

Classical **MUSIC**



ORCHESTRAS FOCUS

Guest editor
Richard Wigley
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Welcome

I'm delighted that the Association of British Orchestras' Annual Conference will be returning to Belfast next year. We at the Ulster Orchestra (UO) look forward to welcoming the ABO's delegates for three days of thought-provoking debates, practical workshops and world-class performances at the Belfast Waterfront (23-25 January 2019).

The city has undergone an extraordinary transformation since the ABO's last conference here in 1998. Belfast today is abuzz with cultural initiatives, from the Titanic Experience and The Black Box to NI Opera and Oh Yeah Music Centre. Our own contribution to the city's cultural landscape includes

regular concerts at the Waterfront and Ulster Hall, plus a wide-ranging programme of learning and community engagement initiatives with people of all ages and backgrounds.

The theme for the conference is 'Cross-border', a timely theme as we in Northern Ireland await the outcome of Brexit negotiations and their impact on our border with the Republic of Ireland. Personally, I'm a strong believer in collaboration and keeping doors open, so one of the topics I've picked for this issue of *CM* is the role of music in breaking down barriers. Two projects are put under the spotlight: the Czech Philharmonic's choir for Roma children facing poverty, social exclusion and prejudice (page 69); and UO's own *Crescendo* project, which uses music to improve confidence amongst children in primary schools from all communities (page 65).

On the subject of Brexit, we're grateful to the ex-senior civil servant and UO Chair, Stephen Peover for setting out his thoughts on the likely consequences of Brexit for the arts in Northern Ireland (page 72). Another leading advocate of the arts, former soprano and Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle CBE, offers her perspective on the contribution that classical music can make to society as a whole (page 74).

During the course of my own career, I've come to realise that the traditional top-down management structure of orchestras can be limiting for some players – particularly those with a yen to explore their own individual creativity. If encouraged and enabled, however, this creativity can be unlocked to great effect, both for the musician and the ensemble. Some examples of success stories are given in my article on page 59, drawn from the three-year Creative Europe EOLab II project which builds leadership among orchestral musicians. A first-hand account of a player's own journey from viola player to amateur is given by UO musician Jonathan Simmance (page 62).

Last, but far from least, we pay tribute to the generosity of individuals and corporate donors without whom none of this work would be possible. Lighting entrepreneur and arts philanthropist Alan Nappin first became involved with the Ulster Orchestra when he sponsored the chair of our principal percussionist, Sam Staunton. Alan, who is now one of the UO's major donors, talks to Sam about his reasons for continuing to support classical music (page 76).

I hope that these strands weave a compelling picture of the state of orchestras today, and the specific challenges that we face in Northern Ireland. Join us in January to find out more and experience Belfast's cultural resurgence for yourself!

RICHARD WIGLEY

MANAGING DIRECTOR, ULSTER ORCHESTRA

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Crossing borders

The Ulster Orchestra's Richard Wigley will host the ABO conference in Northern Ireland in January. He talks to **Andrew Green** about the challenges of Brexit, the transformation of Belfast, and the structures that hinder a musician's potential



▲ ABO host: Richard Wigley

We're proud the ABO conference is coming here again. We hope there'll be as many delegates as attend the association's conferences in London. The old idea that Belfast is somehow difficult to get to is *completely* wrong.'

Richard Wigley welcomes the return of the conference to Belfast after a 20-year absence with the conviction that delegates will witness a Northern Ireland on the crest of a wave. 'The province has been going through a period of very rapid change,' says the managing director of the Ulster Orchestra and conference host. 'It's a more vibrant place even than five years ago. It's a tourist hot-spot. Cruise ships come here twice a week. There's the Titanic Experience, Game of Thrones tours...'

A New Zealander by birth who arrived at the Ulster Orchestra almost three years ago (after spells with the BBC Philharmonic and Hallé orchestras),

Wigley describes Belfast as 'a great place to live. I came here with all those grainy black-and-white images from the Troubles in my head. Things are completely different now.'

ABO director Mark Pemberton reflects that it was a bold step for the ABO to take its conference to Belfast in 1998, less than a year after the Good Friday Agreement. 'The association showed its support for a city coming out of the Troubles and celebrated the contribution of Northern Ireland's national orchestra to its rebuilding. The newly opened Waterfront Hall was the concert venue then, as it will be in January 2019, and we're delighted to bring our annual ABO event to its newly opened conference centre.'

Delegates will be invited to join Richard Wigley on his regular morning run by the River Lagan. 'They'll see the signs that this is now a city that's buzzing. And the Ulster Orchestra has been reflecting that buzz. Think of our

recent focus on the larger Shostakovich symphonies with our music director Rafael Payare – not something often attempted here because of the cost implications. It's been new and different for us.'

'Cross-border' is the conference theme. A piece of branding replete with possible meanings, the most obvious and urgent of which concerns the implications of Brexit for UK orchestras. Speaking personally – and as a bemused New Zealander – Wigley says he 'can't understand this desire to separate from Europe. I fear the closing of doors, the closing of minds. I can't see the positive economic benefit from Brexit.'

What might be the worst case scenario for orchestras from the ongoing Brexit negotiations? Wigley is as much in the dark as anyone. 'No one can be clear what the Brexit ramifications – and therefore the solutions – will be. But I expect orchestras to respond well

“ We’ve gone through very difficult periods in the past but the orchestra has always been resilient ”

whatever the outcome to the negotiations; we always find ways of pushing beyond constraint. For sure, it’ll be interesting to hear discussions on the subject at the conference.

As for the Ulster Orchestra and Brexit, border conundrum and all? ‘Well, we’ve gone through very difficult periods in the past,’ Wigley observes, ‘but the orchestra has always been resilient. I’m optimistic. We’re used to running on half the turnover of the other regional orchestras by being highly efficient.’

Brexit aside, Mark Pemberton emphasises the other dimensions to the cross-border theme. ‘Cities have borders too, between the centre and the suburbs, between rich and poor, and between communities. There are borders between art forms, in our reaching out to new audiences, and in how orchestras are managed and in our relationship with the musicians. All these will be explored in the safe space of the ABO conference.’

One area central to Wigley’s conference

thinking is attracting new audiences via the empowerment of players themselves in a changed relationship with management. This was a prime aim of the EO-LAB (European Orchestra Laboratory) project set up by Wigley in collaboration with orchestras from across Europe – among them, the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, Tonkünstler-Orchester and the Czech Philharmonic. Wigley will welcome EO-LAB orchestral players from across the continent and the UK to join the Ulster Orchestra for a performance of Shostakovich’s Fourth during the conference.

A key EO-LAB component is challenging the notion of top-down structures in orchestras, and hence a focus on the leadership skills of players. Expect this notion to be showcased at the Belfast conference. Wigley returns several times in our conversation to the same guiding principle: ‘How can we release untapped energy in our musicians?’ The traditional

▼ ‘Highly efficient’: the Ulster Orchestra





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▲ Belfast: 'A city that's buzzing'

model, he says, has been for players more or less to carry out what management decides. 'We've started to move away from that at the Ulster Orchestra. The player-manager relationship is being re-imagined and with it the way we think about reaching out to the people of Northern Ireland.

'Players offer a different voice. They may say things which are uncomfortable and challenging to hear. If you think about it, an orchestral musician was a star at school, praised while at conservatoire, successful at auditions and trials... and then comes the reality of day-to-day life in an orchestra, being presented with what you're playing, when and where. A new model for us is about communicating with each individual player and seeing how to best access all that individual creativity. One of our viola players Jonathan Simmance has shown an enviable flair for this kind of communication. OK, we *could* create projects on behalf of the musicians, but it's far better for Jonathan to have conversations with individual fellow players to develop projects, not

least those to do with education.'

Wigley hopes this concentration on real-world musicians' needs will mean a further advance in attendance at the conference by players themselves. And they will also be centre stage in the conference's examination of player wellbeing, in such areas as performance anxiety and physical/mental stress. The groundbreaking work in this area by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra featured at the 2018 conference and the coming event will return to the issues involved. 'Most orchestras are now closely examining the subject of player wellbeing,' Wigley observes.

