



**ULSTER  
ORCHESTRA**

*Let's Play*

**SECTION LEADER VIOLA  
RECRUITMENT PACK**

**Application Deadline  
Sunday 2nd August 2026**



**PRINCIPAL FUNDING PARTNERS**

PRINCIPAL FUNDER



**Belfast  
City Council**



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If you require any reasonable adjustment(s) at any stage of the recruitment process, please feel encouraged to contact our People & Culture Leader, [lisa@ulsterorchestra.com](mailto:lisa@ulsterorchestra.com).

# JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Job Title</b>	Section Leader Viola
<b>Reporting To</b>	Orchestra Manager
<b>Type of Post</b>	Permanent / Full-time
<b>Salary</b>	£45,189.88 per annum
<b>Location</b>	Belfast, Northern Ireland

The purpose of the role is to sit as Section Leader Viola, performing a wide range of repertoire and smaller scale chamber works. Opportunities to perform solo concerti may also be offered on occasion. In addition to playing in the section in a diverse range of orchestral activities, the successful candidate will have the opportunity to attend auditions and sit on appointment panels, participate in chamber music, and take part in Learning and Community Engagement activity. Opportunities also exist for players to create and lead their own non-orchestral activity.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead and sustain the professional standard of the Viola section, always performing to the highest level of musical excellence.
- Possess and maintain a sound knowledge of the programmed repertoire
- Communicate with the Orchestra Manager on future professional development, musical and artistic performance issues within the Orchestra and attend training activities as required
- Participate in the Orchestra recruitment process including representing the section on audition and trial panels
- Responsible for collating and maintaining the deputies and extras list for the section
- Attend meetings pertinent to artistic issues, contributing to artistic decisions and other matters relating to the artistic health and growth of the Orchestra
- Collaborate with other Section Leaders, attending Section Leader meetings as required
- Represent the Ulster Orchestra in a manner befitting its values and vision, ensuring the highest standards of professional etiquette are maintained during all rehearsals, performances, and recordings
- Provide a point of contact and act as a communication channel for the section, responding to and/or escalating any work-related issues raised by section members.
- Arrange and lead sectional rehearsals as required, provide specific feedback to section members, respond to queries, advise on techniques, and encourage artistic growth

- Promote, support, and maintain positive working relationships within the section and with other members of the organisation, including the administration, other orchestral colleagues, and any freelance players
- Ambassadorial duties such as attending fundraising or donor events as required
- Comply with and uphold the Ulster Orchestra's Health and Safety policies and guidance

## PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

### ESSENTIAL

- Training to a level expected of a professional musician
- Recent significant and relevant professional orchestral experience
- Knowledge and experience of performing a wide range of orchestral repertoire
- Ability to demonstrate excellence in orchestral playing ability
- Strong communication skills with the ability to lead others
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to work effectively, flexibly and collaboratively
- Willingness to participate in additional activities such as Learning & Community Engagement

### DESIRABLE

- Previous experience of leading a section within a professional orchestra
- Proven expertise in a wide range of musical activity, including education and chamber work

### OTHER

If appointed, you will be required to apply for an Enhanced Check through AccessNI, to participate in work activities with children and/or adults at risk. If you foresee any potential issues with this, please email our People and Culture Leader at: [lisa@ulsterorchestra.com](mailto:lisa@ulsterorchestra.com).

## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

The Ulster Orchestra strives to be fully representative of our society and to offer a truly inclusive working environment. We are committed to equality of opportunity and welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Within this context we particularly encourage applications from people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+, Black, Asian and other global majority backgrounds, and those from back-grounds of social and economic deprivation.

The appointment will be made on merit with openness and transparency of process.

# SUBMISSION GUIDANCE AND HOW TO APPLY

*Please note, this position was originally advertised in December 2024, however the position was not filled. As this is a readvertisement we are using an amended process which will employ a pre-audition shortlisting stage.*

All our Orchestra jobs are managed through Musical Chairs. We have outlined our recruitment process for your information below. Please note that applications **should not** be sent directly to the Ulster Orchestra.

If you require any reasonable adjustment(s) at any stage of the recruitment process, please feel encouraged to contact our People & Culture Leader, [lisa@ulsterorchestra.com](mailto:lisa@ulsterorchestra.com).

