBC musicians. Discussions ensue ...

15 September: Gala Evening with UO to celebrate the re-opening of the Grand Opera House. Guest artists include Heather Harper, Denys Hawthorne, Colin Blakely and a surprise – Frank Carson.

Christmas Concert conductor and soloist is Max Jaffa.

1981 26 February: Concert in Limerick with the Limerick Choral Union.

10 March: Dublin Concert with Bryden Thomson and John Lill, piano, for the 250th anniversary of the Royal Dublin Society.

The Ulster Orchestra becomes independent of Arts Council management. The Ulster Orchestra Society Ltd., is established as a company, limited by guarantee. The new Board's first Chairman is W. Stratton Mills; its General Administrator, Roger Lloyd, formerly UO Second Clarinet. The UO breaks new ground with its mix of public and private funding with the Arts Council, BBC, Belfast City Council and Gallaher Ltd. ACNI, as now, is the largest funder; the BBC's partnership brings vital additional funding through payments for broadcasts and exposure across the UK and far beyond. Gallaher is the NI company helping to bridge the financial shortfall by funding special concerts and sponsoring commercial recordings.

1 May: First concert with newly enlarged UO.

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Next time (25 Nov.): 1981-1986

Next page: Bryden Thomson, Music Director, Ulster Orchestra.



Bryden Thomson



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This week: 1981-1985

- 1981 Newly enlarged (37 to 55 players) and independent, the Ulster Orchestra under its Principal Conductor Bryden Thomson (appointed 1977) embarks on a revitalised concert season – including a fair share of opera weeks.

April – NI Opera Trust (NIOT): Mozart *Così fan tutte* and Verdi *Macbeth*.

May – Studio Opera Group (SOG): Humperdinck *Hansel and Gretel* and Offenbach *La belle Hélène*.

October – SOG: Rossini *The Barber of Seville* and Haydn *La Canterina* with Donizetti *Upstage, downstage*.

November – Wexford Festival Opera at the Belfast Festival: Mozart *Zaide*.

Richard Howarth appointed Leader. Season includes a major series of Gallaher Concerts.

First *Sonorities* Festival of 20th Century Music held in April with John Carewe conducting Stravinsky, George Newson, Webern and Ravel.

Concerts given in Galway and Kilkenny (August) and the National Concert Hall (NCH), Dublin (October).

Visiting conductors during the season include Maurice Handford, Ivan Fischer, George Hurst, Kenneth Montgomery and Vernon Handley.

Pianists include Shura Cherkassky, Michael Roll, Pascal Rogé, Howard Shelley, Stephen Bishop-Kovacevich, Fou Ts'ong, Dmitri Alexeev and Malcolm Binns.

- 1982 March – NIOT (25th anniversary): Verdi *Il trovatore* and Donizetti *L'elisir d'amore*.

June – Third annual season of Belfast Proms, including Belfast Phil with Kodaly *Psalmus Hungaricus* and Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, No.9.

August – Bryden Thomson conducts the televised finals of the BBC Young Musician of the Year in the Grand Opera House, Belfast. Also the International Young Musician of the Year the following night.

September – SOG: Mozart *The Seraglio* and Britten *The Rape of Lucretia*.

November – Belfast Festival at Queen's (BFQ): UO plays for Canada's Royal Winnipeg Ballet; Sir Charles Groves conducts an all-Haydn concert.

Season soloists include violinists Nigel Kennedy, Konstanty Kulka, Gyorgy Pauk and Stoika Milanova, harpist Marisa Robles and pianist Yitkin Seow.

- 1983 Kurt Wöss conducts the New Year Viennese concerts.
January – Barry Douglas plays Liszt Piano Concerto No.1 for a televised (BBC) season concert.

March – Paavo Berglund conducts a televised concert of Grieg and Sibelius with pianist Cécile Ousset. UO plays in NCH, Dublin (Bryden Thomson and cellist Raphael Wallfisch).

March – NIOT: Donizetti *The Daughter of the Regiment* and Puccini *La bohème*.

April – Bryden Thomson announced as Principal Conductor of the RTÉSO from Jan 1984.

May – SOG: Offenbach *Robinson Crusoe*.

June – Belfast Proms (with Rowel Friers programme cover) offers First Night (Viennese) with Kurt Wöss and Last Night with Kenneth Montgomery.

October – New season opens with Bryden Thomson and Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.3 played by John Lill. UO plays in NCH, Dublin, on 17 Oct with Bryden Thomson and cellist Colin Carr.

November – UO at the BFQ: four concerts / four sponsors – (those were the days!): Robinson & Cleaver, W&G Baird Ltd., Marks and Spencer, and IBM UK Ltd. Two concerts with James Galway as soloist and conductor; Beethoven Triple Concerto with the Beaux Arts Trio; and Bryden Thomson and pianist Jorge Bolet in an all-Gershwin concert.

November-December – UO, Bryden Thomson and flautist James Galway tour to Manchester, Liverpool, Cardiff, London and Swansea.

1984 March – Bryden Thomson conducts Fri and Sat concerts with Brahms Piano Concerto No.2 played by pianist Andras Schiff. Fri concert recorded by BBC TV.
16 and 17 March – two Ulster Hall evenings of Ron Goodwin conducting Film Night.

June – Belfast Proms concerts include 'The Chieftains in concert with the UO'.

October – underneath the listing of Bryden Thomson as Principal Conductor and Music Director, concert programmes now include Vernon Handley as Principal Conductor Elect. He becomes Principal Conductor in August 1985.

November – BFQ opens with UO, Bryden Thomson and cellist Heinrich Schiff; Edward Downes conducts Berlioz *The Childhood of Christ* and Vernon Handley conducts the closing concert with pianist Cécile Ousset.

December – Patrick Moore, astronomer and self-taught musician, presents two Christmas Concerts.

1985 March – Shura Cherkassky plays Chopin Piano Concerto No.2. Mariss Jansons withdraws at short notice and Yan Pascal Tortelier steps in to conduct.

May – BBC TV records the season concert with Bryden Thomson conducting Holst *The Planets* and John Ogdon playing Liszt Piano Concerto No.1.

June – Belfast Proms concerts include a Kurt Wöss Viennese Night, a concert with guitarist Carlos Bonell and a closing concert featuring Derek Bell's *Variations on the IDB theme, 'Come on, Northern Ireland, come on'*.

August – the first season of BBC Summer Invitation Concerts.

20 August – the first-ever appearance of the UO at the BBC Proms in London. Bryden Thomson conducts Barry Douglas in Liszt's Piano Concerto No.2; Heather Harper sings a new commission from Malcolm Williamson *Next Year in Jerusalem: Poems of Jorge Luis Borges*.

Vernon Handley succeeds Bryden Thomson. Now listed as Principal Conductor and Artistic Director.

October – opening season concert conducted by Jacek Kasprzyk as 'Vernon Handley is indisposed'.

November – BFQ opens with Sir Michael Tippett conducting his Concerto for Orchestra. UO plays for Northern Ballet Theatre; a concert features the *Brendan and Granuaile Suites* by Shaun Davey; BFQ closes with *A Handel Celebration*.

December – European Music Year closes with a UO Gala Concert, including Ravel *Bolero*.

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Next time (2 Dec.): 1986-1991

Four pics follow: (i) Rowel Friers cartoon for Belfast Proms 1983 programme cover



(ii) Vernon Handley b&w



(iii) Vernon Handley (colour)



(iv) Stratton Mills, Chairman UOS, with Mary and Bryden Thomson (probably a presentation in 1985)





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This week: 1986-1991

1986 New Year's Viennese concerts conducted by Kurt Wöss.

Guest conductors this year include Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Volker Wangenheim, Edward Downes, Ole Schmitt, Louis Frémaux, George Hurst, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Sir Charles Groves and Guido Ajmone-Marsan.

March – Kenneth Montgomery conducts the Belfast Phil in Holst *The Hymn of Jesus* and Verdi *Four Sacred Pieces*.

April – UO with Principal Conductor Vernon Handley on a European Tour: Utrecht, Heerlen, Rotterdam, Munich (live on BBC Radio 3), Vienna and Linz. The concerts are shared between three soloists: Bernard d'Ascoli, piano; Colin Carr, cello; and Emmy Verhey, violin.

May – Barry Douglas plays Brahms Piano Concerto No.2.

June – Belfast Proms: Barry Wordsworth conducts Radio 2's *Friday Night is Music Night* (live relay). Soloists include singers Irene Sandford and Daphne Arlow. There's also a *Hoffnung Concert* and a *Viennese Night*.

August – UO and Vernon Handley in Kilkenny with cellist Steven Isserlis. BBC Summer Invitation Concerts feature Brahms and Liszt. Opening concert offers Liszt Piano Concerto No.1 played by Barry Douglas. He wins the Tchaikovsky Competition just days earlier and the free concert is inundated. The concert is screened to an overspill in the Group Theatre.

September – Opera Northern Ireland (ONI) sells its first season of Strauss *Ariadne auf Naxos* (3 perf.) and Verdi *Falstaff* (4 perf.).

October – UO 20th Birthday Concert: Vernon Handley conducts Shostakovich Symphony No.10 and Joaquin Achucarro plays Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1. UO plays at Arts Festivals in Omagh, Armagh and Newry.

November – Belfast Festival at Queen's (BFQ) includes a week with the Royal Flanders Ballet (Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet*) and concerts with Janet Baker, contralto, and pianists Peter Donohoe and Nikolai Demidenko.

1987 January – Richard Howarth, violin, directs the New Year's Viennese Concerts in Bangor, Enniskillen, Derry-Londonderry, Coleraine and two in Belfast.

February – For a BBC concert, Gillian Weir gives UK première of Howard Hanson Organ Concerto.

March – Edward Downes conducts a UO Gala Fund-raising Invitation Concert. Barry Douglas plays Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1.

June – Belfast Proms offers two Viennese Nights with Kurt Wöss and a Tchaikovsky Night with Jacek Kasprzyk.

August – BBC promotes Summer Invitation Concerts of G&S: Goetz and Sullivan.

November – BFQ features a concert performance of Beethoven *Fidelio*, Ballet du Nord with Delibes *Coppélia*, and two concerts with Vernon Handley: pianist Bernard d'Ascoli in Ravel; violinist Ernst Kovacic in Elgar.

December – Omri Hadari replaces an indisposed Vernon Handley.
Ron Goodwin conducts two evenings of film music.