'Traditionally musicians have kept their problems to themselves, including the apprehensions of performing before an audience. I think we have to look at other performance areas for inspiration, including the world of sport. What is it that enables a sportsman to give of his or her absolute best? What exactly in Jonny Wilkinson's mindset enabled him to maintain his composure to kick the drop goal that won England the World Cup?

How do top tennis players set themselves up to play in big matches?'

For all Belfast's dramatic transformation, its scarred history and the barriers between communities cannot but hover somewhere in the minds of conference delegates. However, says Wigley, the Waterfront Hall is in itself a symbol of how far the city has moved on. 'Our Ulster Hall audiences have historically been perceived as largely middle-class and from one community. But in recent times we've put on more popular concerts at the Waterfront – music from the movies and so on – which attract broader audiences. Two thousand seats sell out in no time.'

So where else might Wigley be taking his ABO delegates? Perhaps a walk up the Shankill Road to the multi-purpose Spectrum Centre, where the orchestra sometimes rehearses. We are seeking to find a home in North Belfast in a place that was once a flashpoint, but you can see how safe it is now. People I meet on the street say there's no way Belfast is going back to the recent past.' ^{CM}



▲ 'Opportunities for our musicians to re-engage with their own creativity and leadership are overdue'

The power within

Richard Wigley explores the idea of 'untapped potential' in orchestras, and explains how the EOLab II allows visionary projects to be realised

In uncertain times it is critical that we have an honest debate about how we can strengthen the resilience and relevance of our orchestras. As there is no identikit for orchestras the issues raised here will be stark for some and not so much for others. Equally, not all of our musicians will feel the urge to expand beyond the wonderful traditional

symphonic world of high-level concert giving. This is all fine, but there are musicians who have a lot more to offer to their organisations and will do so if offered appropriate opportunities.

I am privileged to have a broad perspective on orchestras from my time as a professional orchestral musician through to the leadership of two UK

orchestras in transition. In between I've been a manager of orchestral education and then of artistic planning; I've worked in a conservatoire; I've been consulted on change by a number of orchestras; I lead the mentoring programme for UK orchestras; and I oversee the Creative Europe EOLab II project which seeks to build leadership among our musicians. ►

I have a deep concern about a long-standing issue for many orchestras: when musicians enter orchestras with all their passion, creativity and talent, they are too often diverted into a programme of activity that is repetitive, prone to fluctuating musical leadership, and that limits personal creativity. Understandably, there is a requirement for orchestral musicians largely to renounce individual expression to satisfy corporate performance needs. I acknowledge that many musicians in orchestras are satisfied with this approach and the phenomenal repertoire that comes with it; not everyone is champing at the bit to have broader opportunities. However, this restriction can generate a certain cynicism, manifesting as a pervasive schism between musicians and

Analysis (TA) is occurring and repeating endlessly. TA shows that the parent/child relationship that can persist between musicians and managers constantly irritates itself and can only be ended with a prolonged period of trust-building and adult-to-adult engagement. If you are a reader of Kahnemann's internationally-recognised research in *Thinking, Fast and Slow* then you'll recognise his definition of fast (instinctive) and slow (rational); he discusses the constant shift in our minds between these states. The instinctive is easy to engage (parent/child) and the rational is effortful (adult-to-adult). This article proposes that orchestras should spend more time in slow, rational, effortful engagement to release more creative energy in their organisations.

- ▶ A series of projects in Austria that place the orchestral musicians in unusual contexts from clubs to mountaintops (Tonkünstler Orchestra)
- ▶ Engagement with school-aged children in Barcelona to input into the orchestra's programming (Barcelona Symphony Orchestra)
- ▶ A major choral initiative in Manchester to engage the business community with the orchestra (Hallé)
- ▶ Programmes in the Netherlands that re-engage an orchestra with towns and cities where the orchestra has lost its historic connections (Netherlands Symphony Orchestra)
- ▶ A community-inspired programme of engagement in Derry, Northern Ireland that looks at local identity and helps express feelings in a post-Troubles society (Ulster Orchestra).

“ Let the vision precede the logistics because it is extraordinary what an organisation can achieve if it believes ”

their managements, and can be resolved only if the management secures enough income and artistic leadership to keep musicians 'not unhappy'. Opportunities for our musicians to re-engage with their own creativity and leadership for the benefit of their orchestra are overdue.

I hope that this article prompts debate ahead of a major shift in our profession – that of creative leadership from our musicians. I hope, too, that we head straight for delivery of its benefits rather than tramping tiredly through the usual litany of why-nots. The benefit is found in releasing vitality and purpose from within our orchestras.

It's a straightforward observation that players routinely ask colleagues to be involved in some event or other that they are organising. If, as a manager, I were to ask the same people whether they would do a similar project, I'm more than likely to be met with questions about mileage, who's being paid what and what time is the meal break. I understand where these questions come from but they are exhausting. A paradigm of Transactional

EOLAB II

Three years ago, with colleagues in the Netherlands and with six European orchestras, we sought to bring fresh thinking and new audiences to partner orchestras. The rather clunky sounding project, European Orchestra Laboratory II (EOLab II), is the resulting three-year programme supported by Creative Europe. When I subsequently joined the Ulster Orchestra we added it to the list.

The guiding principle for EOLab II is to engage the leadership capabilities of musicians and to seek new audiences through connections with community ambassadors. The various projects across the seven orchestras include:

- ▶ Working with Čhavorenge, a choir of Roma children that seeks to engage positively and proudly with their history and culture (Czech Philharmonic)
- ▶ Engagement with Romanians who are still part of institutionalised orphanages (Romanian National Symphony Orchestra)

Each of these projects has a depth of learning that would benefit any orchestra that chooses to better understand EOLab II's successes and failures. Let me list some of the challenges faced:

- ▶ Recognising and understanding the source of misunderstandings between musicians and managers and having the patience and confidence to continue
- ▶ Navigating existing hierarchies within each body of musicians
- ▶ Finding ways to accommodate the various projects within the contractual agreements between musicians and managers
- ▶ Expectations of equal time and pay across the orchestra for this kind of work. For example, a tutti musician who leads EOLab II-type projects will rightly expect to be fairly recognised for this
- ▶ Getting buy-in from those who are unconvincing in each organisation
- ▶ Individualised training and opportunities for musicians (a one-size-fits-all approach is rarely the most beneficial).

THE BENEFITS

The project is over halfway through and has had its share of successes and failures. However, some themes are emerging around its benefits:

- ▶ Engaged creative people will give beyond expectations

- ▶ Shared ideas and thinking across different orchestras and countries gives confidence to new thinking
 - ▶ New, fresh ideas can inform strategic direction for each orchestra
 - ▶ More income can be sourced by broadening reach and impact
 - ▶ Reduced frustration and friction in the workplace
 - ▶ Increased quality of orchestral performance, particularly among those who feel re-engaged with their lost creativity and who receive personal recognition
 - ▶ Common purpose from within the organisation
 - ▶ Continual refreshing of the core programme to match societal changes and expectations.
- Arguably, orchestral projects can be

broadly divided into four categories: core; profile; commercial; and experimental. EOLab II is designed to be experimental, and Creative Europe has kindly supported us with the resources to be ambitious and to risk failure in the drive for new thinking.

At the Ulster Orchestra we have a goal to be 'of' Northern Ireland (to shadow BBC language). Although it is vital for us to be the Berlin-Philharmonic-on-the-Lagan by playing the great repertoire to the highest standards, we also need to differentiate our creative content to make it truly 'of our place'. We recently collaborated with Tony Doherty, an author whose father was killed on Bloody Sunday in Londonderry. Tony has written about his experiences growing up and the sudden loss of his father. One of our musicians, Philip Walton, created

a beautiful score for six musicians that underpins the author speaking from his book. The resulting performances are a powerfully emotive and challenging narrative about the Troubles. It is now one of a range of core projects that feature narratives distinctive to these parts. It has moved from a risky experimental proposition, not least politically, to a core project that has had a range of performances in different contexts.