## **Before applying - check if you have the right to live and work in the UK**

We have a legal responsibility to ensure that all our employees have the legal right to live and work in the UK. Employment offers are conditional on you having, or being able to gain, permission to work in the UK. By law, you will not be able to start working for us until you are able to provide evidence that this permission has been granted.

If you don't already have the legal right to work in the UK, we strongly recommend that you use the [Home Office website](#) to review the legal requirements of working in the UK as this will give you an indication of whether you may be eligible to work in the UK under the Points Based System (PBS) for immigration.

## STAGE 1

### **Application**

All candidates will be required to complete an online portfolio on Musical Chairs by **Sunday 2nd August 2026**. No applications will be accepted after the stated closing date.

You will also be required to complete a monitoring form which is completely anonymous and provides us with important data to support our Diversity & Inclusion strategy.

## STAGE 2

### **Pre-Audition Shortlisting**

Anonymous portfolios received by the stated closing date will be shortlisted based on relevant experience as detailed in the essential and desirable criteria stated above, and candidates will be invited to commence the process at one of the following stages:

- Stage 3: Round One Audition (digital)
- Stage 4: Round Two Audition (live or digital)
- Stage 4: Guest Patch Incorporating Round Two Audition (live)

NB. All applicants will get the opportunity to audition and only a limited number of candidates will be progressed directly to Stage 4, based on significant relevant experience.

## STAGE 3

### Round One Audition

If you are invited to submit a first round audition, you will receive the full audition repertoire on **11th August 2026**. The first round will be a short digital recording (3-5 minutes), comprising first movement exposition of Stamitz Concerto or Hoffmeister Concerto plus excerpts, which you will be required to upload to Musical Chairs by **Monday 9th September 2026**.

All round one auditions will be listened to by the panel.

### DIGITAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Videos must be recorded on a mobile phone for consistency. It must be performed 'as live' in one continuous take and must not be edited.
- Repertoire must be performed in the specified order, and using your usual instrument.
- You must not speak during the recording. Your video recording should be landscape, and you and your instrument should be face on and central to the camera.
- Where possible recordings should be made approximately 2-3m from our mobile phone.

NB. The panel will only hear the audio of your submission, which will be anonymous and accessed via Musical Chairs.

If your round one audition is successful, you will be invited to attend a round two audition, along with those shortlisted to Stage 4.

## STAGE 4

### Round Two Audition

If you are invited to a round two audition, either after shortlisting or a round one audition, you may choose to attend one of our live audition days, which will take place in Belfast on **Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th October 2026**. The audition repertoire will comprise first movement exposition from Bartók Concerto, Walton Concerto, or Hindemith Schwanendreher plus excerpts. All live auditions will be screened for anonymity.

If you are unable to attend either of the live audition days, you may have the option of submitting a digital recording of the repertoire to Musical Chairs no later than midnight on **Sunday 11th October 2026**. NB. The panel will only hear the audio of your submission, which will be anonymous and accessed via Musical Chairs.

### Guest Audition Patch

If you are invited for a guest audition patch, you will not be required to attend the live audition days (above). Guest audition patches will be facilitated between **September and December 2026**, to suit your availability. During the guest patch, you will be required to perform the round two audition repertoire (above) in front of the panel.

The top scoring candidates at stage 4 will be invited to trial.

## STAGE 5

### **Trial**

Candidates who are successful at round two will be invited to complete a trial. The trial will include a range of aspects of the role including core season concerts, pops concerts, regional concerts, learning and community engagement, digital projects and chamber music depending on schedules.

During the trial, you may also be required to perform excerpts, either as part of a chamber ensemble or with the full orchestra.

As we know trials can sometimes be a daunting experience, you may request a point of contact within the orchestra during your trial for support, reassurance and to give you an insight into life at the Ulster Orchestra and in Northern Ireland, for those who don't live here already. The point of contact will not be a member of the panel and is therefore independent of the process.

After your initial trial, you may be invited for further trial(s), at which stage you may be given panel feedback to assist you in your preparation. During your trial(s) you will get the opportunity to meet with members of the management team, to ask the questions which are important to you, to learn more about the values and expectations of the Orchestra, how we will support you in your future career and the rich diversity of our work and repertoire.