1988 January – Barry Wordsworth conducts Viennese concerts with soprano Angela Feeney and cellist John Leeming: three in Belfast, plus Ballymena, Derry-Londonderry, Coleraine and Bangor.

February – UO in Dublin's National Concert Hall (NCH) with director/soloist Rostropovich, cello. Concertos by Boccherini, Vivaldi and Haydn.

April – Assembly Hall, Fisherwick Place: first of three sets of three BBC Invitation Concerts in which Bryden Thomson conducts all nine Dvořák symphonies. Also May and June.

June – UO Proms, formerly Belfast Proms: *Viennese Night*, *Beethoven Night*, and a *Last Night*.

August – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts feature music by Gerald Barry and by women composers.

UO at BBC Proms in London. Vernon Handley is indisposed and replaced by Yan Pascal Tortelier and, for the Gerald Barry première, *Chevaux-de-frise* (a BBC commission), by Robert Houlihan. The London visit is supported by the IDB.

September (16-24) – ONI with UO and Kenneth Montgomery: Puccini *La bohème* and Mozart *Il Seraglio*

All season concert programmes carry this message: 'At the request of the Ulster Hall Manager, patrons are asked to refrain from wearing stiletto heels which damage the oak auditorium floor.'

October – Yan Pascal Tortelier conducts a season concert and also a BBC Invitation Concert of French music: 'Allo, 'Allo!'

November – UO at NCH, Dublin. Christopher Seaman replaces Vernon Handley (whose wife was ill after the birth of their son) and Dmitry Sitkovetsky plays Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto. Concert sponsored by the Irish Association for Cultural, Economic and Social Relations.

BFQ: Gothenburg Ballet in Tchaikovsky *Swan Lake*; Elgar Howarth, conductor, with Håkan Hardenberger, trumpet; Yehudi Menuhin, conductor, with Hu Kun, violin; David Parry with arias and ensembles by Verdi and Donizetti.

December – Christopher Bell conducts Handel *Messiah* performances.

1989 January – Alfred Walter conducts New Year Viennese concerts: three in Belfast, plus Ballymena, Craigavon, Derry-Londonderry and Coleraine.

Conductors this year include Bryden Thomson, Jansug Kakhidze, Kenneth Montgomery and, increasingly, Yan Pascal Tortelier (YPT). Soloists include Barry Tuckwell, horn, Ewan Easton, tuba, Raphael Wallfisch, cello, and pianists Ronan O'Hora, Stephen

Bishop-Kovacevich, Dmitri Alexeev, David Golub, Peter Frankl, Peter Donohoe and Jean-Philippe Collard. Violinists include YPT, Eugene Sarbu and Augustin Dumay.

February – Vernon Handley and Evelyn Glennie, percussion, feature Bartok *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* and the *Carmen Suite* (Bizet arr. Shchedrin). Concert recorded for BBC television.

BBC Invitation Concert features UO with Skylark and Len Graham in *Ulster Airs*.

Barry Wordsworth conducts Uel Deane Farewell Concert (with Belfast Operatic Society).

June – UO Proms include *Vive la France* with YPT and guest leader Paul Willey; *Choral Favourites* with John Lubbock and the Belfast Phil; *The Romantic Violin* with YPT; *Russian Spectacular* with Barry Wordsworth and violinist Eugene Sarbu; and *Viva España* with Alexandre Myrat and harpist Marisa Robles.

August – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts feature Beethoven, Liszt and Arvo Pärt. Also violin concertos by Britten, Moeran and Walton.

September – UO at the Kilkenny Festival: YPT with Bernadette Greevy, contralto.

15-23 Sept. – ONI with UO for Mozart *Don Giovanni* and Gounod *Faust*.

Yan Pascal Tortelier is now Principal Conductor and Artistic Director; Paul Willey is listed as Leader Designate.

October – UO and YPT as director/soloist tour Vivaldi *Four Seasons* and Beethoven *Pastoral* Symphony to Larne, Dungannon, Belfast, Ballymena and Newry.

David Jones conducts UO in Derry Guildhall, featuring première of Derry City Council commission from Kevin O'Connell, *From the Besieged City*.

November – BFQ: YPT with Strauss *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*; ballet Tchaikovsky *Sleeping Beauty*; Simon Halsey conducts Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.2 with Vladimir Ovchinikov and Elgar *The Music Makers* with Bernadette Greevy.

December – Paul Willey now the UO leader.

UO and YPT at NCH, Dublin, including Debussy *Images*, Ravel *Bolero* and Chabrier *España*.

1990 Cecil Ward CBE succeeds W. Stratton Mills as Chairman, UOS.

Barry Wordsworth conducts Viennese Concerts in Newtownabbey, Derry, Coleraine, Lisburn and Belfast (3x).

Conductors this year include Michel Plasson, Ronald Zollman, Sir Charles Groves, Vernon Handley, Kees Bakels, Wilfred Boettcher, Louis Frémaux and Jacek Kaspszyk. Soloists include cellists Arto Noras and Raphael Sommer, violinists Peter Zazofsky and Raphael Oleg, pianists Shura Cherkassky, Claude Frank, Cristina Ortiz, Hugh Tinney, Michael Roll, Howard Shelley and Jeffrey Biegel.

March – David Parry conducts performances of Strauss *Die Fledermaus*.

May – Guildhall, Derry-Londonderry: UO performs Shaun Davey *The Relief of Derry*.

June – UO Proms: *American Night*; *Russian Night*, *G&S Night*; and (live relay for BBC Radio 2) *Friday Night is Music Night*.

August – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts include Jongen *Symphonie concertante* (Gillian Weir, organ); Walton *Sinfonia concertante* (Kathryn Stott, piano); and Szymanowski *Symphonie concertante* (Rolf Hind, piano).

UO with YPT at BBC Proms in London – Arleen Auger sings Canteloube *Chants d'Auvergne*.

September – UO with Jacek Kaspszyk and Mayumi Fujikawa, violin, at RDS, Dublin.

ONI – Puccini *Tosca* (4 perf.) and Mozart *The Magic Flute* (3 perf.).

October – Holst *Planets* with projections to celebrate 200th anniversary of the Armagh Observatory.

First of five Gallaher 'Classical Romance' concerts for the bicentenary of Mozart's birth (1791) and the 150th anniversary of Tchaikovsky's birth (1840).

November – BFQ: YPT conducts Beethoven *Choral* Symphony; 13-17 Nov. Royal Flanders Ballet with *La Sylphide*; Jansug Kakhidze with Joanna McGregor, piano, playing Mozart Piano Concerto No.21.

December – UO and YPT with Jerome Rose, piano, at NCH, Dublin. Concert includes Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.2 and Stravinsky *Petrushka* (1947 version). Christmas concerts with Melvin Tix, clown and 'clownductor'.

1991 All-Mozart New Year's Day concert with dir/soloists Barry Douglas and Ernst Kovacic with soprano Lorna Anderson. Recorded for BBC television.

Compiled by David Byers ByersMusic.com

Next time (3 Feb.): 1991-1995

Suggested pics (not included here)

- (i) programme cover for European Tour 1986.
- (ii) three UO conductors (L to R) Bryden Thomson, Yan Pascal Tortelier and Vernon Handley.
- (iii) season brochure cover featuring associate leader Maurice Cavanagh who had died a fortnight earlier.
- (iv) same – but a close-up of the main pic with Maurice Cavanagh.



Musical Times



A chronology of selected highlights, celebrating the Ulster Orchestra's history.

This week: 1991-1995

1991 15 Feb concert 'In Memory of Paul Tortelier'; 16 Feb 'A Tribute to Paul T'.
Yan Pascal Tortelier's father, the great cellist Paul Tortelier, had died 18 Dec 1990.

Spring Clearance Sale at the UO Ticket Office in the BBC Shop in Arthur Street.
UO LPs on offer at £5.50 each.

Recent UO releases on CD included Yan Pascal Tortelier (YPT) conducting Dukas and Chabrier, Debussy and Ravel, and a disc of Saint-Saëns, including the *Organ* Symphony (Gillian Weir).

UO season included the RTÉ NSO with George Hurst playing Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra* (01 Mar) and the RSNO with Bryden Thomson playing Bruckner Fourth Symphony (20 Mar).

May – UO/YPT in Dublin (RTÉ Proms, including Berlioz and Dutilleux) and Waterford.

June – UO Belfast Proms 91: 5 UO concerts, incl. *Carmina Burana* in the King's Hall with Ulster Youth Dance and 'a choir of hundreds' (a specially augmented Belfast Phil).

Aug – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts: Poulenc Concertos and Stravinsky symphonies and ballets.

Sep – 25th Anniversary Season opens with Sir Peter Maxwell Davies conducting the Scottish Chamber Orchestra; UO plays for Opera NI's Mozart *Così fan tutte*.

Oct – First UO Season concert: YPT conducts Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*.
UO/YPT tours to Croydon, Eastbourne, Cheltenham, Warwick, Wolverhampton and Sunderland. Tokyo Symphony Orchestra gives Ulster Hall Season Concert.

Dec – Gallaher *New Horizons* concert includes première of Kevin Volans *One Hundred Frames*. Christmas Family Concert with Norwegian musical clown Melvin Tix.

1992 Jan – Concert dedicated to Bryden Thomson (died 14 Nov 1991).
25 Jan-7 Feb: UO/YPT (with pianists Barry Douglas and Christopher O'Riley) in USA: New York State, Florida (5 concerts), South Carolina (2), North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Tour programme includes Adrian Thomas *Intrada*, Philip Hammond *Fanfare for Orchestra* and David Byers *Out of the Night*. Funding from British Council and Dept. of Education.

Feb – Irish Chamber Orchestra/Nicholas Kraemer concert in Ulster Hall in UO's absence.

Mar – Gallaher *New Horizons* concert includes Messiaen *Trois petites liturgies*.
General Manager Roger Lloyd resigns.

May – UO/Bramwell Tovey in Leisureland, Galway, and at the RTÉ Proms, Dublin.

June – UO Belfast Proms: 4 UO concerts and one by the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

Aug – UO at King's Lynn Festival and Marble Hill Riverside Concerts (Twickenham).
BBC Summer Invitation Concerts (5): Schubert Symphonies 1-9, incl. No.7.