If we continue with developing player-led content in this way – and we will – then something from our core programme will have to fall out. This will be painful, but it isn't that difficult to spot regular programming that isn't successful any more.

EOLab II can demonstrate other projects that have already begun the move from experimental towards core. For ▶

▼ 'Fresh thinking and new audiences': The Romanian National Symphony Orchestra



BRANCHING OUT**Viola player Jonathan Simmance explains how expanding his role helped him fulfil his creative potential**

▲ 'I desired individuality': Jonathan Simmance

For most of my musical life, I followed a stereotypical path: beginning at an early age, progressing through the ABRSM system, studying at university and conservatoire, before embarking on a portfolio career comprising orchestral playing, wedding gigs, teaching and bar work. I was encouraged at every turn to be expressively individual, creative, and to embrace the vagaries of a career in the arts.

I then had the incredibly good fortune to secure a position in the Ulster Orchestra.

Being a small cog in such a magnificent machine as a symphony orchestra can be incredible. I take pride in the role, synchronising with desk partners, the viola section, the strings and the whole orchestra. Rarely, however, is one afforded the space to be individual, and certainly not within the ranks of the string section. The

expectation is exactly the opposite: you are told what, when and how to play within a finely tuned mechanism, without much spontaneous creativity.

Don't get me wrong, this is not a criticism of the medium. There is nothing finer than a symphony orchestra in full flow. I often compare it to an express locomotive at full steam; visual, aural, powerful, mechanical and yet alive.

Perhaps selfishly, though, I desired individuality. I taught, sang, composed, arranged and played chamber music, but I really sought creativity within the orchestral context. I was approached by a colleague to participate in a series of workshops in a school, thrown in at the deep end without training or experience, and I loved it. I will be forever grateful to him for trusting me.

The outreach programme of the orchestra has since grown exponentially; it is now a core part of every musician's contract. After a particularly resonant collaboration with Women's Aid, I was approached by the managing director to take on a role within our then fledgling, now thriving, Learning and Community Engagement department. I jumped at the opportunity – although not without a nervous backward glance and a firm shove from my wife.

I am now both a job-sharing viola player and amateur for the UO, facilitating community collaborations, education workshops and pre-concert engagements. I work in schools in socially-deprived areas; with survivors of domestic abuse; with communities divided by the Troubles; and with musicians from myriad different genres. I provide support, project ideas, workshop plans and arrangements for colleagues, and introduce the Ulster Orchestra to a diverse new audience.

It has been a steep learning curve. I admit that administration and deadlines are not really in my nature. I am not quite as 'match fit' as I once was, having to work harder to maintain the concentration and technique needed for playing. I have learned much about the issues facing society, and am often responsible for giving a voice to those in need of being heard. I straddle the line between players and management with accompanying mild ribbing from the viola section.

And I still have the privilege of being a small part of a symphony orchestra at full steam.

example, the learning from our colleagues in Barcelona after observing the EOLab II project in Manchester led to a wildly successful choral programme – wildly successful because they were looking to recruit 400 singers and had applications from 3,000! This left the enviable 'problem' of how to cater for over-success. Boy, do we need more of that kind of problem.

EOLab II allowed for time to be spent with musicians and managers outlining and clearly agreeing why any project is of value. We all recognise the issue of too much time and energy spent stuck in a circular discussion of the What, How, Who and When that drags the conversation into the negative and pulls us away from the more important discussion of a project's value. Let the vision precede the logistics because it is extraordinary what an organisation can achieve if it believes. The sheer joy that the musicians of the Czech Philharmonic share with the Roma children's choir, Čhavoreng, is enough to challenge any negative preconceptions of that project's relevance and value. The vision that my good friend Petr Kadlec of the Czech Phil has shown, and the sheer bloody-mindedness to make it happen, is inspirational in itself.

NEXT STEPS

Rather than offer some kind of flow chart approach to copying each project, we want you to contact the EOLab II partner orchestras and get a personal account of how and why the various projects were important and successful or otherwise. You can use the sounding board of the EOLab II leaders to help identify the steps you could take to reap the benefits listed above.

Lastly, please don't get frustrated at the first steps or at the siren voices ('We tried that and it didn't work...'). We are now, after two years of the EOLab II programme, seeing how the benefits can lift partner orchestras. Patience and constant reminders of the benefits are fundamentally important for the sector. I have been lucky to have been given creative leadership opportunities as a musician that have enriched my life and, I trust, the orchestras that have employed me. Others also deserve those opportunities. 

Bridge over troubled water

The Ulster Orchestra's Crescendo project is helping to heal divisions between groups of people historically in conflict. Coriander Stuttard reports



▲ 'Improved morale, pride and collaboration': Crescendo in action

An important part of the Ulster Orchestra's outreach work is its Crescendo project, which works with community leaders to transform the lives of children in socially-deprived areas of Belfast. Crescendo brings together the Colin Community and Colin Neighbourhood Partnership, the Shankill Community and Greater Shankill Partnership, and four primary schools. More recently the Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation at Queen's University Belfast has been providing an academic evaluation of the programme to deliver even greater benefits to the children.

One key aim of Crescendo is to build an integrated community with two primarily Catholic and two primarily Protestant primary schools. The project aims to break down historical religious and social barriers, through allowing the children musical

exposure. Its premise is about inclusivity, not excellence.

The idea of Crescendo originated five years ago, when the Ulster Orchestra organised a 'paper orchestra' in a shopping centre. Children were given paper instruments and sang along while the orchestra played. Many children had never come across an orchestra or indeed any acoustic classical music instruments before. Following this, community leaders from both Shankill (a Protestant community) and Colin (defined as a Catholic community) decided to visit the Big Noise Project in Scotland. 'We hired a bus and visited Raploch, a working-class housing scheme near Stirling, and also a school in Glasgow where the majority of children in P1 had no English language but were singing and learning to communicate through music,' says Kate Thompson from

the Colin Neighbourhood partnership. 'We were all blown away by the teacher's ability to communicate with these children and in a safe environment. We also witnessed children with profound disabilities being included.'

Working with the Ulster Orchestra, these community leaders then forged classroom projects led by associates of the orchestra, with players from the orchestra dropping in as guests to give instrumental demonstrations. The weekly projects look at different aspects of music, such as rhythm and pitch, but demonstrate these from an orchestral point of view so the children get a sense of how the orchestra works when it comes together to play. Jonathan Simmance, viola player and amateur from the Ulster Orchestra, says that the children all knew about flute bands and traditional Irish music but didn't have an awareness of orchestras. 'They get

to listen to the instruments and we also give them performance opportunities – it could be singing a song on their own or backed by musicians. We want to make it a regular part of their lives.'

Thompson says that running the school sessions meets one of Crescendo's objectives: to provide a safe, secure environment for the children's confidence and self-worth to develop. 'The work encourages mutual respect and negotiation through the medium of

in June, both communities came together under the roof of the Ulster Hall in a United Children's Concert. Getting the audience into the Ulster Hall was itself significant: the few members of the audience who had been inside before had done so for boxing matches – it was perceived as a place for more elderly, middle-class guests. The children were given the opportunity to sing and sit alongside members of the orchestra with some especially arranged percussive or string parts. Kate Thompson

he hopes to introduce some instrumental work – ukuleles and ocarinas – and then woodwind strings and brass. There are encouraging movements, too, towards after-school practice sessions which have been met enthusiastically by parents.

What makes the Crescendo project so interesting is that it is drawing inspiration from much of the outreach work around – In Harmony and El Sistema – but has paved its own way, adapting to the particular needs in this community. As Jackie Redpath summarises, 'Crescendo is working across the sectarian divide, in four schools and two communities massively impacted by the conflict. Music is the agent for change in releasing the pupils' creativity and building their self-regulation, resilience and aspiration. Beyond this the orchestra, through Crescendo, is straddling the cultural divide between classical music and a working class community in the Shankill, basing much of its rehearsals in the Spectrum Centre – a large community facility at the heart of the Shankill. It has created an unlikely partnership between the world of high-brow culture, traditionally epitomised by the Ulster Orchestra and classical music and the lives of children in some of the most challenged circumstances in Northern Ireland.'

