



# ULSTER ORCHESTRA

*Let's Play*



## SECTION LEADER OBOE

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025

### PRINCIPAL FUNDERS



BBC  
RADIO



Belfast  
City Council

**What we do:** We connect fantastic music and musicians to the people of Northern Ireland and beyond.

**Who we are:** Our 63 top class musicians, together with our administrative team, are one of Northern Ireland's most cherished cultural assets.

**At the heart of our communities:** Our musicians routinely devote time every week for community engagement; you can find us in care homes, hospitals and hospices, spreading solace and joy to patients and residents and our musicians also provide vital high-level support for talented youngsters.

**Our philosophy:** The best orchestras create great inspirational concerts and also draw from their communities, by reflecting their cultures, their hopes and dreams. They help their communities find their creative voices; that is what we are about.

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|----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Job Title:</b>    | Section Leader Oboe       |
| <b>Reporting To:</b> | Orchestra Manager         |
| <b>Type of Post:</b> | Permanent Full-time       |
| <b>Salary:</b>       | £43,873 per annum         |
| <b>Location:</b>     | Belfast, Northern Ireland |

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## JOB DESCRIPTION

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The purpose of the role is to sit as Section Leader Oboe, performing a wide range of repertoire, smaller scale chamber works and occasional solo concerti. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to participate in recruitment for the Orchestra and will be expected to take part in Learning and Community Engagement activity, contributing positively to the culture and values of the Society.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead and sustain the professional standard of the Oboe 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

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## PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

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### ESSENTIAL

- Training to a level expected of a professional musician
- Recent significant and relevant orchestral oboe 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

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## OTHER

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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).

*NB. By virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (exceptions) Order (NI) 1979 and because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this post is exempt from the provisions of Article 5 of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (NI) Order 1978. Accordingly, you are not entitled to withhold information about convictions, which would otherwise be considered 'spent' under the provisions of the 1978 Order. Failure to disclose such information could result in dismissal or disciplinary action in the event of employment.*

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## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

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The Ulster Orchestra strives to be fully representative of all demographical aspects of 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 backgrounds of social and economic deprivation.

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

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## SUBMISSION GUIDANCE AND HOW TO APPLY

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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. It is a condition of any offer of employment we make to you that you have, or 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 **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025**. 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: Digital Submission – First Round Audition

You will receive the full audition repertoire on **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025**. The first round will be a short digital recording (3-5 minutes), comprising of **Mozart Oboe Concerto 1st Movement Exposition (unaccompanied) plus two excerpts**, which you will be required to upload to Musical Chairs by Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026.

**All first-round 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**, without accompaniment for round one, 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 your mobile phone**

NB. Your video recording is a private submission and will only be listened to by the panel. **The panel will only hear the audio of your submission**, and all submissions are anonymous throughout the audition process.

## Stage 3: Second Round Audition

If you are successful at stage 2, you will progress to the second round of auditions. **Live auditions** will take place on **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026**. The audition repertoire will comprise **Mozart Oboe Concerto 1st Movement Exposition (accompanied), plus excerpts**.

If you are unable to attend a live audition, you may have the option of submitting a digital recording of the repertoire to Musical Chairs.

## Stage 4: Trial

Candidates who are successful at round two will be invited to complete a short trial of **up to 3 weeks**. The trial will aim to include all aspects of the role including core season concerts, pops concerts, regional concerts, learning and community engagement, digital projects and chamber music depending on schedules. You will also be required to perform excerpts with the orchestra as part of your trial.

You will get to meet with members of the management team, which will provide you with an opportunity 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.

As we know this 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 the real-life experience of working in the Ulster Orchestra and living in Northern Ireland. The point of contact will not be a member of the panel and is therefore independent of the process.

After the initial short trial, you may be invited for further trial(s), at which stage you may be given panel feedback to assist you in your preparation.

## Stage 5: 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**. The Orchestra Manager will meet

with you after 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.

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## OUR HISTORY

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Music Director Laureate **Daniele Rustioni**  
Honorary Principal Guest Conductor **Jac van Steen**  
Conductor Laureate **Rafael Payare**  
Artist Laureate **Sir James Galway**

Leader **Ioana Petcu-Colan**

Founded in 1966, the Ulster Orchestra has been at the forefront of musical life in Northern Ireland and the Orchestra's full-time musicians form the region's only professional symphony orchestra.