Oct – Michael Henson appointed Chief Executive; En Shao named Principal Conductor-Elect; UO/Jean-Bernard Pommier at NCH, Dublin incl. David Byers *Out of the Night*; First *Two Cathedrals* Festival in Derry with 2 UO concerts; UO in Belfast and Wexford Festival with Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius* (rec. for BBCNI TV). British Council funded. Programme states 'Touring with an orchestra is an expensive business and it is, of course, only made possible with generous funding from government bodies and commercial sponsors.'

Dec – UO leader Paul Willey appointed Leader, BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra; Boston Pops-style Christmas Family concerts with Harry Ellis Dickson.

1993 Jan – Viennese Concerts with Takuo Yuasa.

Feb – RTÉ NSO/Fedor Glushchenko in UH concert with Bruckner Fourth Symphony; Paul Willey returns as soloist with UO in Barber Violin Concerto.

Mar – Anna Colman appointed UO's Associate Leader.

Apr – 2 UO concerts for *Sonorities* Festival, incl. Ligeti Piano Concerto (Rolf Hind).

May – UO at RTÉ Proms, Dublin.

June – Belfast City Council's Proms '93: 4 UO concerts.

Aug – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts (5): *Visions* incl. symphonies by Hanson, Ives, RVW, Sibelius, Honegger and Hindemith.

Sep – En Shao now confirmed as UO Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser. UO offers Cookstown Family Music Week; UO plays at inaugural festival for Univ. of Limerick's new concert hall. UO 'in residence' for a week at Ardhoven Theatre, Enniskillen, *Spotlight on Music*.

1994 Jan – Viennese Concerts with Günther Bauer-Schenk; Gallaher *The Music Makers* series incl. Michael Nyman Piano Concerto (Kathryn Stott).

Feb – RTÉ NSO/Vladimir Altschuler in UH with Lutosławski Piano Concerto (Mícheál O'Rourke); UO/Erich Binder concert incl. Philip Flood *Kicking Down*.

Mar – UO incl. Stephen Pickett *Landscapes for tuba and orchestra* (Ewan Easton).

Apr – UO tour with Matthias Bamert and James Galway: Carlisle, Leeds, Newcastle, Aberdeen and Inverness. Coleraine UO concert premières Ian Wilson *Rise*.

May – UO *Laser-light Spectacular* at Dundonald Ice Bowl.

June – Belfast Proms '94: 4 UO concerts incl. *Joseph Roadshow* with Christopher Bell.

Aug – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts (5), *Through the Looking Glass*, feature Berwald Symphonies.

Oct – UO gives Irish première of James MacMillan *Britannia*, part of ABO's UK-wide BT *Celebration Series*; Gallaher new series features *The Schumann Symphonies*.

Dec – James Stewart OBE succeeds Cecil Ward CBE as Chairman, UO Society Ltd.

1995 Jan – James MacMillan *Veni, veni Emmanuel* in Gallaher *Schumann* series; Leoš Svárovský conducts complete Smetana *Má vlast* for BBC Inv. Concert.

Mar – Dmitri Sitkovetsky replaces indisposed Gunther Bauer-Schenk incl. Shostakovich Piano Concerto No.2 (Ruth McGinley).

Apr – Belfast Phil performs Tippett *A Child of our Time*; 2 UO concerts for *Sonorities Festival* incl. Michael Alcorn *Macha's Curse* and Stephen Gardner *Wanting, not wanting*.

May – Brian Blessed hosts *The Shakespeare Concert*; Derry Music Week with UO; Season closes with En Shao conducting Shostakovich Symphony No.10.

June – Belfast Proms '95: 5 UO concerts.

Aug – UO/En Shao at BBC Proms in London incl. Scriabin Piano Concerto (Artur Pizarro); BBC Summer Invitation Concerts: *The Bruckner Experience* (5 early symphonies).

Sep – En Shao's tenure as Princ. Cond. ends; Lesley Hatfield appointed UO Leader 'after a long search'; Anna Colman continues as Associate Leader; *Festa Fermanagh*, a week of UO events at the Ardhoven Theatre incl. Britten *Noye's Fludde* with Colette McGahon, Henry Herford and Barry McGovern (2 perf).

Oct – UO Tour of Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford with Gunther Bauer-Schenk, incl. Ian Wilson *Rise* and Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1 (Vladimir Ovchinnikov).

Nov – Season concert with Brahms *A German Requiem* (Belfast Phil) incl. Brian Irvine *Ferragosto IV*.

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Next time (24 Feb.): 1996-2001

**WANTED, for temporary loan or donation to the UO programme collection for PRONI:
UO concert programmes for 15 October 1993 and 5 November 1993.
Please contact David Byers, via Contact at byersmusic.com.**



Musical Times



A chronology of selected highlights, celebrating the Ulster Orchestra's history.

This week: 1996-2000

1996 Popular concerts include Sean Rafferty *Saturday Night Live* series with Keith Floyd, Terry Nutkins, Emlyn Hughes, and John Coles.

Jan – no Principal Conductor. Education and Community Department under Paula Mullan very busy, incl. *Myths and Legends* devised by Stephen Pickett for SELB; Children's Poems inspired by Helios Overture, with Gareth Hopkins in Donaghadee; Cross-community Percussion Project with Malcolm Neale in West Belfast; Colmcille Project in Derry with Elaine Agnew and Belfast Wind Quintet; Royal Mail Project in Lisburn and North Belfast primary schools.

Mar – Dmitri Sitkovetsky announced as Principal Conductor from September.

Apr – Ruth McGinley plays Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.2.

May – Anthony Halstead conducts David Morris *Jump!*; Orion Quartet with Derry and Strabane Youth Dance groups; Music and Deafness Day training for players and teachers; Big Bad Bass works with Partial Hearing Unit of Cregagh Primary School.

Jun – Proms '96 with 5 UO concerts.

Aug – 5 BBC Summer Inv. Concerts: *Come the Revolution!* incl. Russian symphonies.

Sep – 30th Anniversary Season with Dima Sitkovetsky as new Principal Conductor.

Oct – Première of Stephen Gardner *Wallop*, cond. John Lubbock; première of Philip Hammond *Die Ersten Blumen*, cond. Günther Bauer-Schenk.

Dec – John Craven presents/narrates Christmas Concerts in Bangor and Belfast.

1997 Jan – New Waterfront Hall Opening Festival concerts with Jerzy Maksymiuk, James Galway, Barry Douglas, Marisa Robles and narrators James Ellis and Frances Tomelty. Incl. Lorin Maazel *Irish Vapours and Capers* and première of Philip Hammond *Waterfront Fanfares*.

Also concerts with Matthias Bamert and Joshua Bell (incl. Mahler 1), and Yuri Simonov and Lynn Harrell (Elgar Cello Concerto). Temirkanov conducts 3 concerts with St Petersburg Phil. Orchestra.

May – Sonorities Festival: UO incl. première of Michael Alcorn *Macha's Curse*; Adilia Alieva plays Schnittke Piano Concerto.

Jun – 5 concerts for Proms '97.

Aug – 5 BBC Summer Inv Concerts: *Legends* plus concertos by Barber and Menotti.

Oct – Takuo Yuasa now Principal Guest Conductor; new season opens in Derry and Belfast Waterfront with pianist Marc-André Hamelin. Sitkovetsky is dir/soloist for Vivaldi *Four Seasons* in the Waterfront.

Nov – Rudolf Barshai conducts Shostakovich 5 and Chamber Symphony, Op.83a, arr Barshai.

Dec – Johnny Ball presents/narrates Christmas Concerts in Ballymena, Andersonstown and Belfast (x2).

1998 Jan – Lucy Griffith now Associate Leader. Viennese Concerts with Christopher Bell and soprano Mary Nelson.

Feb – Vernon Handley with Raphael Oleg for Elgar Violin Concerto and première of Michael Alcorn *Mambo*. BT Celebration Series incl. Jonathan Dove *The Ringing Isle*.

Mar – BBC Young Musicians '98 final concert with UO in Waterfront. Barry Douglas is jury chairman. Takuo Yuasa conducts John Tavener *The Protecting Veil* with Maria Kliegel, cello.

Apr – 1798 commemoration filmed for BBC 2: Mozart Requiem in Wexford, Dublin and Belfast, UO cond. Christopher Bell, with combined choirs from each venue. Poignantly, St Anne's Cathedral performance coincides with Good Friday Agreement.

May – UO in Spain: concerts in La Coruña, Orvieda and Madrid (x2).
UO at Sonorities Festival includes première of Kevin O'Connell *North*.

Jun – 4 concerts for Proms '98.

Aug – UO/Sitkovetsky and Barbara Hendricks in fifth BBC Prom in London.
5 BBC Summer Inv Concerts incl. John Tavener *Tears of the Angels*, Britten *Sinfonia da Requiem* and music by Balassa, Falla and Copland.

Sep-Oct – New season opens with Barry Douglas in Derry and Belfast Waterfront (Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.3); Mark Kaplan plays Barber Violin Concerto; Takuo Yuasa conducts *Carmina burana*.

Nov – Andrew Litton conducts Mahler 3 in Waterfront (105 players on stage).

Dec – BBC Inv. Concert marks Howard Ferguson's 90th birthday.

1999 Jan – Anúna with UO in Waterfront; Association of British Orchestras conference in Waterfront. UO/ABO concert with Arcadi Volodos in Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.2.

Feb-Mar – UO in Stuttgart, Munich and Amsterdam (Concertgebouw). RTÉ NSO in Ulster Hall with Chantal Juillet, violin (Shostakovich First Concerto).

Apr – Takuo Yuasa conducts Bruckner 5. UO awarded the first RPS Music Award for Education following a 6 month initiative involving 4,000 West Belfast school children. ACNI Chairman: "This highly-prized award confirms what many in NI and elsewhere already know – that the UO makes a vital contribution to the quality of life in NI and that there are no boundaries to the involvement of everyone in making the arts happen right where they live."

May – David Fisk succeeds Michael Henson as Chief Executive.

Jun – UO concert for BBC *Sounding the Century*: Charles Hazlewood conducts Reich, Berio, Berberian, Nancarrow and Stravinsky.

Aug – 10 day UO residency in Hong Kong; BBC Summer Inv Concerts: *Sounds of '99* with music from 1799, 1899 and John Tavener's *The World*, (1999).

Sep – Millennium Season begins; Pavarotti concert at Stormont; Shlomo Mintz plays Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto.