Simmance agrees: 'What is most touching is that we are normalising the orchestra and classical music in areas where we were aliens. And we're now beginning to be seen as part of the fabric of the schools.'

“ We are normalising the orchestra and classical music in areas where we were aliens ”

ensemble music,' she says, 'and it reduces the children's exposure to negative influences and high-risk behaviours. Both Shankill and Colin communities experience some of the highest levels of deprivation across Europe with poor health outcomes and poor educational achievement, demonstrating how important the Crescendo project is proving for this generation. The chance to experience music throughout their primary education and with their peers across a divided community is a longer-term aim.'

Jackie Redpath, who leads the work in the Shankill Community, agrees. 'Four years ago the Greater Shankill was designated a "children and young people zone" by its community, seeking to redress decades of decline, the impact of the conflict, gross levels of educational underachievement and health inequalities. The aim of the zone is to create opportunities for this generation of Shankill children to more fully realise their potential.' Annie Armstrong, manager of the Colin partnership explains how Crescendo ties in with their specific aims. 'In the Colin community our focus has been on working with children and parents at the earliest opportunity. The Crescendo project is a really good example of our early intervention approach ... building confidence and encouraging parental involvement.'

The external perception of improved morale, pride and collaboration between communities and partners is a crucial part of the project, set against a backdrop of regeneration after the post-Troubles era. The first Christmas concerts in each school brought families together to see the children benefiting directly from the music. Then

continues, 'We had about 250 people witnessing the Crescendo project. It was an outstanding event as it showed that music can overcome the divide of our education system and the post-Troubles society in Northern Ireland.'

Fundraising is absolutely crucial to implement the vision of the project. Simmance says, 'The efforts of the fundraising team in the orchestra and also the two community organisations have been amazing. They have the expertise and insight not only in education, but also in being part of the community.' His vision is to continue the programme of basics in the schools while reviewing previous years of work. The third cohort of children will start in January. As they progress through the years,

▼ Building self-confidence: Crescendo project pupils



A sense of belonging

Petr Kadlec of the Czech Philharmonic explains how an EOLab II project is helping members of the Romany community to escape poverty and prejudice through singing

My first visit to a Romany settlement in eastern Slovakia, February 2014: groups of children in muddy clothes rush to welcome a stranger with joy. I will never forget their eyes. There is childish joy in them – carelessness, mischief – yet also they are full of sorrow, fear and despair. You can see a double future: a hopeful one, evoked in all of us by children; and the one in which the desperate fate of their parents is reflected. Which is more probable?

The singer and choirmaster Ida Kellarová does everything she can to move the scales towards hope. In the Čhavorenge choir,

which she founded in 2011, she creates an environment in which children discover a relation to their own culture, gain self-confidence and discover options other than those suggested by their circumstances – often those of poverty, social exclusion, lack of education or prejudice. The Czech Philharmonic does what it can — for six years now — to support Kellarová's endeavour.

At the beginning there was her invitation: 'Come with us to the settlements'; followed by our spontaneous answer, 'Why not?' Since then, some of the Czech Philharmonic musicians have experienced two summer

concerts in Romany settlements in Eastern Slovakia and two in Czechia. Over the summer of 2018, the Romano drom (Romany Way) took place in Romania and Bulgaria, supported by the EU programme Creative Europe. 'Čhavorenge' ('to children' in Romany), has developed into an experienced choir that has performed in dozens of concerts in Prague's Rudolfinum, the seat of the Czech Philharmonic, but also in the Hradčany Square, the very centre of the Czech statehood, under the baton of chief conductor Jiří Bělohávek, as well as many other places in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. ▶

▼ The Čhavorenge choir: 'Children discover a relation to their own culture'



© PETR KADLEC



▲ Changing lives: Čhavorengé

Ida Kellarová says that Romany children lack idols and good leadership. If they have it, though, there is nothing they cannot achieve. Good leadership, first and foremost, means that you know about every child; every child matters, and nothing which could endanger the whole is ever ignored. 'There is almost a supernatural discipline, docility and ubiquitous order,' says Jiří Ševčík, one of the members of the Czech Philharmonic who has been working with the choir for a long time. 'To a large extent, this order is based not on prescriptions and limits, but on the sense of a shared work and responsibility, honesty and the love of children from the adults who dedicate their attention to them.' There are choirmasters who want to have a top choir, but who are not really concerned about the children and their fates. Ida wants to have an excellent choir, but the main aim of her work is to show to children a different way of life and thinking. The choir's mission statement

is to help children and young people to find a sense of belonging, a sense of their culture and personal identity. And to serve as a role-model for future generations.

In a café near the Czech border, two elderly ladies sit over their coffees, commenting on the evening concert of Čhavorengé: 'There will be gypsies again, wreaking havoc. Shame Hitler had not lived ten years longer; they would be no problem now.' In the same place, inhabited by Germans 80 years ago, you can hear a grammar school student claiming that 'Romany people should go back to where they came.' In another town, large and culturally vibrant, the Čhavorengé composer Desiderius Dužda is approached by a man in his thirties who claims, 'In this country of mine I can do nothing because of people like you!' It's like a reflex. Is it any wonder then that a few of those who are caught in the trap of social exclusion want to function outside this vicious circle?

Čhavorengé is not just a choir, but an idea; the idea of the better in us. The idea that a person can transform, break free from their circumstances; that each of us can find our true voices and let ourselves be led on a journey which will not necessarily be an easier one but will be the right one. The idea that even in the deepest darkness you can believe in a hope that the world — sometimes seemingly suspicious and inimical — is not so, or does not have to be; and that in every person there is something that enables him or her to arrive at understanding with all the others.

We are happy that we will be able to present this idea of the world — on the invitation of the Association of British Orchestras — on 23 January 2019 in Belfast, together with the Czech Philharmonic's musicians, Ida Kellarová and the children of the Čhavorengé choir. 

Fasten your seatbelts

Two leaders of UK orchestras discuss the implications of Brexit. First, the chairman of the Ulster Orchestra **Stephen Peover** expresses his concern that open, collaborative society is at risk



▲ 'Cross-border initiatives flourished with EU support': Stephen Peover

I should perhaps make it clear from the outset that I was and still am a strong supporter of the Remain campaign and of the wider European project. Northern Ireland went through more than 30 years of communal violence with over 3,000 deaths, not to mention the countless other physical and psychological traumas which ensued. The peace process opened up our society which had for too long been effectively monocultural (even if that monoculture was differentiated by religious affiliations) and we have had for the first time the beginnings of a richer and more diverse set of traditions and cultures as people from all over Europe and elsewhere settled here. Quite apart from its other more practical implications, therefore, I fear that the greatest risk to us in Northern Ireland is the shutting down of a more open society and the recreation of the inward looking and stultifying mindset which so characterised our past.

It is widely acknowledged that the European Union has played a major part in

the stabilisation of politics here in Northern Ireland and, moreover, through its funding programmes – most particularly the various manifestations of the peace programme – it contributed significantly to a whole range of initiatives aimed at those most affected by the violence. Those initiatives have included assisting the development of a vibrant community arts sector and have helped create a wider recognition of how the arts can enrich and empower people in the most economically disadvantaged areas where the violence had its greatest impact. Pressures on budgets have already endangered much of that activity, and I fear that such pressures will worsen rather than be ameliorated.

Cross-border initiatives flourished with EU support and with the creation of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement. The fluidity of the border is so much a part of life here now that no one would want to return to the former customs arrangements, let alone the rigorous security controls

which were in force during the Troubles. In this context I have some concerns about the impact that Brexit may have on the co-operation we have been fostering and the proposals we have been developing to work with communities on both sides of the border to showcase the cultural heritage we share. There are real opportunities in the arts and education to build shared experiences and to promote mutual understanding.