In 2019, the Ulster Orchestra appointed Daniele Rustioni as its Chief Conductor, a role which commenced at the start of the Orchestra's 2019/20 Season, and in 2022/23, in recognition of the strength of the relationship, he was appointed the Orchestra's Music Director. Rustioni's tenure ended with the 2023/24 season, and he joins a distinguished line of past principal conductors including Bryden Thomson, Vernon Handley, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Thierry Fischer, Kenneth Montgomery, JoAnn Faletta and, most recently, Rafael Payare.

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 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 regularly at the main BBC Proms series in the Royal Albert Hall.

An important aspect of the Ulster Orchestra's work across Northern Ireland is its annual touring programme of concerts, which brings live orchestral music to the heart of communities across the region. *Ulster Orchestra On Your Doorstep*, was founded in the 2016/17 Season (the Orchestra's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season) and it 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. In addition to our local tours, we also have performances each season in Europe, including at the renowned Brucknerhaus Concert Hall in Linz and Festival Berlioz in France.

The Orchestra performs with several regular partners, including Northern Ireland Opera, Belfast International Arts Festival and Belfast Philharmonic Choir. A partnership was established in 2016 between the Ulster Orchestra and the club night Lush!, and the ensuing arena event Lush! Classical has been a hugely successful and popular concert every year

since.

The Ulster Orchestra records regularly for labels such as Hyperion (with Howard Shelley), Naxos (with former Chief Conductor JoAnn Falletta), Chandos, SOMM and Toccata Classics. Through partnering with organisations such as NI Screen, the Orchestra has undertaken various recording activities for film and TV, including the internationally-renowned children's series 'Puffin Rock'.

The Ulster Orchestra's Learning and Community Engagement programme aims to connect the Orchestra with communities and individuals across Northern Ireland and to provide accessible and innovative opportunities for people to engage as audiences and participants. Since 2016, all the Orchestra's musicians have been working on education and outreach activity, including Relaxed Performances for people with additional needs, residencies in schools and universities, concerts directly in people's communities, mentoring and coaching for players at all stages of their musical journey and the Crescendo project, the Orchestra's community-led residency project for children from disadvantaged areas in North and West Belfast. We have a long list of organisations that we work with, including Age NI, Autism NI, the Now Group, the Alzheimer's Society, the Belfast Trust Arts in Health programme, Community Arts Partnership, the Flax Trust, and Women's Aid.

We are always looking for new and innovative collaborations. Our Salon Sessions online project took small ensembles from the orchestra to unique and wonderful spaces, fulfilling our passion to work with and support local artists, offering them a platform to showcase their talents and what Belfast has to offer across the world. Each artist had their songs or poems arranged and performed by a variety of small ensembles of Ulster Orchestra musicians, recorded and filmed in inspiring, quirky, innovative locations culminating in a twenty minute professionally produced online 'session'. These are free to view by the public via the Orchestra's YouTube channel. Successful collaborations include artists such as Ryan McMullan, Colum Sands, Niamh Dunne, Jordan Adetunji and our wonderful 'Your Song Now' project resulted in a successful album, *Our Songs, Our Place*, featuring original songs by nine local artists.

Thanks to everyone in the Ulster Orchestra family, we hold a unique place in the hearts of Northern Ireland's people, and we share a commitment to maintain and grow that success in the future.



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## OUR VISION & VALUES

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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 Ulster Orchestra 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. Through our membership of Black Lives in Music as well as collaborations and partnerships with several inclusive music ensembles we are committed to playing our part in working towards a music industry which is truly inclusive.

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## OUR BENEFITS

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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. While a salaried role is a benefit in itself, we are pleased to be able to offer more in terms of benefits. We have highlighted just a few of them below.

### Family Friendly Policies

We aim to ensure that every employee feels supported and encouraged to have a healthy balance between work and home commitments.

School run, or early morning parkrun? No problem! With rehearsals typically starting at 10am, there's no need for breakfast clubs, and you can even get your daily exercise out of the way before work.

Our policies for **Maternity, Paternity, Adoption Leave & Shared Parental Leave** are generous and supportive, aimed at helping employees to balance their work and home life commitments.

We offer a **Career Break** policy after 3 years of service, to assist with work-life balance, e.g. To take time off for caring responsibilities, to go back to college, to go travelling and/or to accompany a partner on an overseas assignment.

### Health & Wellbeing

We have a comprehensive **Wellbeing Policy** through which we aim to help our employees to stay fit and healthy and support them when they are ill.