Oct – Matthias Bamert conducts Bruckner 8; Sitkovetsky conducts Karayev 3.

Nov – Sarah Chang plays Mendelssohn Violin Concerto; Takuo Yuasa conducts Prokofiev 6.

Dec – Christmas Concerts with Howard Blake *The Bear*, narrator is UTV's Frank Mitchell.

2000 Jan – Sitkovetsky with Marc-André Hamelin in Waterfront for Bernstein Symphony 2 (*The Age of Anxiety*).

Feb – Penderecki conducts UK première of his Symphony 3; Kazushi Ono conducts Mahler 8 (*Symphony of a Thousand*) with Belfast Phil, RSNO Chorus and Methodist College Junior Choir (both concerts in Waterfront).

Mar – Thierry Fischer conducts Ó Riada, Stanford, Cogan and Harty (BBC St Patrick's Day concert); Tadaaki Otaka conducts Sibelius 1; Takuo Yuasa conducts Shostakovich 15.

Apr – Yoel Levi conducts Mahler 7.

May – UO's *Night of 1000 Dinners* to raise £10,000 for education work; UO English Tour: Newcastle 6th, Norwich 7th, Manchester 9th, and Bristol 10th with Lynn Harrell (Elgar Cello Concerto).

August – UO in Kilkenny; BBC Summer Inv Concerts: *Haydn Concertos Plus!*

Oct – Takuo Yuasa conducts Mahler *Das Lied von der Erde*; Belfast Phil performs Tippett *A Child of our Time*.

Dec – Stephen Montague Piano Concerto with Philip Mead.

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Next time (3 Mar.): 2001-2006



Musical Times



A chronology of selected highlights, celebrating the Ulster Orchestra's history.

This week: 2001-2005

2001 Jan – Viennese concerts with Günther Bauer-Schenk in Coleraine, Larne, Derry and Belfast (x2); Dima Sitkovetsky with Hakan Hardenberger in trumpet concertos by Haydn and Daniel Börtz.

Feb – Martyn Brabbins cond. Piers Hellawell's *Inside Story*; UO/Brabbins give concert in Utrecht (Moeran, Hellawell, Stanford, Ferguson); UO in Grand Opera House (GOH) for Castleward Opera's *Madame Butterfly* and *Martha*; Rautavaara Symphony 7 for BBC.

Mar – Waterfront Hall (WFH) James Galway cond/soloist for Gallaher Gala Farewell Concert, bowing out after 21 years as UO Principal Sponsor; St Patrick's Day (WFH) Shaun Davey *Granuaile* and *The Brendan Voyage*; Sitkovetsky cond. Mahler 4 (WFH); Takuo Yuasa cond. MacMillan *Veni, veni Emmanuel* and Bartók Concerto for Orchestra (WFH). Education concerts for SEELB postponed because of foot and mouth outbreak.

Apr – WFH announces *The Celtic Circle Classical Music Series* (Sep 00 – May 01): five concerts with RSNO, UO, RTÉ NSO, RLPO, BBC NOW. The UO concert would be the opening one of the Belfast Festival.

May – Sitkovetsky's final season ends with Shostakovich 5 and Bartók Viola Concerto (Yuri Bashmet).

June – Summer Proms include Cleo Laine with John Dankworth and friends, also *Handel by Candle* in St Anne's Cathedral; violinist Sarah Chang in concert at Lisburn's Island Hall. Thierry Fischer and Philippe Graffin record CD for Hyperion; Takuo Yuasa records Yashiro and Yamada CD for Naxos.

Aug – UO in London for BBC Proms: Sitkovetsky/Nobuko Imai incl Mozart Sinfonia concertante and Ian Wilson *Man o' war*; BBC Summer Invitation Concerts feature double concertos – *Mine's a Double!*

Sep – Thierry Fischer succeeds Sitkovetsky as UO Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor; Sitkovetsky appointed Conductor Laureate; UO/Fischer record Jean Françaix CD for Hyperion; UO with Ulster Youth Choir in concert in Derry and Belfast (cond. Christopher Bell); New season, featuring *Visions of Utopia*, opens with Deirdre Gribbin *Visions of Utopia: Unity of Being* (première) and Berg Violin Concerto (Augustin Dumay); Gribbin repeated at Prague Autumn Festival (30 Sep).

Oct – UO concerts in Wrocław, Bydgoszcz and Bratislava, including Ian Wilson *Man o' war*; UO to New York for *UK with NY* festival (following 9/11 disaster) with Gribbin and Mendelssohn Symphony 2.

Nov – David Fisk resigns as Chief Executive; UO in GOH for *Cinderella* (six perf.) with Monte Carlo Ballet; Yuasa/Peter Donohoe record CD of Rawsthorne for Naxos.

Dec – Tom Collins succeeds James Stewart OBE as UOS Chairman; Rosemary Kelly succeeds Tom Collins as Deputy Chairman; George Benjamin cond. his *Ringed by the Flat Horizon*, Messiaen *L'Ascension*, Ligeti Double Concerto and Ravel *La Valse*; UO/Fischer/Cristina Ortiz at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.

2002 Jan – Viennese concerts with Nicolae Moldoveanu in Craigavon, Coleraine, Derry, Belfast (x2) and (in Feb) Banbridge; Sitkovetsky/Evelyn Glennie at WFH (percussion concertos by David Bedford and Nebojša Jovan Živković); UO with James and Jeanne Galway, Daniel O'Donnell and Lesley Garrett in WFH for BBC *Songs of Praise*.

Feb – János Fürst conducts Dvořák 6; Sitkovetsky conducts Franck Symphony.

Mar – Yuasa/Isabelle van Keulen perform Walton Viola Concerto with Prokofiev 7; YP Tortelier cond. Rachmaninov *Symphonic Dances*; St Patrick's Day BBC concert: Vernon Handley cond. Moeran, Dunhill, Norman Hay and Stanford 5.

Apr – Fischer conducts UO and Ulster Youth Orchestra in Stravinsky *The Rite of Spring*; Matthias Bamert cond. Bruckner 6; Ilan Volkov cond. Berlioz *Harold in Italy* (with Nobuko Imai).

May – Ralph Kirshbaum plays Walton Cello Concerto; Fischer cond. Mussorgsky *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

Jun – Sean Rafferty presents the Queen's Jubilee Concert, cond. Vernon Handley; concerts in Coleraine, Larne and Armagh; BBC Radio Ulster presents UO in *Gerry Anderson's Classical Favourites* at WFH.

Jul – David Byers appointed Chief Executive from end of June.

Aug – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts include Vernon Handley cond. Harty *The Children of Lir* (Virginia Kerr, sop); János Fürst cond. Sibelius *Luonnotar* (Solveig Kringelborn, sop).

Sep – UO *Proms in the Park* at Belfast City Hall with Anúna, Fionnuala Hunt and Scott Foster; new UO season features Schubert symphony cycle and *Northern Lights*; season opens with Kevin Volans *Strip-Weave* (première).

Oct – Handley cond. Mahler *Lieder eines fahrenden gesellen* (Stephen Roberts); András Ligeti cond. Sibelius Violin Concerto (James Ehnes); Belfast Festival opens with *Sounding the City*, Bernstein, Gershwin and four commissions (Elaine Agnew, Stephen Gardner, David Byers and Brian Irvine).

Nov – 5 perf. at GOH of *The Belfast Carmen* (Marin Lynch and Mark Dougherty); Fischer and Philippe Cassard, piano, record Jean Françaix CD for Hyperion.

Dec – Kenneth Montgomery cond. Tchaikovsky 4 and Schumann Piano Concerto (Mikhail Rudy); Roy Goodman cond. Handel *Messiah*.

2003 Jan – Viennese Concerts with Ernst Kovacic, dir/soloist in Ballymena, Derry, Belfast (x2), and with Christopher Bell in Coleraine and Armagh; Fischer/John O'Connor with Beethoven Piano Concerto No.3; Kazushi Ono/Pascal Rogé with Mozart Piano Concerto No.19, K.459.

Feb – Yuasa/Christian Lindberg with trombone concertos by Sandström and Ferdinand David; new monthly Sunday afternoon series begins at Millennium Forum, Derry, with Paul Murphy, cond. And Cora Venus Lunny, violin.

Mar – Sean Rafferty presents St Patrick’s Day UO concert at National Concert Hall (NCH), Dublin, with Kenneth Montgomery, Liam O’Flynn and Arty McGlynn; David Quigley perf. Beethoven Piano Concerto No.3 in Derry; Celso Antunes cond. Belfast Phil in Puccini’s *Messa di Gloria*.

May – Sonorities Festival: UO with music by Gordon Kerry, Peter Sculthorpe, Elena Kats-Chernin and Elaine Agnew *Slurp*; ‘Doreen Curran in Opera and Song’ in Derry; Vladimir Spivakov cond. Shostakovich 9; Fischer/Barry Douglas with Brahms Piano Concerto No.2.

Jun – Downpatrick opera concert; Gerard McChrystal, saxophone, in Derry and also Armagh.

Jul – UO with Nicholas Braithwaite and Hugh Tinney, piano, at Farmleigh House, Dublin and Braithwaite/Lesley Hatfield, violin at NCH, Dublin.

Aug – UO at BBC Proms in London: Fischer/Liwei Qin, cello, incl. Prokofiev Cello Concerto, Op.58, Volans *Strip-Weave* and Sibelius 5; BBC Summer Invitation Concerts offer a Russian season.

Sep – Vernon Handley succeeds Dimitri Sitkovetsky as UO Conductor Laureate; Yuasa cond. *Proms in the Park* at Belfast City Hall; New season featuring Beethoven symphony cycle opens with Brian Irvine *And Pigs Might Fly* (première UO commission) and Nikolai Demidenko with Beethoven Piano Concerto No.5 and Tchaikovsky 5.

Oct – Vernon Handley with Bax Violin Concerto (Chantal Juillet) and Elgar Enigma Variations; Nikolai Moldoveanu with Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1 (Freddy Kempf) and Philip Hammond ...*the starry dynamo in the machinery of night* ...

Nov – UO/Yuasa with Arvo Pärt concert at Clonard for Belfast Festival; Fischer/Mary Nelson, sop. Mozart arias and Beethoven 1 and 5.

Dec – Julian Bliss makes his UO debut with Mozart Clarinet Concerto.