From the perspective of the Ulster Orchestra and the development of classical music in Northern Ireland, it scarcely needs to be said that our repertoire reflects our participation in the common cultural heritage of Europe. Our professional musicians too are drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds; freedom of movement has allowed us to draw talent from wherever it is to be found. New immigration processes may ensure that such talent is still accessible to us, but in Northern Ireland we have learnt to be wary of the ways in which 'chill factors' create informal barriers within our own community, affecting where we live, work, shop and socialise. We need to be sensitive to the impact that the chill factor, which is already flowing from Brexit, may have on the willingness of others to come and settle here and share their skills and insights with us.

I would like to be able to point to some potential benefits for the arts after Brexit but I find myself unable to do so. It must be admitted that none of us is quite sure what the details of the Brexit deal may be. My key worries, however, are not really about the practicalities but about the impact on the values and culture of wider UK society. It is said that there was once a headline in the *Times* which read 'Fog in Channel – Continent Isolated' and while the story may be apocryphal, the risk is that the attitudes it describes may be very real.



▲ CBSO rehearsing in Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie

Stephen Maddock OBE, chief executive of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, considers the challenges for orchestral touring

Early on 24 June 2016 I was interviewed by Classic FM down the line from my hotel in Japan (where the CBSO was on tour – we had all voted in advance by post/proxy, don't worry). They asked me whether I saw any upsides for orchestras from the previous day's shock decision to leave the European Union. I said that I couldn't – the easy things were likely to get harder, while the hard things would get no easier.

In the latter category is the much-vaunted 'trade beyond the EU'; in the case of UK orchestras, that generally means tours to Japan, China, the USA, and occasionally Latin America, the Middle East and a few other territories. In fact the range of opportunities beyond the EU has been broadening fast in recent decades, reflecting the fact that classical music is actually a growing industry when looked at on a global scale. But these tours are always very costly and time-consuming to put together, not least because of the complex visa, carnet and paperwork requirements.

European touring has been much easier thanks to the UK's membership of the EU's single market and customs union. This has meant that we can tour to 27 European countries without any need for visas or work permits for our musicians, or carnets (temporary export licences) for our instruments. It also means that we can recruit without complications from a talent pool of over 500 million, while a large

proportion of our guest artists travel here on EU passports and can therefore accept a typically poorly-paid (by international standards) week with a British orchestra without too much administrative hassle.

As our uncertain future after March 2019 comes ever closer, we are now working through a vast range of issues as part of our contingency planning. If there is a deal on the withdrawal agreement, of course little should change in the short term, and we will continue to lobby as a sector on the precise arrangements for travel, migration and other regulations after the transition period ends at the start of 2021. This uncertainty is bad enough, but we are also now mapping in detail the implications of a possible 'no deal' scenario from next March onwards. The issues are especially pressing for the CBSO as we have a 12-concert European tour with Yuja Wang and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla starting in mid-May 2019, taking in six countries (including Switzerland) in just over two weeks. As with most tours (and this has been planned for a couple of years), there is the bare minimum of 'free' days and travel time, with the finest of margins in terms of the schedule and the budget.

Even if the worst of the predictions – planes not flying, lorries stuck in Kent, tariffs on our fees (any of which would make most orchestral tours completely impossible) – are somehow avoided, the chances are that taking

100 people (from typically 15-20 different nationalities) will become significantly more expensive, complex and time-consuming. We have added a travel day at the start of each tour, but what if we need to add more non-playing (and thus non-earning) days to each tour? What if, in the end, European promoters decide that booking British orchestras is just too much hassle? That's a huge chunk of this sector's earnings removed at a stroke, and with it the other 'soft power' reputational benefits that this country will surely need as it retreats to its small island.

Two years on, I'm still searching for any upside. 🇬🇧

▼ Touring will become 'expensive, complex and time-consuming': Stephen Maddock



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Raising the bar

Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle is a trained singer who brings a deep love of music to her role as Lord Lieutenant of Belfast. She explains the importance of the arts in building cultural confidence and shaking off the shackles of Northern Ireland's past



▲ Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle: 'It's time to stand up and articulate exactly what classical music can do for people'

Belfast recently played host to one of the most thrilling events I've seen in the city for a very long time: the gala opening of *Rigoletto* by Northern Ireland Opera, with the Ulster Orchestra in the pit under the baton of Gareth Hancock.

Some absolutely extraordinary work has taken place around this production, with outreach and community projects involving people who would not normally have access to classical music. It has been joyous and uplifting to see over 1,000 people getting involved, from the tiniest primary school children through to older people and those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Northern Ireland is still a society coming out of our conflict, so the psychological scars continue to run very deep. We have issues of cultural confidence and find it challenging to articulate how we feel about culture and the role of the arts, but initiatives like these give cause for incredible joy and provide sense of cultural liberation. It also provides a very tangible output in terms of where Northern Ireland has come from, and where it's going.

Culture has never been very far away for the people of Northern Ireland. Music is particularly important to us, but I think there was a psychological shackle on people during the dark days. With new leadership coming through, we're now seeing how classical music has an application across the whole of society. It's all about added value. One of the Ulster Orchestra's wonderful initiatives is called 'Move to the Music', bringing elderly people from rural areas to concerts, which fulfils all sorts of possibilities and functions.

At a time when there are so many calls on the public purse, should funding for the arts be seen as indulgent? The answer is 'No', because it's time to stand up and articulate exactly what classical music can do for people – and indeed what it does do on a daily basis.

The positive growth we're seeing in classical music is part of a wider cultural resurgence in Northern Ireland. For example, there's the Oh Yeah Music Centre, our dedicated music hub here in Belfast, which came out of a conversation with Gary Lightbody and the band Snow Patrol about the catalytic effect of music on people's lives. The energy around the centre is amazing: there's everything going on there. The Titanic Experience has also been a major step forward for the city, as has the Troubles exhibition at Ulster

Museum. These are world-class, world-leading projects.

Music, in particular, offers opportunities for giving voice, allowing people to participate at whatever level and in whatever way they feel comfortable. This lies at the heart of Northern Ireland's cultural resurgence and articulation of cultural confidence: it's palpable and it's spreading. We're now empowering communities who would previously have said, 'Classical music is not for us'. There's also a lot of work going on around Irish traditional music and flute bands – the Arts Council now has a scheme for band instruments. This is about a holistic vision, rather than separation and division.

Just as we're talking about shaking off our shackles and healing psychological scars, we've got to look at building resilience across the whole arts sector. Absence of funding is no excuse for not doing good work: we've just got to find a way to make things happen! That means exploring new models, doing things differently, building alliances and finding partners where we haven't looked before. Above all, it's about the quality of the work being delivered.

NI Opera's *Rigoletto* is a perfect example of what can be achieved by raising the bar. The cast for this production included Nadine Koutcher, winner of Cardiff Singer of the World in 2015, Sebastian Catana, a fabulous international baritone, and Operalia winner Davide Giusti. Alongside these principal roles, there were a number of young singers from Northern Ireland making their company debuts. This builds on the company's legacy of growing local talent and allowing them to take their place with the best in the world.

In terms of the region's wider cultural resurgence, we're now receiving a lot

of overseas investment. Many of these investors want to know whether Northern Ireland has a symphony orchestra, an opera company and an annual concert season. The Titanic Experience has become a huge draw for visitors, with big cruise liners now stopping at Belfast.

Meanwhile, we're watching with interest to see what happens with Dublin's new Irish National Opera company, and for opportunities to cooperate. Wouldn't it be wonderful to see an NI Opera season in Belfast, followed by a season in Dublin? That would begin to make the island of Ireland a destination for opera. Indeed, developing greater cultural cohesion between the two parts of Ireland offers a raft of possibilities: it will require creative thinking and some hard choices, but given where Northern Ireland has come from and where it's going, I think we're up for that! 