## STAGE 6

### **Permanent Contract & Probation**

If you are successful at the trial stage, you will be offered a permanent position with the Orchestra with a probation period of

up to 12 months. There will be check-ins at 5 and 9 months to provide feedback on your progress and to provide you with an opportunity to discuss how you are finding the first year.

Please note, to be able to fulfill all aspects of the position, including Learning & Community engagement activities, you must ensure you live within a reasonable commuting distance of Belfast.



# ALL ABOUT UO

The Ulster Orchestra ("UO") is Northern Ireland's only professional symphony orchestra. Founded in 1966, we have been at the forefront of musical life here, making a significant cultural, economic and social contribution and providing different ways for our communities to engage in excellent and unforgettable concerts and shared music experiences.

Our mission is:

*To enrich people's lives regionally, nationally and internationally through excellence in musical performance, learning and community engagement, and creative collaborations across the arts.*

We are hugely privileged to have an ongoing working relationship with world-renowned artists:

Chief Conductor [Anna Handler](#) (from September 2026)

Music Director Laureate [Daniele Rustioni](#)

Principal Guest Artist [Michael Collins](#)

Honorary Principal Guest Conductor [Jac van Steen](#)

Conductor Laureate [Rafael Payare](#)

Artist Laureate [Sir James Galway](#)

Leader **Ioana Petcu-Colan**



**ULSTER  
ORCHESTRA  
AT TOWNSEND**



The UO performs around 40 concerts a year in the Ulster Hall and the Waterfront Hall, Belfast bringing a wide variety of musical experiences to the people of Northern Ireland, those visiting, and those who encounter us through international touring and regular radio and TV broadcasts with both BBC Northern Ireland and BBC Radio 3. We strive for excellence in everything we do, be it regular concert performances, learning and community engagement programmes, or creative collaborations across the arts.

Our recordings are gaining global critical acclaim, with a recent CD of music by Kurt Weill on SOMM records garnering praise such as *"This is a warm, attractive performance ... Sound quality is vividly realistic. This disc is a fine introduction to Weill's purely instrumental music."* (Limelight) and *"The Ulster Orchestra gets into every nook and cranny of this neglected piece (the brass are particularly outstanding) ..."* (BBC Classical Music). The Orchestra also regularly records for labels such as Hyperion (with Howard Shelley), Naxos (with former Chief Conductor JoAnn Faletta), Chandos and Toccata Classics.

An important aspect of the UO's work is its annual touring programme of concerts, which brings live orchestral music to the heart of communities across Northern Ireland. We play in as diverse a range of venues as possible, sending everything from small ensembles and chamber music concerts, right up to the full symphony orchestra, far and wide across country.

In addition to our local tours, we also perform each season in Europe, including at the renowned Brucknerhaus Concert Hall in Linz, Festival Berlioz in France and most recently the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.



We love collaborating with a range of partners including Northern Ireland Opera, Belfast International Arts Festival and Belfast Philharmonic Choir not to mention the Lush! Classical event which has grown into one of Northern Ireland's best-loved live music events, blending electronic club anthems with full orchestral arrangements.

Our Learning and Community Engagement programme aims to connect the UO with communities and individuals across Northern Ireland, both as audiences and participants. All our

musicians work on activities including Relaxed Performances for people with additional needs, mentoring and coaching for players at all stages of their musical journey and the Crescendo project, our community-led residency project for children from disadvantaged areas in North and West Belfast.



We feel very fortunate to be based in Northern Ireland where we are part of a really active arts and cultural scene, with a regular programme of concerts, events and festivals - from pub backroom traditional sessions to international

touring stars, there is something for everyone here and so many opportunities for us to get involved in new things.

In 2022, we moved into an old church building on Townsend Street in Belfast, giving us a home and placing us firmly within the community. With this move, we plan to create an accessible space for rehearsal, recording, performance and learning and community engagement through music, collaborating with others towards the economic and cultural development of the area and creating a sustainable purpose for a heritage site.

This is an exciting time to be part of the UO as we embark on an ambitious restoration and redevelopment project to design a home fit for purpose both now and in the future our wide and varied activities, to celebrate the heritage of the UO, the buildings and the area and to better support active collaboration with the local community network of stakeholders.