2004 Jan – Declan McGovern succeeds Rosemary Kelly as Deputy Chairman; John Anderson presents and Yuasa conducts Viennese concerts; UO gives *Eternal Memory*, the Holocaust Memorial Day concert; Kenneth Montgomery/Gillian Weir with Poulenc Organ Concerto and Saint-Saëns 3.

Feb – Derry Sunday concerts continue with Emma Johnson, clarinet; Vassily Sinaisky with Rachmaninov *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* (Alexander Melnikov).

Mar – Derry concert features Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1 (Ruth McGinley); more Jean Françaix CD recording for Hyperion; inaugural concert of Belfast City organist Colm Carey; climax of the major *Gulliver* children’s project with a street procession, WHF concert and exhibition of art work.

Apr – UO leader, Lesley Hatfield, appointed leader, BBC NOW; Yuasa/Colette McGahon, mezzo, with Falla, concert incl. Michael Alcorn *Mambo* and Rodrigo *Concierto de Aranjuez* (Craig Ogden). Libor Pešek cond. Dvořák centenary concert, incl. the Violin Concerto (Tasmin Little).

May – Tadaaki Otaka with Shostakovich Piano Concerto No.2 (Finghin Collins); Fischer with Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.2 (Louis Lortie) and Shostakovich 5; Yuasa records CD of Rubbra for Naxos.

Aug – Spanish season of BBC Summer Invitation Concerts.

Sep – *Proms in the Park* at Belfast City Hall: UO/Fischer with James and Jeanne Galway, Bruno Caproni, Cora Venus Lunny and Ulster Youth Choir; new season offers a Brahms cycle and begins with *When Love speaks* (Strauss *Don Juan*, Mozart *Elvira Madigan* Piano Concerto and Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet*); other concerts incl. Harty *The Children of Lir* and Berlioz *Nuits d'été*.

Oct – An indisposed Dennis O'Neill is replaced by Justin Lavender for WFH Opera Gala; YP Tortelier cond. Franck Symphony; Belfast Festival concert at Clonard celebrates Rautavaara, incl. Symphony No.7 and *Cantus Arcticus*.

Nov – UO/Stephen Layton give world première in WFH of John Tavener *Hymn of Dawn*; Peter Wispelwey plays Elgar Cello Concerto; Pekka Kuusisto plays Mendelssohn Violin Concerto; John O'Connor plays Beethoven Piano Concerto No.1.

Dec – Andrew Parrott cond. Handel *Messiah*, orch. Mozart.

2005 Jan – Brahms Double Concerto with Paul Barritt, violin, and Emma-Jane Murphy, cello.

Feb – Fund-raising Ladies Lunch hosted by Belfast Lady Mayoress in Malone Golf Club; UO gives Irish première of Rautavaara Clarinet Concerto (Richard Stolzman); UO in Dublin for Verdi Requiem (Guinness Choir); Yuasa cond. Harty for Naxos CD recording incl. Piano Concerto (Peter Donohoe).

Mar – UO plays for Raymond Gubbay's *Classical Spectacular* at Odyssey Arena; Hyperion records CD of Delius and Ireland piano concertos with Piers Lane; BBC St Patrick's Day concert in WFH with Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Liam O'Flynn and Moya Brennan.

Apr – Handley with Korngold Violin Concerto (David Grimal) and Vaughan Williams 4; Fischer with Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.3 (Barry Douglas); Christopher Bell cond. *Popular Classics* in WFH; *Sonorities* Festival premières new work by Ed Bennett and offers *The Music of Frank Zappa*.

May – *Night of 1,000 Dinners* to raise £12,500 for UO; Derry and Belfast: Vladimir Spivakov and Cora Venus Lunny with Mozart Sinfonia concertante, programme incl. Tchaikovsky 6; WFH *Popular Classics* features Julian Lloyd Webber and singer Ceara Grehan; Phase I of Ulster Hall redevelopment begins.

Jun – Bernstein Anniversary concerts for Radio 3 (WFH) with BBC Singers, National Chamber Choir, Dublin, Humphrey Burton and Jamie Bernstein.

Jul – UO in NCH, Dublin, for World Harp Congress, then Cork for *Come & Play* and Family Concert (*Cork Pirate Party*) with Alasdair Malloy.

Aug – BBC Prom in London: UO/Fischer with Mary Nelson, Victoria Simmonds and Methodist College Senior Girls' Choir for Mendelssohn and Beethoven; BBC Summer Concerts incl. music by Stanford, Kinsella, David Byers, Gerald Barry and Stephen Gardner.

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Next time (3 Mar.): 2005-2010



Musical Times



A chronology of selected highlights, celebrating the Ulster Orchestra's history.

This week: 2005-2010

2005 Sep – Kenneth Montgomery appointed Principal Guest Conductor. Thierry Fischer's final season as Principal Conductor features a Brahms Symphony cycle. UO Masterclasses this season given by Ronald Brautigam, Pekka Kuusisto and guitarist Fabio Zanon. The season begins mid-Sep with four concerts with *An American Connection* featuring Joanna MacGregor (Gershwin), Julian Bliss (Copland), Torleif Thedéen (Dvořák) and Mark Kaplan (Barber).

Oct – David Adams appointed UO leader. UO at Belfast Festival incl. opening concert with Marianne Faithfull and her band; music by Alan Hovhaness in Clonard Monastery incl. Symphony No.50, *Mount St Helen's*; closing concert (Nov) incl. Steve Reich *Desert Music* and John Adams *Short Ride in a Fast Machine*.

Nov – Ronald Brautigam plays Beethoven's last three piano concertos (third concert with Martyn Brabbins incl. Bruckner 3). UO in Killarney with Argentine tenor José Cura.

Dec – Thierry Fischer cond. Holst *The Planets* in Waterfront Hall (WF) with Methodist College Senior Girls' Choir, also Bach orch. Stokowski *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*.

2006 Jan – First year of Viennese Concerts with 'Strictly' dancers Camilla Dallerup and Ian Waite; Sean Rafferty presents and Ailish Tynan sings. Andrew Manze directs *Baroque Classics* in the WF incl. Vivaldi *The Four Seasons*. A weekend festival, *Mozart @ 250*, features Kenneth Montgomery with pianists Hugh Tinney and Finghin Collins, and soprano Mary Nelson.

Feb – Libor Pešek conducts the complete Smetana *Má vlast*; pianist Alexander Melnikov plays Bartók Concerto No.3. Irish President, Mary McAleese attends the second of two own-promoted UO concerts in Dublin's National Concert Hall (NCH).

Mar – Celso Antunes cond. Piazzolla Bandoneon Concerto with Dermot Dunne, accordion. Second season of *Popular Classics* concerts incl. *The Essential John Williams* in the WF. Thierry Fischer cond. a Schumann symphonic cycle plus the three Schumann concertos with Steven Isserlis, Louis Lortie and Pekka Kuusisto.

Apr-May – *La belle Époque* series incl. Mahler 4, Guilmant 1 (with Colm Carey, organ), Saint-Saëns Violin Concerto No.3 with Augustin Dumay, Strauss *Der Rosenkavalier* suite and Ravel *La Valse*.

Sep – Kenneth Montgomery appointed Principal Guest Conductor; Brian Irvine appointed Associate Composer and spearheads new education projects. His *A Pocket Full of Kryptonite* provides a fanfare for the UO's 40th anniversary season alongside Shostakovich 5. The new season celebrates Shostakovich at 100, Elgar at 150, Arts Council NI support at 40, BBC and Belfast City Council relationship at 25.

Oct – Belfast Festival opens with José Cura in concert with UO; Clonard Monastery concert features Peteris Vasks Violin Concerto, *Distant Lights*, and Mozart *Gran Partita*; closing concert incl. Gorecki 3 cond. Tuomas Ollila.

Nov – Gershwin Gala with Rumon Gamba, Joanna MacGregor and singer Ceara Grehan. First of three UO own-promoted concerts this season in National Concert Hall, Dublin (NCH) with Ulster Bank sponsorship and soloists Leon McCawley (Nov), Barry Douglas (Jan) and Boris Berezovsky (May).

2007 Jan – János Fürst, the UO's first leader and then Associate Conductor, dies just one week before his UO concert with Barry Douglas. UO gives Chinese New Year concert incl. He Zhanhao and Chen Gang *The Butterfly Lovers* Violin Concerto. Family concert in WF: *A Pirate Party*.

Jan-Feb – Brahms Concerto cycle with Barry Douglas, Marc-André Hamelin, Daniel Hope, and (Double Concerto) Benjamin Schmidt and Quirine Viersen.

Mar – *Barry Norman Film Night* in WF; Benjamin Zander conducts Mahler 1 and a Schools' Concert; Phil sings Mendelssohn *Elijah* in WF. A major UO education project culminates in 250 schoolchildren performing *A Marvellous Medicine* in WF – music by Brian Irvine setting words from Roald Dahl *Dirty Beasts* and other poems.

Apr – Ulster Hall (UH) closes 'for 18 months' (!) – final stage of refurbishment. *Popular Classics* Gala Concert in WF with Katherine Jenkins postponed at short notice due to singer's ill health.

Apr-May – Whitla Hall concerts: Freddy Kempf plays Chopin Piano Concerto 2; Tasmin Little plays Elgar Violin Concerto. Boris Berezovsky plays Rachmaninov Piano Concerto 3 with cond. Yan Pascal Tortelier in WF.

Jun – UOS Chairman Tom Collins awarded OBE in Birthday Honours List. Rescheduled Katherine Jenkins concert takes place.

Aug – UO at Kilkenny Festival. BBC Summer Invitation Concerts incl. Mozart's five Violin Concertos, Falla *Master Peter's Puppet Show* and commissions from Greg Caffrey, Bill Campbell, Rachel Holstead and Frank Lyons. Venues include Derry's Millennium Forum and Lisburn's Island Arts Centre.

Sep – Carrickfergus hosts the annual BBC *Proms in the Park* concert. Kenneth Montgomery, now Principal Conductor, opens new season 'betwixt and between halls' with Beethoven 9 in St Anne's Cathedral and, also in St Anne's, Vaughan Williams *Tallis Fantasia* and Bruckner 5. UO fund-raising *Swing Gala Ball* held in St George's Market with 'Strictly' dancers.