► NI Opera's *Rigoletto* at Belfast's Grand Opera House



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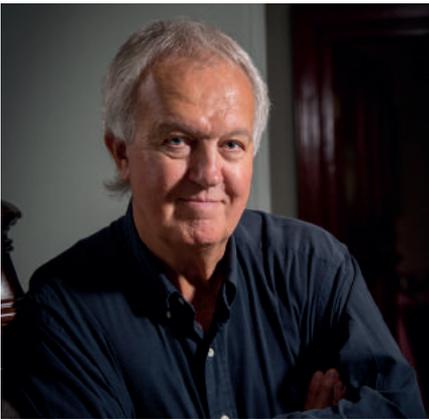


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Bridging the gap

Entrepreneur and philanthropist Alan Nappin talks to Ulster Orchestra principal percussionist Sam Staunton about his commitment to supporting work that connects classical music with the wider community

© ARN FOUNDATION



▲ Alan Nappin and Sam Staunton

Sam Staunton: Tell me about your business background and how you came to set up the ARN Foundation.

Alan Nappin: I was born in London and left school at the age of 16 with two O-levels. I started work as a storeman in the electrical wholesale trade. In 1974 I was made redundant and worked on a building site in Chelsea for two years, moving to Northern Ireland in 1976 to join my two sisters, who had both married. There I started off selling to electrical wholesalers as an agent until 1984 when I started Ansell Sales and Distribution. I developed my business over the years and in the 90s concentrated mainly on lighting. To expand our operations I set up a distribution centre in England in 2001, started importing from China and eventually established offices there. I sold the business in November 2014 to a leading lighting manufacturer in Japan.

SS: What led you to support the Ulster Orchestra and become such a generous donor?

AN: As a child I was introduced to orchestral concerts at the Royal Festival Hall that were created especially for young people. I think it's important that Northern Ireland should have its own symphony orchestra and that it should

be well supported. Quite by chance, over dinner I was introduced by a mutual friend to a cheeky guy (you!) who turned out to be the leader of the Ulster Orchestra's percussion section. You explained that there was an opportunity for supporters of the orchestra to sponsor a musician's chair and I began giving to the orchestra in that way. Over the years our relationship developed and eventually I decided to become a major donor.

SS: As a supporter of the UO, how important to you is our learning and community engagement work compared with concert performances?

AN: Learning and community engagement work is an extremely important part of the Ulster Orchestra's work. You guys are out there in the community all the time and I think it's important to bridge the perceived gap between orchestral concerts and the wider community.

SS: The ARN Foundation supports people with mental health issues and learning difficulties. What was it that inspired you to help people in this way?

AN: While my foundation supports people with mental health issues and learning

disabilities it supports a whole range of different charities. I have focused a lot on mental health charities because Northern Ireland has the highest level of mental illness in the UK. There is a rate of almost one suicide every day, of which around 80 per cent are male.

SS: It can be challenging for arts organisations to raise funds when there are so many good causes that need support. What do you think arts organisations need to do to attract more philanthropy?

AN: Currently I don't support any other arts organisations, but when such good community and outreach work is being done as part of an arts organisation's core activity – as part of its basic function – it needs to be shouted from the rooftops. This type of message encourages more philanthropic support, the kind of support that the Ulster Orchestra has inspired me to provide.

SS: What musical highlights have you most enjoyed as a UO supporter?

AN: Seeing conductor Rafael Payare take the orchestra to another level over the last few years has blown me away.

SS: What advice would you give to someone who wants to become an arts philanthropist but doesn't know where to focus their giving?

AN: Giving in this way is a deeply personal thing, so it's up to each individual to decide what motivates them.

SS: When will I next be seeing you at an Ulster Orchestra concert?

AN: I'll be there for 'The Magic of Christmas' at Belfast's Waterfront Hall on 19 December – for those of us in the audience, that's when Christmas really begins! 

Alan Nappin's ARN Foundation is an independent charitable trust that supports a wide range of good causes across Northern Ireland. @ARNFoundation

60 years young

Ealing Youth Orchestra celebrates its 60th anniversary season during 2018-19 with a special programme of high-profile concerts



▲ Celebrations in order: EYO

The orchestra is delighted to have been able to appoint a composer-in-residence for the first time ever: former EYO player and rising star Hannah Kendall. In November 2018 and February 2019, EYO will perform Hannah's piece *The Spark Catchers* (originally commissioned by the BBC for Chineke Orchestra's first Prom in 2017), and will then give the world premiere of a brand new commission for its 60th anniversary gala concert (29 June 2019). A special invitation is being extended to all former members of EYO to attend this concert and, if possible, to bring their instruments for a pop-up

finale performance of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* which we hope will be heard on the other side of London!

Before that, on 15 February 2019, the orchestra will appear at the Ealing Music and Film Festival alongside members of the London Mozart Players in the latest of a series of side-by-side mentoring projects. We are excited to welcome the amazing young pianist Lauren Zhang, winner of BBC Young Musician 2018, for a reprise of her prize-winning performance of Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No 2. 

www.eyo.org.uk, www.facebook.com/EalingYouthOrchestra



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State of the nation

Director of the ABO Mark Pemberton discusses the challenges posed by Brexit to UK orchestras and explains how the ABO is helping its members to navigate these troubled times

It's been quite a year since the ABO's last annual gathering last January in Cardiff. Back then, our theme was collaboration, something that clearly chimed with our members if the increase in attendance is anything to go by. But more than that, the mood of the conference was positive. We had just had a massive vote of confidence in our sector from the government with the implementation of Orchestra Tax Relief. And although we all knew Brexit was a threat, we had been reassured by indications from government it could secure a good deal for the UK.

It's not looking so positive now. Brexit at the time of writing is looking very scary indeed. A succession of 'no deal' preparation papers from the government has made for grim reading, posing a direct threat to our members. From delays at the border to the imposition of carnets and disruption to flights, there would be an impact on touring into the EU, a vital revenue stream for our members. This is made more problematic by the fact that contracts will already have been signed for tours taking place after 29 March 2019.

The government's proposals on migration are also not helpful. Applying the same controls on European as on non-European Economic Area (EEA) citizens, with salary thresholds and skills and healthcare charges, will make recruitment of talent into our orchestras significantly harder and more expensive. And as much as we would love to have a ready-made army of British musicians stepping into the breach, the fact is that decades of under-investment in music education have left us short of home-grown talent.

So perhaps it's no surprise the theme of our conference in Belfast is 'cross border'. Because crossing borders is what orchestras do. From touring to digital delivery, our orchestras are global businesses. But borders are not

just physical. As our relevance as an art form continues to be questioned, there are other boundaries that need to be crossed, both internal and external, to reach new and diverse audiences in new places, to forge an inclusive workforce, and to redefine what it means to be an orchestra in the 21st century.

Because it's not all bad news. Orchestra Tax Relief *is* making a difference, helping our members keep their heads above water after years of cuts in public investment. Audiences continue to be loyal, and we are hoping that when we do our triannual statistics next year they will show the sort of growth in ticket sales we reported in 2013 and 2016.

“ It's been great to see such talent across our sector, and willingness on the part of our members to invest in their staff ”

Meanwhile the Family Arts Campaign, in which the ABO has played an active part since its launch in 2012, continues to help build family audiences, both young and old. It was a welcome development when the campaign was included in Arts Council England's portfolio of Sector Support Organisations.

The ABO is particularly proud of the success of its Find Your Way programme, which aims to nurture the next generation of leaders in our sector. Great leadership is going to be key to navigating the choppy waters that lie ahead, and we want to make sure we build a community of emerging leaders with the skills and confidence to take on the challenge. Find Your Way is now in its fourth year, and we were delighted that last year's programme was supported by Arts Council England and the Jerwood Foundation,

helping to build an even better programme for the participants. It's been great to see such talent across our sector, and willingness on the part of our members to invest in their staff. The session that the 2017/18 cohort curated at our conference in Cardiff was a highlight for many delegates, and has set the bar high for Belfast.

And the ABO continues to work with the PRS Foundation on its successful Resonate programme, incentivising ABO members to perform works commissioned over the past 30 years. We also have our Sirens programme, thanks to a generous gift from Diana Ambache, which aims to raise awareness and appreciation of the music written by historical women from around the world.

