

**IRISH
BAROQUE**
ORCHESTRA

Reimagining Our Culture

Strategic Plan 2021-2025





The Irish Baroque Orchestra is committed to artistic excellence for public benefit through an open and inclusive culture which places music first and finds strength in diversity.

PETER WHELAN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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FOREWORD

For the past 25 years the Irish Baroque Orchestra has occupied a special place in Ireland's rich arts landscape. Its voice is truly unique, offering a window to the sounds of the past, firing the imagination of audiences today and prompting deeper reflections on Ireland's own classical music heritage.

Using Handel's 1742 visit to Dublin as a focal point, we endeavour to rediscover the soundscape of 18th century Ireland, using scholarship and experimentation to share new insights into the fascinating musical personalities who immigrated to and emigrated from Ireland in the 'Golden Age' of the 18th century. Enriched by intriguing stories, original source material and the musical excellence of its players, the IBO's programming is bold, distinctive – and uniquely Irish. With artistic excellence at the very heart of what we do, our work enlightens and reconnects our audiences to centuries of the interaction Ireland has had with mainstream European Art Music – and in turn surprises and educates the world about Ireland's unique and colourful contributions to the genre.

This strategy sets out key priorities for the organisation as it moves into a new, transformational chapter of its development. Reflected in this ambitious document is the importance of the orchestra's contribution to Ireland's arts scene, and a sense of the potential for reimagining how it can use its voice. Whether entertaining live audiences, educating young people, inspiring digital followers or advocating for Irish classical music on an international stage, this strategy ensures that the organisation challenges the very definition of an orchestra and reframes it in a way that is dynamic, entertaining and inspiring. This vision reverberates throughout our new strategy, and we look forward to making it manifest over the coming years.

**Peter Whelan, Artistic Director and Aliye Cornish Moore,
Chief Executive Officer**

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Irish Baroque Orchestra is to bring international-standard historically-informed performance (HIP) to audiences in Ireland and abroad, cultivating audience appreciation and deepening understanding of early music. Through its education work IBO aims to nurture the next generation of professional period instrument players, and to stimulate interest in HIP for musicians of all ages.

VISION

The strategic plan 2021-2025 will take the orchestra through a transformational period which sees a considerable scaling-up of its ambitions, leading to increased artistic and educational output. The plan seeks to secure a central place for HIP within the classical music scene in Ireland. Having established itself nationally, development of its international profile will see the IBO taking its core Irish heritage programming to new audiences through performances at established, well-known festivals, concert series and venues.

VALUES

The Irish Baroque Orchestra is committed to artistic excellence for public benefit through an open and inclusive culture which places **music first** and finds **strength in diversity**. The artistic ambitions of the organisation are underpinned by common values of respect, transparency, communication and a commitment to a shared vision for the orchestra.

CONTEXT

Scholarship and musical excellence converge in a unique way through the IBO's historically-informed performances. This creates 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.

The IBO uses its unique perspective to act as an ambassador for the stories of Ireland's musical past, adding to the growing store of knowledge surrounding the very early days of Baroque and Classical music in Ireland. Through this work it creates an artistic legacy of committing new works to the Baroque canon, and generates new resource material for musicians. A revived strand of Ireland's cultural identity is brought to audiences today, to be celebrated and enjoyed.

HIGH-LEVEL GOALS

The IBO commits to a new ambition as an organisation: seeking to define the agenda for HIP in Ireland through strategic development of its artistic and educational programming, supported by a focus on inclusion and access.

As a flagship national organisation the IBO drives the sustainability of the HIP movement in Ireland through an expanded portfolio of education initiatives, aimed at cultivating talent in the next generation of professionals. It plays a role in the development of the HIP movement at a European level, through creative and collaborative exchange with peer organisations.



1. ARTISTIC

OBJECTIVE

To develop Ireland's HIP scene and advance the orchestra's profile at an international level, building on a reputation for artistic excellence based on a solid foundation of research.