Oct – UO concerts with clarinettist Emma Johnson in Castleblayney, Letterkenny and Dundalk funded by Irish Arts Council. First of four concerts this season in NCH, Dublin, sponsored by the Ulster Bank: Andreas Scholl (Oct), Bryn Terfel (Jan), Hugh Tinney and Finghin Collins (Feb) and Sir James and Lady Galway (Apr). Across the season, UO concerts given in Coleraine (x3), Derry/Londonderry (x2), Enniskillen (x2), Bangor and Downpatrick. Masterclasses, supported by the Fenton Arts Trust, with Emma Johnson, David Pyatt and Peter Donohoe. Clonard Monastery concert incl. Bax and Vaughan Williams 5, cond. John Lubbock, replacing indisposed Vernon Handley (UO Conductor Laureate).

Oct-Nov – Belfast Festival opens with the Chieftains and the UO in concert; a week later Ute Lemper and UO in the Grand Opera House (GOH), incl. Weill *Seven Deadly Sins*. Another week later, also in GOH, counter-tenor Andreas Scholl sings Handel with the UO.

Nov – Verdi Requiem in WF with cond. Celso Antunes, Belfast Phil and the Guinness Choir, Dublin; also WF concerts with Nicola Benedetti and Nikolai Demidenko. Three-day composition workshop with Brian Irvine for ten school pupils organised by the UO and the Ulster Youth Orchestra.

Dec – Players and admin staff join lobbying protest at Parliament Buildings Stormont to appeal for increased arts funding after a four-year standstill in funding to the Arts Council, a huge discrepancy between funding levels in NI as against other regions, plus £4.5million diverted from the arts to support the 2012 Olympics. And thereafter came the 2008 international financial crisis! Martin Haselböck conducts *Messiah*, incl. counter-tenor David D Q Lee and tenor Benjamin Hulett.

2008 Jan – Sir Desmond Rea becomes UOS Chairman on the retirement of Tom Collins OBE. Christopher Bell conducts the Viennese Concerts with the 'Strictly' dancers; *Popular Classics* concert with Bryn Terfel in WF.

Feb – UO + Brian Irvine Ensemble in Whitla Hall concert incl. Irvine *Montana Strange*. Hugh Tinney and Finghin Collins, cond. Kenneth Montgomery, play both Liszt Piano Concertos in WF. Peter Donohoe plays Harty Piano Concerto in the Whitla Hall, QUB.

Mar – *Carmina Burana* in WF with Belfast Phil and Phil Kids, cond. Christopher Bell.

Apr – *Popular Classics* concert with Sir James and Lady Jeanne Galway in WF.

Apr-May – Prokofiev series incl. Symphony 5, *Peter and the Wolf*, Violin Concerto 2 with David Adams and Piano Concerto 3 with Alexander Kobrin replacing Alexander Melnikov at short notice.

Aug – UO's 9th BBC Prom in London, cond. Montgomery, with Howard Ferguson *Partita*, Dvořák 8 and Stanford Piano Concerto 2 (Finghin Collins). BBC Summer Concerts in Belfast Spires, St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh and Lisburn Arts Centre, incl. new works by Stephen Gardner, Marion Ingoldsby, Edward McGuire and Mark Bowden. UO concert in Kilkenny Festival, cond. Nicholas Braithwaite.

Sep – BBC *Proms in the Park* at Belfast City Hall with Peter Moore, BBC Young Musician of the Year. UO Fundraising Ball at WF. New season begins with four *Flights of Fancy* concerts (incl. Berlioz, Mendelssohn, Rimsky-Korsakov and Elgar) in the WF with Pascal Rogé, Tasmin Little, Paul Lewis and Natalie Clein. Two cond. by Montgomery, one by Jac van Steen, and the last advertised as Vernon Handley. However, following Handley's death the previous month, Montgomery conducts this concert in Handley's memory.

Oct – Belfast Festival includes Clonard Monastery UO concert with Jonny Greenwood film music. Closing concert with Barbara Cook cancelled because of her indisposition. UO travels to Drogheda for John Tavener concert, cond. Tõnu Kaljuste.

Nov – Four NCH Dublin concerts this season: Julian Bliss (Nov), John O'Connor (Feb), Ronald Brautigam (Apr) and Benjamin Grosvenor (May). *Popular Classics* concert in WF with Cleo Laine, John Dankworth and family. UO in Dublin for Guinness Choir Bach concert. Demidenko replaces indisposed Aleksandar Madzar for WF *Popular Classics*. UO plays for WF concert with Katherine Jenkins.

Dec – Christmas Concerts cond. Christopher Bell in Newry, Bangor, Ballymena and Shankill and Andersonstown Leisure Centres (plus Omagh with Stephen Bell); two evenings of Charlie Chaplin films in WF, cond. Carl Davis.

2009 Jan – UO plays for Flash Harry concert in Odyssey; Belfast Phil and UO in WF with *The World of Italian Opera* – ‘mad, bad and dangerous’. *Baroque Classics* in WF with cond. Roy Goodman and Tine Thing Helseth, trumpet.

Feb – Tchaikovsky 4 cond. Bramwell Tovey; *Valentine Film Night* with Barry Norman; *Time Travel* schools’ concert, all in WF.

Mar – Ulster Hall (UH) re-opens with UO concert, incl. première of Brian Irvine *Big Daddy* *Motorhead*, Stanford *Songs of the Fleet* (Belfast Phil and Paul Whelan), Rachmaninov *Paganini Rhapsody* (Michael McHale). Three UO *Bohemian Rhapsodies* concerts with three Dvořák concertos. Launch of new monthly Lunchtime Concert series supported by JTI. BBC St Patrick’s Day concert *The Music of Bill Whelan* in WF. Major UO education project *The Pied Piper* with music by Brian Irvine (cond. Stephen Deasley) culminates in WF concert, plus street parade, art works, etc. First project in NI to be awarded the *Inspire* mark of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

Apr – Haydn *Seven Last Words* in Clonard Monastery with Michael Longley and Glenn Patterson. Joint UO and UYO concert in WF; *Sea Pictures* project and performance in Fleming Fulton School.

May – Kenneth Montgomery in UH with Bruckner 6 and Sibelius Violin Concerto (Pekka Kuusisto); Alfie Boe *Popular Classics* concert in WF; season ends in WF with Rachmaninov *Symphonic Dances* and Grieg Piano Concerto (Benjamin Grosvenor); BBC concert for *Sonorities* Festival incl. Michael Alcorn *Synapse*; UO plays for Phil Kids’ concert; CD recording of Tovey *The Bride of Dionysus*.

Jun – SELB schools’ concerts in Newry, Banbridge and Dungannon; Downpatrick Opera Fringe Festival concert.

Aug – BBC Summer Concerts incl. Bill Campbell *Weather Report*, Stephen Gardner *The Shipyard*, Deirdre McKay *Meltwater*, Elaine Agnew *Straight to the Point*, Ian White *Strata*.

Sep – UO admin offices and box office move from Elmwood to Ulster Hall; UO leader David Adams appointed leader of the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera; season brochure redesigned as A5 landscape shape; BBC *Proms in the Park* at Hillsborough Castle with Sir James and Lady Galway. Kenneth Montgomery’s final season as Principal Conductor opens in WF with Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto 1 (Alexander Kobrin).

Oct – No UO Dublin season due to international financial crisis and loss of sponsorship. New monthly JTI Lunchtime Concerts season attracts large audiences. UO masterclasses this season with Michael Collins (Oct), Nikolai Demidenko (Jan) and Natalie Clein (Mar). Belfast Festival: concert in WF with Seamus Heaney and Michael Longley; Clonard Monastery concert of Haydn with BBC Singers; UH concert with Szymanowski Violin Concerto 2 (Tasmin Little) and Lutosławski Concerto for Orchestra.

Nov – Handel *Alexander’s Feast* (Belfast Phil); Hummel and Haydn trumpet concertos with Tine Thing Helseth; Mendelssohn Violin Concerto (Jennifer Pike); UO Fundraising Ball in UH with Flash Harry; later this season, Paul Watkins appointed Principal Guest Conductor; Christopher Bell appointed Associate Conductor.

Dec – Christmas Concerts in Ballymena, Strabane, Bangor and Belfast, cond. Christopher Bell with Emma Morwood, soprano. At Sir James Galway's 70th birthday concert he is announced as the UO's Artist Laureate.

2010 Jan – Bryn Terfel Gala Concert in WF incl. Claire Jones, harp; Flash Harry concert at Odyssey; UO concert for the new Theatre at the Mill, Newtownabbey.

Jan-Feb – *Chopin @ 200*, Chopin festival over two weekends with Nikolai Demidenko.

Feb – Carlos Kalmar cond. Shostakovich 9 and Brahms Violin Concerto (Ilya Gringolts); Carl Davis cond. *James Bond Film Night*;

Mar – Elizabeth Watts sings Britten *Les illuminations*; Belfast Phil performs Cherubini *Coronation Mass for Louis XVIII*; Julian Bliss plays Mozart in Armagh; WF concert as culmination of major education project *Rain falling up* with music by Brian Irvine, UO with 400 school children and 100 elderly people singing about the boy Jake who builds a gravity defying switch and floats off into outer space.

Apr-May – Beethoven Piano Concerto No.3 (Jean-Philippe Collard); Ravel Concerto in G (Pascal Rogé); Mozart *Coronation* Concerto (Louis Lortie); UO plays for Belfast City Council organ concert; UO in Dublin for Guinness Choir singing Holst and Howells; UO plays for UH Phil Kids' concert.

Aug – Tamás Kocsis appointed leader, UO; BBC Summer concerts feature music by women composers incl. Deirdre Gribbin, Ina Boyle and Elaine Agnew. UO at BBC Proms in London, cond. Paul Watkins, with Stephen Osborne, piano.

Sep – BBC *Proms in the Park* at Hillsborough Castle with UO, cond. Carl Davis. New season opens at WF with cond. Bramwell Tovey and Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.4 (Boris Berezovsky), launching cycle of all four Rachmaninov concertos. David Byers retires as Chief Executive; Dick Mackenzie CB appointed Interim CEO.

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Next time (14 Apr.): 2010-2017



Musical Times



A chronology of selected highlights, celebrating the Ulster Orchestra's history.