Which brings us back to inclusion and diversity – hot topics at our 2017 and 2018 conferences. ABO members are under scrutiny as never before, and we will continue to provide a platform for members to share best practice and forge solutions to what is without doubt a complex problem.

But let's return to our role as a champion for the orchestral sector. Last January we held a reception in the Senedd in Cardiff as part of the ABO conference. In March we celebrated the ABO's 70th anniversary with a reception in the Houses of Parliament, hosted by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Classical Music, featuring speeches from the culture minister and the shadow secretary of state for digital, culture, media and sport, and attended by a host of MPs and peers from across the political divide. In December we will be holding a reception in the Scottish Parliament to celebrate Scotland's classical music sector. And in January 2019 we will be in Belfast for the ABO conference. It's quite an achievement to have ramped up our visibility across all four home nations in a single year.

Since last January we have also been active in fringe events at the party conferences, met politicians and liaised with government departments. If the ABO isn't out there championing its members, who will? 

◀ 'Crossing borders is what orchestras do': Mark Pemberton

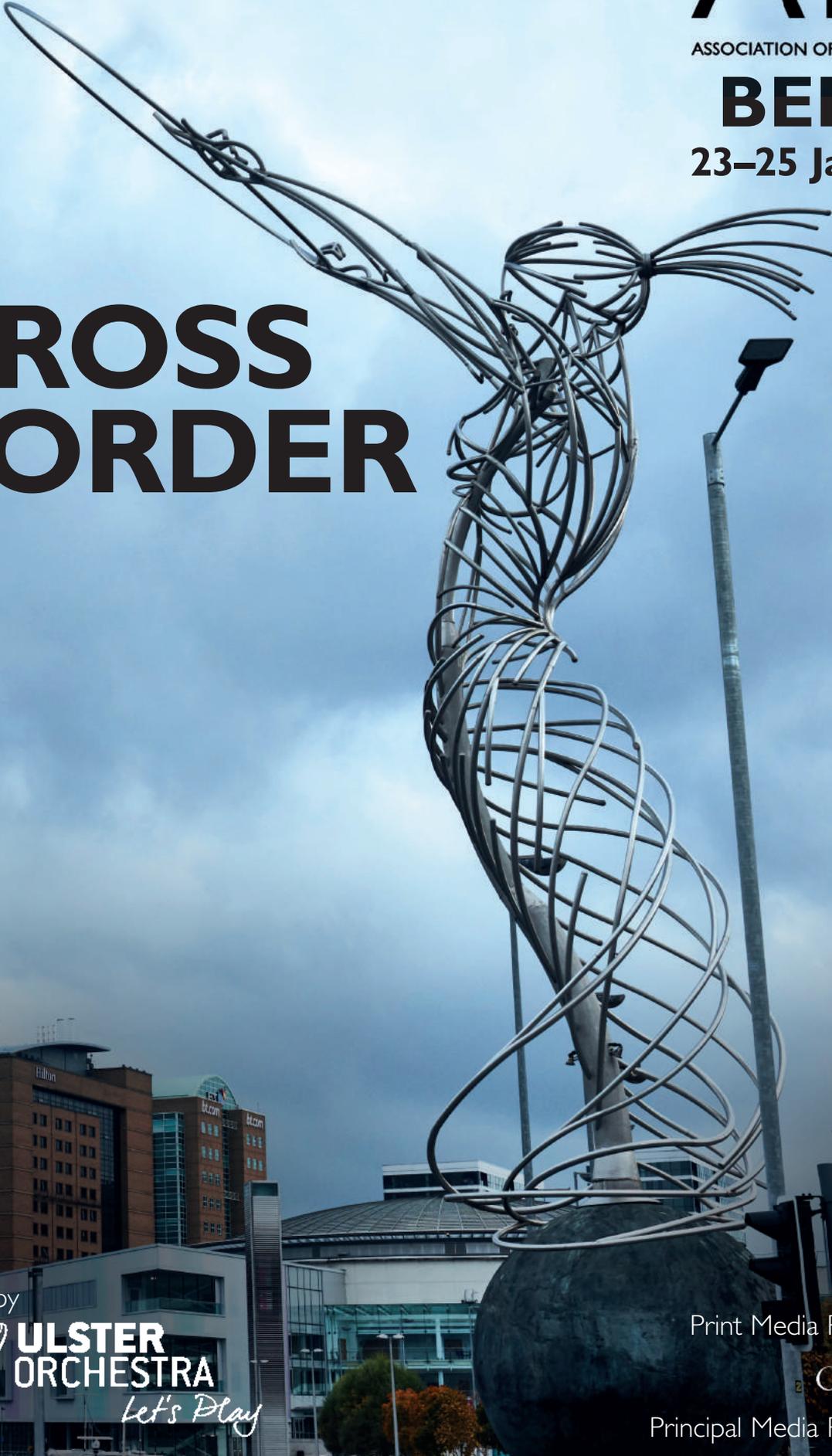
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Following one of its best attended conferences ever, the ABO makes a welcome return to Belfast in 2019. Twenty years from our previous visit, it's a city on the rise, brimming with vitality and good humour, looking forward and determined not to dwell on its past. But the shadow of Brexit looms large, creating uncertainties for our host, the Ulster Orchestra, that are a microcosm of the challenges faced by orchestras not only in the rest of the UK, but across the globe.

We look forward to welcoming delegates once again to the impressive Belfast Waterfront, now repositioned as the ICC Belfast within the conferencing market. And with an awards dinner at the magnificent and award-winning Titanic Belfast, and a concert from the Ulster Orchestra in the Waterfront Hall's Main Auditorium, it promises to be an action-packed three days.



Award winners at ABO Conference 2018

© KIRSTEN MCTERNAN

We are pleased our partnerships continue both with Classic FM, our Principal Media Partner, and Rhinegold Publishing, our Print Media Partner. As part of our partnership with Rhinegold, we will once again present the annual ABO/Rhinegold Awards at the conference dinner, including trophies for Orchestra Manager, Concert Hall Manager and Artist Manager of the Year, alongside the prestigious ABO Award.

With low-cost flights from all parts of the UK, and frequent international connections via London Heathrow and Schiphol, Belfast is an easy place to get to. And with its combination of earnest discussion and the fabled Belfast 'craic', this year's conference promises to be serious fun.

THE THEME



Beacon of Hope

Crossing borders; it's what orchestras do. From touring to digital delivery, our members are global businesses. But borders are not just physical. As our relevance as an artform continues to be questioned, there are other boundaries that need to be crossed, both internal and external, to reach new and diverse audiences in new places, forge an inclusive workforce, and redefine what it means to be an orchestra in the 21st century. Join us in Belfast as we debate the key issues of today, and look at how to overcome the barriers to growth.

THE BIG DEBATES

- **Cross Border: City Limits**

There are borders within cities. From the centre to the suburbs, rich to poor, heritage to contemporary, what role can orchestras play in crossing the boundaries and forging social cohesion?