We're on a journey and we hope you will come with us!



# OUR VISION & VALUES

Our vision is 'to be a vital force in the cultural, social and educational life of Northern Ireland'. It is an ambition that requires constant evolution to meet its challenges. Society doesn't stand still, and nor do we.

Along with our vision, we hold our values dear – they are unique and authentic to us as they were co-created through a collaborative process of lively debate and discussion – just how we like to do things here!

## We CARE about our colleagues

- We treat each other with dignity and respect
- We encourage, support and value each other
- We are one team and share a collective responsibility
- We build trust through constructive communication
- We are innovative, resilient and resourceful

## We COMMIT to being world class

- We are dedicated to the highest level of quality and performance
- We are proud of our collective talents
- We are aspirational, ambitious, creative and progressive
- We are advocates and ambassadors for music and the arts
- We are honoured to be the orchestra of Northern Ireland on the world stage

## We ENGAGE with our community

- We reach out to, work with and connect people
- We provide inspirational musical experiences that are accessible to all
- We are proud to be instilled in, relevant to

and valued by the community

- We present learning and life enrichment opportunities for people of all ages
- We value this country's rich artistic heritage and the part we continue to play in its future

These values underpin everything we do, and you will see them running through all of our company policies and procedures. Life at UO is varied, meaningful and enriching - our employees live the values because they are as important to them as they are to our company.

Central to our values, is our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. We strive to provide a space where every person is treated with dignity and respect and feels welcomed, accepted and supported, where they can excel at what they do and can fulfil their potential, whatever their background. As a proud partner of [Black Lives in Music](#) we are committed to playing our part in working towards a music industry which is truly inclusive.



# CULTURE & BENEFITS

We have built a really strong culture at UO based around our core values, and we aim to provide a space where every person is treated with dignity and respect and feels welcomed, accepted and supported, where they can excel at what they do and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

We are committed to ensuring that our culture has a positive impact on candidate experience, and we welcome any feedback on our recruitment processes – email [lisa@ulsterorchestra.com](mailto:lisa@ulsterorchestra.com).

Working in the arts and creative industries is a wonderful experience, and the UO is in the enviable position of being able to offer the security of a permanent employment to over 80 creatives, along with some great benefits:

- **Financial Support:** upon completion of your probation, you will have the opportunity to apply for an interest-free loan to help you maintain or purchase your instrument.
- **Health & Wellbeing:** our comprehensive wellbeing provision aims to help you to stay fit and healthy and support them when they are ill. This includes access to performing arts physiotherapists and GPs, regular hearing tests and a Health Cash Plan which provides cash back towards everyday healthcare bills and a range of other wellbeing benefits.
- **Holidays:** we have a generous annual leave provision, which means more time to enjoy those other important things in your life.
- **Learning & Development:** in addition to induction, you will have access to training and coaching opportunities to support performance enhancement, artistic growth and personal development.
- **Long Service Awards:** we want you to think of this as a career, not a job, so loyalty awards are provided at various long service milestones.
- **Pension:** you will be enrolled to our Group Personal Pension scheme with a generous employer contribution.
- **Complimentary tickets:** whenever available, you will be able to request complimentary tickets for our season concerts for yourself or friends and family members.
- **Free Parking:** at our home-base on Townsend Street, you will have access to our company car park where you can park all day for free.
- **Cycle to Work Scheme:** you can apply for our cycle scheme which is open twice a year offering savings on purchasing a bike and accessories, with the cost spread over a period of 12 months
- **Family-friendly policies:** we aim to ensure that every employee feels supported and encouraged to have a healthy balance between work and home commitments, with generous policies for family leave, breaks and flexible working arrangements.



We would also include our location as one of our benefits. Northern Ireland offers a high quality of life. Small enough to get around easily but big enough to offer a great way of life and an amazing variety of experiences and activities - there are lots of brilliant reasons to live and work here!

Check out: [Welcome to Northern Ireland | Official site for Tourism NI](#)

For more information about the life and work of the Ulster Orchestra, visit <http://www.ulsterorchestra.org.uk>



We are ever grateful to our principal funders - the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the BBC and Belfast City Council.

## PRINCIPAL FUNDING PARTNERS



Belfast  
City Council