This week: 2010-2017

- 2010 Oct – 8 JTI Lunchtime Concerts this season at £5 each; Belfast Festival incl. 4 UO concerts: with singer Paul Brady, organist Dame Gillian Weir (Poulenc and Saint-Saëns), a Fred Astaire tribute, and Mahler 5 with Antoni Wit.
- Nov – Pekka Kuusisto plays Barber Violin Concerto; François-Frédéric Guy plays Beethoven *Emperor*; Jean-Luc Tingaud conducts Fauré Requiem; Jack Liebeck plays Korngold Violin Concerto.
- Dec – Martin Haselböck conducts *Messiah*; Gareth Hudson conducts *Best of Broadway*, both in the Waterfront Hall (WF).
- 2011 Jan – Declan McGovern, on secondment from BBC NI, appointed CEO, succeeding Interim CEO Dick Mackenzie CB. Violinist Lara St John plays Piazzolla *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*. Liszt Festival advertised for Jan-Feb cancelled several months earlier to save money.
- Feb – Katarina Andreasson conducts Golijov *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*; UO Fundraising Ball in Ulster Hall (UH) with Duke Special and Brian Irvine.
- Mar – Ciaran Scullion introduces *Time Travel* education concerts in Belfast and Derry; Bramwell Tovey conducts Harty *With the Wild Geese* and Benjamin Grosvenor plays Saint-Saëns; Belfast Phil sings Rossini *Stabat Mater*; BBC St Patrick's Day concert in WF with UO and Horslips.
- Apr – UO and Guinness Choir with Verdi Requiem in Dublin's Grand Canal Theatre; Sir James Galway in concert in WF; Barry Douglas plays Bartók Concerto No.3.
- May – JoAnn Falletta announced as new Principal Conductor at 2011-12 season launch. Radio 3's *Hear and Now* from St Cecilia's School, Derry: music by Ian Wilson, David Morris, Frank Lyons, Brian Irvine and Christopher Norby. Maxim Rysanov plays Walton Viola Concerto; season finale with Bartók *Concerto for Orchestra*; *Sound Waves* project in Newry, Craigavon and Dungannon; UO plays for Katherine Jenkins at Odyssey Arena.
- Jun – *Musical Magic* project in Strabane, Enniskillen and Coleraine.
- Aug – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts feature Russian music plus Mendelssohn Violin Concerto and Horatio Parker Organ Concerto.
- Sep – BBC *Proms in the Park* with UO in Castle Park, Bangor; CD recordings of Michael Hurd and Cecilia McDowall, cond. George Vass; JoAnn Falletta opens new season with Tchaikovsky 4 in WF; BBC celebrates its 30-year unique relationship with the UO.
- Oct – 9 JTI Lunchtime Concerts this season at £6 each; Belfast Festival opens with all-American programme cond. Falletta in WF; Tasmin Little plays Elgar Violin Concerto in

UH; joint concert with UYO and UYC (*Carmina Burana* in WF); UO with Kiri te Kanawa in UH; CD recording of Holst, cond. Falletta.

Nov – Professor Sir George Bain succeeds Professor Sir Desmond Rea as Chairman, UO Society Ltd; Demidenko plays Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1 in Whitla Hall due to UH unavailability; UO plays in Grand Opera House (GOH) for NI Opera's *Hansel and Gretel*.

Dec – Fleming Fulton School production *One Snowy Night* in WF (UO/John Lubbock); UO presents *Brian Kennedy's Swing Christmas* in UH.

2012 Jan – Burns Night concert with Eddi Reader and Dan Gordon; Flash Harry with UO in Odyssey.

Feb – CD recording of Moeran with JoAnn Falletta; *A Tribute to John Barry* in WF; UO/Watkins première Ian Wilson *The Stars, The Seas* (UOS commission with JTI funding).

Mar – Jurjen Hempel conducts joint RTÉCO/UO concert in WF for Cultural Olympiad. Barry Douglas plays Brahms Piano Concerto No.1 (UO/Dima Slobodeniouk); Declan McGovern departs as CEO.

Apr – *Baroque at Easter* concert in Clonard; Titanic Anniversary Concert in WF with Nicola Benedetti, Bryan Ferry and Joss Stone for BBC Television; Duke Special concert in WF; Courtney Lewis cond. Franck Symphony; Brian Irvine *Rain Falling Up* in Derry.

May – Paul Watkins conducts Mendelssohn Piano Concerto No.1 with Ronald Brautigam; Pekka Kuusisto plays Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto; education concerts with Stephen Bell in Newry, Craigavon, Dungannon, Omagh and Limavady for Southern and Western Education and Library Boards, and in Belfast sponsored by Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

Jun – UO in GOH with Cara Dillon and band; outdoor concert in Castle Park, Bangor for H.M. Queen's Diamond Jubilee; Belfast City Council UH organ concert incl. Jongen *Symphonie concertante*; Sir James and Lady Jeanne Galway with UO in WF; NI Opera Shorts by Conor Mitchell, Christopher Norby, Ed Bennett, Deirdre McKay and Brian Irvine with UO at the MAC.

Jul – Orchestra Consultant Ed Smith appointed Interim CEO.

Aug – BBC Proms in London: UO with UYO, JoAnn Falletta and Sir James Galway incl. Elaine Agnew *Dark Hedges* for flute and two orchestras (new commission); BBC Summer Invitation Concerts across Wed Lunchtimes and Fri evenings (incl. Hellawell *Agricolas*).

Sep – BBC *Proms in the Park* cond. Christopher Bell at Titanic Slipway; new season opens with a Russian programme (JoAnn Falletta and pianist Peter Donohoe); another CD recording of Moeran cond. Falletta; other soloists this month: Tine Thing Helseth, trumpet, and Julian Bliss, clarinet; masterclasses this season by Tine Thing Helseth, Paul Watkins, cello, and Nikolai Demidenko, piano.

Oct – 9 JTI Lunchtime Concerts this season at £6 each; Christian Lindberg, trombone, conducts and plays his *Helikon Wasp*; charity concert in WF with The Priests; CD recording of works by John Knowles Paine; Belfast Festival opens with UO/Falletta incl. Holst *The Planets* and Gershwin Piano Concerto (Michael McHale).

Nov – James MacMillan conducts his *Confession of Isobel Gowdie* and *The Sacrifice: Three Interludes*; NI Opera Gala with Barbara Bonney cancelled; UO plays for Radio Ulster's *Hugo Duncan Tea Dance* in UH.

Dec – Celso Antunes conducts *Messiah*; Christmas concerts with soprano Emma Morwood and cond. Christopher Bell.

2013 Jan – Benjamin Grosvenor plays Britten Piano Concerto (cond. Andrew Litton).

Feb – Rosa Solinas, previously Head of Music, Arts Council of NI, appointed CEO, succeeding Interim CEO Ed Smith. Paul Watkins conducts Walton 1 and also plays Haydn Cello Concerto in C; Tamás Kocsis plays Brahms Violin Concerto; UO plays for NI Opera's *The Flying Dutchman* at GOH; Carl Davis cond. *Westerns* Film Night.

Mar – Jac van Steen cond. Bruckner 3; BBC St Patrick's Day Concert in WF with Clannad; Beethoven 9 with Belfast Phil abandoned during concert due to power failure after heavy snowfall in central Belfast; *Popular Classics* at Clonard; UO cond. Paul Murphy for 2 perf. with Royal Ballet in Millennium Forum for Derry City of Culture.

Apr – BBC Inv. Concert incl. music by Ryan Molloy, Donnacha Dennehy, Donal Sarsfield and David Fennessy; Finghin Collins plays Britten's Diversions for left hand.

May – UH concert for Linen Hall Library 225th anniversary incl. music by Neil Martin; season closes in WF with Verdi Requiem, cond. Falletta; *Planet Earth* education concerts for SELB and WELB in Derry, Newry, Carrickfergus and Craigavon.

Jun – 2 Phil Coulter concerts in Derry; David Stern cond. Beethoven 9 with Belfast Phil in UH (see abandoned Mar concert).

Aug – Clonard concert for Feile an Phobail; UO concert with Ruby Hughes, soprano, for *Happy Days* Beckett Festival, Enniskillen.

Sep – Admin staff reorganised with a significant change of personnel through voluntary redundancies. UO box office outsourced to Belfast City Council at the Ulster Hall. UO Subscription scheme stopped. CD recording of Dussek with Howard Shelley; BBC *Proms in the Park* at Titanic Slipway; new season opens in Derry (City of Culture), then Belfast, with Falletta and Barry Douglas (Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1); UO plays for NI Opera's *L'Elisir d'amore* in Newtownabbey, the MAC and Omagh; new season spreads concerts over Sunday afternoons at 2.30pm, Mondays, Wednesdays at 7pm, Fridays and Saturdays; masterclasses this season with Michael McHale, Tasmin Little, David Pyatt, horn, and Kari Kriikku, clarinet.

Oct – 9 JTI monthly Lunchtime Concerts at £6 each, plus 3 Monday half-hour 'Bite-size' concerts; Rafael Payare conducts both Shostakovich piano concertos with Alexander Melnikov. Belfast Festival concerts: Sir James Galway plays Rodrigo and Borne *Carmen Fantasy*; Roy Laughlin conducts Strauss *Four Last Songs* (Katherine Broderick) and Mahler 4.

Nov – Belfast Music Week concerts: UH Monday 1.30pm *Mother Goose* (John Wilson) and Seamus Heaney concert incl. Neil Martin *Lachrymae rerum* in WF with Stephen Rea (Heaney died 30 August); *Psycho Live!* in Derry and Belfast.

Dec – Kenneth Montgomery conducts *Messiah*; 2 perf. in Derry of Shaun Davey *Relief of Derry Symphony*.

2014 Jan – Viennese Concerts with soprano Ailish Tynan, cond. Christopher Bell and dancers Camilla Dallerup and Ian Waite; Ryan Wigglesworth cond. Sibelius 3 (part of Sibelius cycle across the season, just lacking Sibelius 4) and Walton Violin Concerto (Tasmin Little).

Feb – UO at GOH for Verdi *Macbeth* (NI Opera).

Mar – Rosa Solinas departs as CEO; Sir George Bain serves as Executive Chairman; première of Ian Wilson *Causeway*; CD recording with JoAnn Falletta of music by American composer John Knowles Paine; Rafael Payare cond. Kevin Volans *Strip-Weave* for BBC; Payare cond. *Peter and the Wolf* for education concerts; Jean-Luc Tingaud cond. Haydn *The Creation*; Falletta cond. première of Ian Wilson *Causeway*.