Our **Health Cash Plan** is immediately available to all new joiners and provides cash back to cover costs such as dental and optical bills, physiotherapy and consultancy charges. It also provides access to a 24-7 helpline, virtual GPs and an online discount platform.

All employees have regular access to a **BAPAM physiotherapist and a registered GP**, who is available to provide and referrals for any medical concerns. We also know how important your ears are. When a player joins, they will have an appointment with **our contracted audiologist** to provide you with moulded hearing protectors, and we will arrange for you to have regular hearing tests.

We offer a **Cycle to Work** scheme to all employees, enabling you to save at least 25% of the cost of a new bike and spreading the cost over a 12-month period. Not only good for the environment but also helps you to stay fit and healthy by getting on your bike.

### Holidays

How does 5 weeks off in the summer sound to you? In addition, you will have a further 2 weeks off at other times in the year, so plenty of opportunity to enjoy those other important things in your life.

## Induction

Upon joining the UO, all employees have a structured and comprehensive induction, to ensure all new joiners receive a consistent and positive experience and feel welcome, included and supported, from the point of job offer to the end of their probationary period.

## Learning and Development

We believe in the importance of continuous learning and development and invest to support the growth and progression of our employees. This might be in the form of individual, confidential one to one coaching or group training sessions covering topics such as Resilience, Communications, Leadership etc. We also encourage personal and professional development through internal secondments and acting up opportunities as well as support towards relevant further academic and skills development programmes.

## Loyalty Awards

We are delighted to have low turnover of our people, with the average length of service being 13.5 years. We thank our employees for their loyalty, by providing loyalty awards at various long service milestones.

## Pensions

All employees are automatically enrolled into our company pension scheme and will benefit from our generous employer contributions (currently 6% p.a.). As we comply with government legislation regarding pensions, employees also currently contribute 2% p.a. All employees have access to the Orchestra's pension advisor for advice on their pension requirements.

## Financial Support

Ulster Orchestra Society Ltd offers an interest-free loan scheme to support Orchestra players with the costs associated with purchasing and maintaining their instruments. All permanent orchestra players will be eligible to make an application for a loan, upon satisfactory completion of their probationary period. You may apply for a loan to cover all or part of the associated costs. The amount loaned will be capped at £10,000 per employee, within each financial year subject to availability of funds.

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## LIVING HERE

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Northern Ireland offers a high quality of life. Small enough to get around easily (you can cross Northern Ireland by car in about 2 hours) 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!

Travelling to and from Northern Ireland is easy, with three airports (two of which are in the Greater Belfast area) with regular direct flights to the UK and Europe, and it is 2 hours by road or rail from Belfast to Dublin. Public transport is efficient and there is relatively little congestion, so getting around is easy too.

People here are renowned as friendly and welcoming and Northern Ireland typically fares in research into happiness levels, e.g. in 2020 Lloyds Banking Group's annual Happiness Index placed Northern Ireland as the happiest place to live in the UK, with contentment levels here having increased by 6% on the previous year.

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In line with the rest of the UK, there is reasonable personal taxation, an excellent education system, a world-class healthcare system which is free and accessible to all and affordable properties.

Property prices in Northern Ireland remain well below those in other UK locations and in the Republic of Ireland - around 75% lower than they are in London and 60% lower than Dublin. Most people living in Belfast and the surrounding area prefer to buy property rather than rent, and prices mean this is well within reach.

For anyone thinking of relocating with a family, you'll be pleased to know that Northern Ireland is the top region in the UK for educational attainment, consistently coming out top at GCSE and A-Level exam level (the latter is equivalent to the US High School Diploma, the Republic of Ireland's Leaving Certificate and Scotland's Higher exams).

Northern Ireland is becoming ever-more multi-cultural and diverse and there are many organisations and networks whose remit is to support people and help them to settle into life here. We also have a relatively low crime rate compared to other parts of the UK, so it feels like a safe place to live.

Our scenery is spectacular and between mountains and dramatic coastlines, you're spoilt for choice when it comes to locations for outdoor activities from hiking to watersports such as paddle-boarding and fishing - or even just a spectacular drive along the Antrim Coast.

The food and restaurant scene is of international quality and - besides Ulster Orchestra concerts - there are so many arts and cultural events and festivals, from pub backroom traditional sessions to international touring stars, you're bound to find something to appeal to your tastes.

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

