

The Oliver Award-winning Irish Baroque Orchestra is acclaimed as Ireland's flagship period music ensemble and delivers world-class historically-informed performances across Ireland and abroad. Under the artistic direction of Peter Whelan, scholarship and musical excellence converge in a unique way through the IBO's work, creating an original offering like no other organisation on the Irish classical music scene. Through this integration of research and practice the very idea of an orchestra is defined afresh, providing an unusual and enriching experience for today's audiences.

As an ambassador for the stories of Ireland's musical past, the IBO uses its unique perspective to develop the growing store of knowledge surrounding the very early days of Baroque and Classical music in Ireland. The IBO's research, recordings and performances offer audiences across Ireland a new opportunity to reevaluate and reclaim their cultural heritage, while also engaging the Irish diaspora through the increasing global reach of this work. Even Handel's *Messiah* - an annual touring highlight in the IBO calendar - is a rekindled link to Dublin's cultural life in 1742.

Celebrating 30 years in the 2025/2026 season, the IBO's programme includes a tour to the USA, a return to London's Wigmore Hall and the long-awaited release of a new recording on Linn Records, bringing Handel's *'Messiah'* to audiences with all the hallmarks of the IBO's approach under Peter Whelan.

Storytelling sits at the heart of the IBO's Irish heritage recording cycle on Linn Records, which spotlights the interesting characters and extraordinary music from an Ireland of old. This cycle includes *'Welcome Home Mr Dubourg'* (2019), *'The Trials of Tenducci'* with Tara Erraught (2021), *'The Hibernian Muse'* with Sestina (2022) and *'Mr Charles the Hungarian'* (2023). A warm critical response to these recordings internationally has marked out the IBO's distinctive voice on the world stage, with notable praise from Gramophone Magazine, France Musique and BR Klassik. Future recordings include a programme celebrating Rachel Baptist, the famed soprano from 1760s Ireland, and an ambitious reconstruction of Handel's 1742 *'Dublin' Messiah*.

In February 2022 the IBO made its debut to critical acclaim at the Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House, London with Vivaldi's *'Bajazet'*, a co-production from Irish National Opera and the Royal Opera House. The excellence of their work on *'Bajazet'*, with artistic director Peter Whelan, was recognised in April 2022 with an Olivier Award for *'Outstanding Achievement in Opera'*.

In recent seasons the IBO has made high-profile debuts at the BBC Proms, the Edinburgh International Festival, the MA Festival Bruges and Summer at Snape. In Ireland, the IBO continues to work in partnership with a number of organisations, to bring excellent artistic experiences to audiences around the country. In 2025/2026 these include the Blackwater Valley Opera Festival, the Office of Public Works and University Concert Hall, Limerick.

The IBO is committed to developing the national scene for historically-informed performance and works with a number of partner organisations across Ireland to ensure its continued growth for future generations. The award-winning Irish Youth Baroque Orchestra (delivered in partnership with the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras) gives students the opportunity to work intensively on elements of period style under the guidance of director Claire Duff. IBO's Apprentice programme supports students as they take their first steps into the profession, with several alumnae now working with the IBO as active professional musicians.

The Irish Baroque Orchestra is generously funded by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon. It also receives financial support from Culture Ireland to support an expanding international profile, and Dublin City Council for Dublin HandelFest. The orchestra has its own collection of period instruments, purchased with the assistance of an Arts Council capital grant and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The IBO is resident at the National Concert Hall, Dublin and as of 2021 is an ensemble and Board member of the Réseau Européen de Musique Ancienne (European Early Music Network).