- **Cross Border: Brexit**

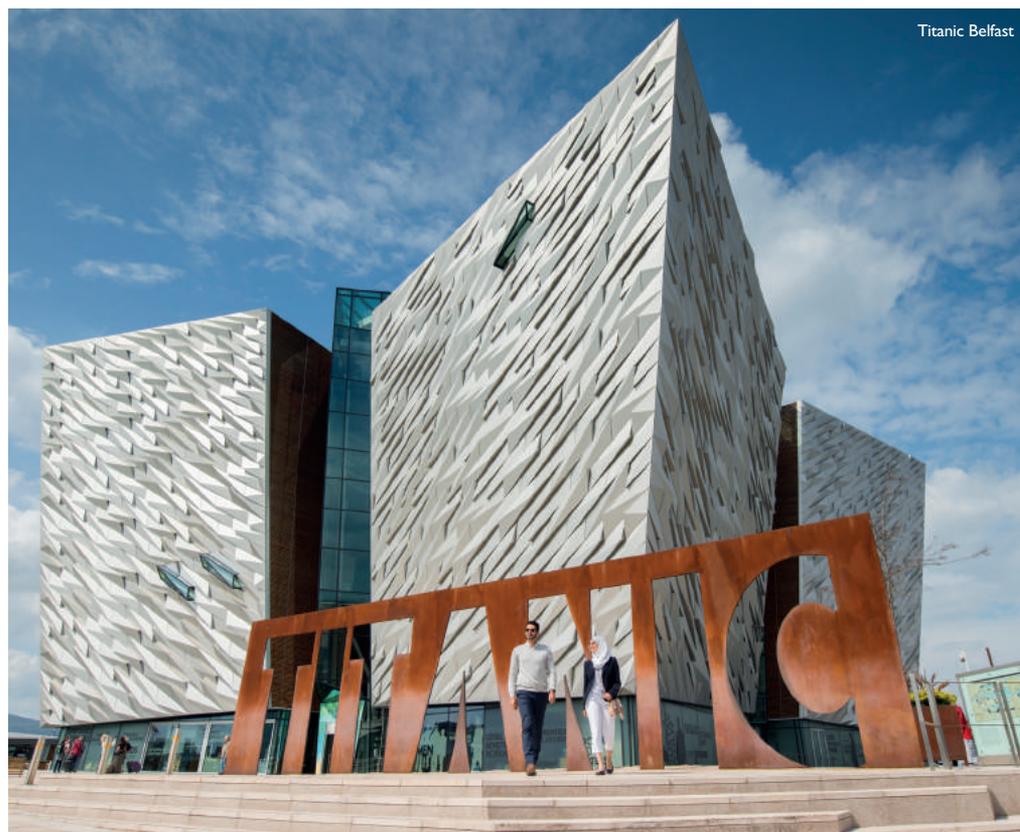
With just a few short months to go to Brexit Day, what does the UK's future relationship with the EU look like and what will be the impact on the classical music industry? What can we learn from the freeflowing relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic? From the workforce to touring, we look at the implications of Deal or No Deal.

- **Cross Border: The Musician**

Continuing on from our Collaboration theme of last year, how do we overcome some of the inbuilt boundaries that exist between management and musicians? How do we release the creative energy of our musicians, and help them sustain a long and happy career? And how do we continue to make progress on overcoming the barriers to a more diverse and inclusive workforce?

- **Cross Border: The Music**

Can new technology help break through some of the barriers to new audiences?



Titanic Belfast

© VISIT BELFAST PORTAL

THE CONFERENCE

The annual ABO Conference is the UK's leading classical music conference, attracting delegates from every part of the industry from here and abroad. People who return to the ABO Conference year after year tell us how much they learn from the wide variety of debates and workshops and the wider perspective that our sessions offer by bringing together different manager groups. The opportunity to engage more widely with other areas of our business is exactly what strengthens the orchestral sector from within, helping to develop careers and deepen understanding for all those who attend.

Of equal importance is the networking that goes on outside the formal events. In addition to our members, we welcome delegates and speakers from a wide range of organisations across the globe, offering the chance to meet leading members of the classical music industry and beyond, to share best practice, and to enjoy lively and informative debates.

People make our industry what it is, and the ABO Conference provides the one major opportunity each year for us all to come together in one place. Whether you're new to the industry or a respected veteran, a CEO, musician, working within one of the many varied roles within orchestras or the wider classical music sector, you'll find it relevant, engaging and unmissable.

OUR HOSTS: ULSTER ORCHESTRA

With a mission to enrich the lives of people living in Northern Ireland, those visiting and those who encounter it, through international touring and regular radio and TV broadcasts with both BBC Northern Ireland and BBC Radio 3, the Ulster Orchestra strives for excellence in all it undertakes, be it regular concert performances, learning and community engagement programmes, or creative collaborations across the arts.

The Ulster Orchestra gives around 40 evening and lunchtime concerts each season in its home, the Ulster Hall, and in Belfast Waterfront. The Orchestra performs for the BBC Radio 3 invitational concert series at the Ulster Hall and in front of tens of thousands for the BBC's *Proms in the Park* celebrations each year.

An important aspect of the Ulster Orchestra's work across Northern Ireland is its annual touring programme of concerts. A new initiative for the Orchestra, *Ulster Orchestra On Your Doorstep*, was founded in its 2016/17 50th Anniversary Season and sees the orchestra play in as diverse a range of venues as possible across Northern Ireland, sending everything from small ensembles and chamber music concerts, right up to the full symphony orchestra, far and wide across the region.

The Orchestra's successful partnership with Northern Ireland Opera (now in its sixth year) will see the two organisations work together on performances of Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* in November 2017. The Orchestra gave four performances at the 2017 Belfast International Arts Festival and also regularly performs with Belfast Philharmonic Choir. A new partnership for the Ulster Orchestra was established in 2016 with the club night Lush!, based at Kelly's nightclub in Portrush, and the first Lush! Classical event sold out the SSE Arena. A second date in October 2017 also sold out.

The Ulster Orchestra records regularly, and its most recent recording commitments have been for the Naxos label under the baton of former Chief Conductor JoAnn Faletta and for the Hyperion label with Howard Shelley. The Orchestra has also recorded work for Chandos, SOMM and Toccatà Classics.



THE CONCERT

Thursday 24 January 2019, 7.45pm
Waterfront Hall Main Auditorium, 2 Lanyon Pl, Belfast, BT1 3WH

Strauss Four Last Songs
Shostakovich Symphony No.4

Rafael Payare *Conductor*
Dorothea Röschmann *Soprano*

Richard Strauss finished a prolific career as a writer of songs with four of the most sublime ever written, composed for his beloved soprano voice. Four Last Songs was completed the year before he died and tackles the subject of death with serenity and acceptance. The glorious lyricism of the writing demands a singer of soaring radiance and in Dorothea Röschmann we welcome one of the great sopranos performing today. "...the intelligence and commitment of her performance elevate the poetry." (Gramophone Magazine)



© MARK ASHBEE

Rafael Payare

Shostakovich was midway through writing the Fourth Symphony when Pravda denounced him for the first time. He was under enormous pressure from the State to write a work that would restore his reputation, but the Fourth Symphony definitely did not fit the bill, so Shostakovich cancelled the première. Instead his Fifth Symphony was the work to restore his reputation – a work which, it could be argued, hid his criticism and mockery of Stalin with more subtlety.

Shostakovich's Fourth is an enormous work on a huge scale. As part of the ABO's Annual Conference, the Ulster Orchestra is delighted to welcome professional musicians from across Europe to create the huge orchestral force this work demands.

THE HOTEL

Our official conference hotel this year, Maldron Hotel Belfast City boasts spacious, air-conditioned bedrooms equipped with all the enhanced modern room amenities you would expect of a 4 star hotel with exceptional value for money. Located in Belfast City Centre, within walking distance of The Grand Opera House and Victoria Square Shopping Centre, the hotel offers discounted parking at the Great Northern Car Park (located 2 minutes from the hotel) and free Wi-Fi to all guests. Maldron Hotel Belfast City is conveniently located within walking distance to Great Victoria Street Train and Bus Station for all of your commuting requirements.



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The Grain & Grill Bar and Restaurant, housed within Maldron Hotel Belfast City, serves great Maldron Signature Dishes and the Maldron team are always on hand to recommend the perfect beverage to accompany your meal. The restaurant uses the finest locally sourced ingredients, offering fresh food until 9:30pm in an inviting, fresh and contemporary environment.

The ABO has a small allocation of rooms reserved at a special rate for delegates which are available on a first-come-first-served basis. Please visit www.abo.org.uk/conference for further hotel information.

HOW TO BOOK

Please visit www.abo.org.uk/conference to book and for details of our single day packages, discounts for multiple bookings and special discounted rates for Musicians and Students.

	Early Bird Booking Rate – Available until 14 December 2018	Full Booking Rate – Available until 8 January 2019
ABO Members	£330 +VAT (1st Delegate)	£370 +VAT (1st Delegate)
Non-Member	£400 +VAT	£420 +VAT