Apr – Kari Kriikku plays Lindberg Clarinet Concerto; perf. with UYO and UO of Elaine Agnew *Dark Hedges* cancelled (BBC Proms commission, 2012).

May – Quirine Viersen plays Walton Cello Concerto; Falletta cond. closing season concert with *Symphonic Dances* by both Rachmaninov and Bernstein (*West Side Story*).

Jun – Final of the Pipeworks International Organ Competition at the UH with the UO, cond. Paul Brough.

Aug – Rafael Payare succeeds JoAnn Falletta and position renamed Chief Conductor. Jac van Steen appointed Principal Guest Conductor. Ian Wilson's tenure as Associate Composer ends. BBC Invitation Concerts feature Scandinavian music; UO/Jac van Steen perf. Sunday afternoon BBC Proms concert in London incl. Bill Whelan *Riverdance* Suite.

Sep – Trevor Green appointed Special Executive (a role later designated Orchestra Consultant). BBC *Proms in the Park* at the Titanic Slipway. New season (with a gradual return of Subscription booking) opens with Beethoven Symphony No.9, cond. Rafael Payare in UH; BBC Invitation Concert features Ian Wilson *Sullen Earth* Violin Concerto (Ioana Petcu-Colan), Deirdre McKay *Driven* (Robin Tritschler, tenor) and *Meltwater*.

Oct – UO's public funding now reduced by 28% overall. 'Save the Ulster Orchestra' online campaign in full swing. Financial crisis story covered by the national press: 'UO facing the axe within weeks'. 7 monthly JTI Lunchtime Concerts at £6 each across the new season, plus one 'special' Festival Lunchtime with 'emerging conductors'; Gala Concert in UH marking BBC Northern Ireland at 90; Payare cond. Simon Mawhinney *The Pot of Pulgarve* with Beethoven Piano Concerto No.4 (Barry Douglas).

Nov – Jac van Steen cond. Britten *War Requiem* in St Anne's Cathedral with UO and RTÉCO (Jac also doubling for the indisposed second conductor Frank Zielhorst); CD recording of Steibelt Piano Concertos with Howard Shelley; concert with cond. Christian Lindberg incl. Falla with trombone solos.

2015 Jan – Belfast City Council and then the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) (thanks to Stormont's January monitoring round) find total of £500,000 as a short-term fix to address potential UOS insolvency. Admin restructured as five directorates with, eventually, a Managing Director. BBC Inv. Concert incl. Philip Hammond Piano Concerto. Domingo Hindoyan replaces Payare for *Latin Rhythms* concert and Dvořák 7.

Feb – UO in GOH for NI Opera's *Salomé*, cond. Nicholas Chalmers; Chinese New Year Concert cancelled; Baiba Skride plays Nielsen Violin Concerto (cond. Ben Gernon).

Mar – Giselle Allen sings Sibelius *Luonnotar* (cond. Jac van Steen); *Sci-Fi Weekender* offers Fritz Lang *Metropolis* and *Star Wars* concert in UH; Christian Lindberg, trombone, performs his *The Erratic Dreams of Mr Grönstedt*.

Apr – Further Arts Council cut-back reduces annual funding by £100,000; Tamás Kocsis plays Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto (cond. Payare); another scheduled perf. with UYO and UO of Elaine Agnew *Dark Hedges* cancelled (BBC Proms commission, 2012); UH perf. with children's choir of *Bluebottle* by Brian Irvine, Belfast's first Music Laureate; CD recording of music by Victor Herbert, cond. Falletta; Mark Kosower plays Herbert Cello Concerto No.2 in JTI Lunchtime Concert.

May – Falletta cond. Tavener *The Protecting Veil* (Guy Johnston, cello); Jamie Phillips cond. Thomas Adès *Three Studies from Couperin*; Payare cond. Colin Matthews *Grand Barcarolle*; season finale in National Concert Hall, Dublin, and in WF, cond. Payare, has Shostakovich Symphony 10 and Elgar Cello Concerto (Alisa Weilerstein); Belfast Phil concert with première of James Whitbourn *The Seven Heavens*.

Jun – UO in Crumlin Road Gaol with Sir James Galway and Neil Martin, Uilleann pipes, for BBC Music Day; BBC concert, cond. Jurjen Hempel, with Emil Jonason, clarinet, for Golijov *Sidereus* and *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*.

Jul/Aug – *Happy Days* Beckett Festival for Britten *Phaedra* (Ruby Philogene, soprano).

Aug – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts: some with an Australian theme.

Sep – BBC *Proms in the Park* from the Titanic Slipway; subscription reintroduced for UO's new season of concerts; opening concert with Jac van Steen and Mussorgsky *Pictures at an Exhibition*; Payare conducts Poulenc Organ Concerto and Saint-Saëns *Organ* Symphony with Colm Carey; 9 JTI Lunchtime Concerts this season at £6 each.

Oct – Favourite John Williams' movie themes; Brian Irvine *Bluebottle* in Derry. Belfast Festival: UO at GOH for NI Opera's *Turandot* (Calixto Bieito production).

Nov – Rodgers and Hammerstein popular favourites concert with Christopher Bell; concerts with Dvořák 8 in Omagh (winds only first part, incl. Strauss and Tomasi) and Lisburn (strings only first part, incl. Mozart and Bartók); James Crabb plays Piazzolla Bandoneon Concerto.

Dec – Matthew Halls conducts *Messiah*; UO plays for BBC *Sports Personality of the Year* (Odyssey, now renamed the SSE Arena).

2016 Jan – Viennese Concerts, cond. Christopher Bell with Cara O'Sullivan, soprano, in the UH; BBC concert with Elaine Agnew *Twilight*, Piers Hellawell *Dogs and Wolves*; Ed Bennett *Ausland*, Marion Ingoldsby *The Heron by the Weir*, Ian Wilson Piano Concerto (*Mutazione*); Payare cond. Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No.3 with Alexander Gavrylyuk.

Feb – Orchestra Consultant Trevor Green's role comes to an end. UO admin moves from the Ulster Hall to Seymour House in Gloucester Street. Robert Ziegler cond. *Valentine's Classics*; Payare cond. Beethoven Piano Concerto No.2 and Timo Andres *The Blind Banister*, both with Jonathan Biss, piano.

Mar – Richard Wigley appointed Managing Director. UO players at Lyric Theatre for NI Opera's *The Turn of the Screw*; UO concert cond. Robert Houlihan for St Patrick's Festival, Armagh; Bach *St John Passion* in UH, cond. Jac van Steen.

Apr – *Favourite Arias* with Noah Stewart; BBC concert in the Guildhall for City of Derry Jazz Festival.

May – Ailish Tynan sings Mozart and Stravinsky; Payare cond. Beethoven 4 and Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique*; UO Gala Concert for opening of Portaferry's The Portico of Ards.

Jun – UO concert in Parliament Buildings, Stormont, for BBC Music Day; UO/Stephen Bell plays for Royal Garden Party at Hillsborough Castle; BBC concert incl. Stephen Gardner *No Prayers Nor Bells* and Vaughan Williams Symphony 3, *Pastoral*.

Aug – BBC Summer Invitation Concerts focus on British music, incl. Norman Hay *Ulster Airs*, Howard Shelley plays Sterndale Bennett, Barry Douglas plays Britten Piano Concerto; *Music Room* chamber concerts for Eastside Arts and West Belfast Festivals;

UO/Payare at BBC Proms in London for Sunday afternoon concert incl. Tchaikovsky 5 and première of Piers Hellawell *Wild Flow*.

Sep – New education contract implemented for orchestral players; BBC *Proms in the Park* at Titanic Slipway incl. soprano Lesley Garrett and clarinettist Martin Fröst; new season (50th) opens with Rachmaninov 2 (cond. Payare) and Shostakovich Cello Concerto No.2 (Alisa Weilerstein); *50 Concerts in a Day* event around Belfast for UO 50th anniversary, incl. Pop-Up Concert in Victoria Shopping Centre and evening concert with Belfast Phil in St Anne's Cathedral; Barry Douglas begins his Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto series.

Oct – 10 JTI Lunchtime Concerts on Tuesdays this season at £7.50 each; Saturday night *Lush Classical!* Concert in SSE Arena; Belfast Festival concert with Rimsky-Korsakov *Scheherazade* and Berlioz *Nuits d'été* (Rachel Kelly, mezzo); *Spooky Classics* for Derry Hallowe'en concert.

Nov – BBC concert with Deirdre Gribbin *Unity of Being*, Ryan Molloy Violin Concerto, Kevin Volans Symphony: *Daar kom die Alibama*; UO at GOH for NI Opera's *Don Giovanni*; UH concert with excerpts from *Eugene Onegin* and four movements from *Má vlast*.

Dec – Stephen Peover succeeds Professor Sir George Bain as Chairman of UO Society Ltd; Sergey Khachatryan plays Bruch Violin Concerto and not Beethoven; Laurence Cummings cond. *Messiah*; BBC Concert with Nino Rota Trombone Concerto (Peter Moore); Christmas regional concerts cond. Christopher Bell (Robert Houlihan in Strabane) with Rebekah Coffey, soprano.

2017 Jan – Viennese Concerts return to WF with 'Strictly' dancers AJ Pritchard and Chloe Hewitt, and soprano Celine Byrne; Zoe Salmon presents UO *Burns' Night* concert; UO players at Lyric Theatre for NI Opera's *Powder Her Face* by Thomas Adès.

Feb – Yan Pascal Tortelier cond. Franck Symphony; UO at NI Science Festival with Brian Irvine *Anything But Bland*; Viviane Hagner replaces Alina Ibragimova for Brahms Violin Concerto.

Mar – Tamás Kocsis plays Rózsa Violin Concerto; UO gives NI première of Piers Hellawell *Wild Flow* and Barry Douglas completes Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto cycle.

Apr – UO shortlisted for a Royal Philharmonic Society award in the Ensemble category for its *50 Concerts in a Day* celebrating the UO at 50; *Best of James Bond* concert, cond. Stephen Bell; UO with NI Opera for *La bohème* in concert (UH). Further worries about potential shortfall in funding to the Arts Council of NI and consequent problems for the NI arts sector.

May – UO/Payare concert in Symphony Hall, Birmingham; Beethoven 9 with Belfast Phil; season finale with Prokofiev 5 and Beethoven *Emperor* (Stephen Hough), both concerts cond. Payare.

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