2021 CONTEXT

Celebrating its 25th year in 2021, the Irish Baroque Orchestra has built a reputation based on high artistic standards and a commitment to innovative research-based programming and performance. Its place in Irish musical life is recognised through strategic funding from Arts Council Ireland, and a residency at the National Concert Hall, Dublin, as well as long-running relationships with respected promoters and festivals across the country.

The appointment of Peter Whelan as Artistic Director in 2018 places new emphasis on research at the heart of the organisation's work.

This has opened up valuable opportunities for the IBO, building on the success of highly-regarded projects delivered in the last three years. By embedding the journey from manuscript to performance firmly into the creative process, the IBO has an artistic identity completely distinct from any other groups in the Irish Classical landscape, and a completely unique offer for international audiences.

MALCOLM PROUD

Invitations to perform at the Wigmore Hall and the Royal Opera House in 2021 reflect the orchestra's increasing international profile. A series of recordings showcasing music from Ireland's Baroque period will further elevate the orchestra's work over the coming years as it seeks to bring new stories from this era into the public consciousness. Worldwide distribution of these recordings contributes to the ongoing growth of the orchestra's profile, and allows it to advocate internationally for this period of Irish musical history.

2025 OUTCOME

The IBO's artistic output is spread throughout the year, with clearly identifiable programming strands delivered nationally, underpinned by scholarship and specialist knowledge. An increased schedule of international engagements reflects the orchestra's expanding profile overseas.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

As a leader: defining the HIP scene in Ireland

- ▶ Use the unique perspective of a research-based performing organisation to tell forgotten stories of Ireland's cultural heritage through the ongoing 5-disc recording series for Linn Records and core performance programming, both of which offer extensive international reach.

- ▶ Offer the people of Ireland a new opportunity to reclaim and revalue their heritage through the IBO's research and performance, while also engaging the Irish diaspora through an increased global reach from touring, broadcasts and album promotion.
- ▶ Expand the IBO's reputation for outstanding period performance into the Classical period, through a new commitment to annual programming of pieces by Haydn and Mozart.

As an artistic partner

- ▶ Develop relationships with regional promoters to underscore the organisation's commitment to regional audiences.
- ▶ Establish and develop a Dublin HandelFest in partnership with the OPW, celebrating Handel's legacy in Dublin and facilitating performance opportunities for other groups.
- ▶ Build upon existing relationships and cultivate new partnerships with other performing arts organisations, aligning the forward planning process through joint programming.
- ▶ Form alliances with historical resource organisations, putting an emphasis on research at the centre of our work.

As an international organisation

- ▶ Develop a performing presence overseas through developing relationships with European music festivals, concert series and venues.
- ▶ Reach new audiences through an uplift in international promotion surrounding forthcoming Irish cultural heritage album releases worldwide.
- ▶ Participate in wider conversations across the European Early Music sector as members of the Réseau Européen de Musique Ancienne (European Early Music Network), exchanging ideas and forming a network of contacts internationally.

As a performing research organisation

- ▶ Commission and support publication of urtext editions from the IBO's heritage programming.
- ▶ Advocate for Irish heritage programming at an international level through creating resources for both professional and amateur concert programming.
- ▶ Document the journey from source material to performance as part of our digital output.



The IBO is an industry leader, providing opportunities for people of all ages to learn about historical performance both through digital resources and in person.



2. EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION

OBJECTIVE

To offer a diverse range of digital and live education initiatives, catering for all ages and standards.

CONTEXT

The IBO's education programme is an expanding seam in its output, with an Education and Participation Officer appointed in early 2020 to oversee its growth. A long-running partnership with the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras led to the foundation of the Irish Youth Baroque Orchestra in 2017, which is currently open to students on string instruments and flute, with oboe players joining the group in 2021. New partnerships with the Royal Irish Academy of Music and St Peter's National School in Phibsborough are in place from 2021. The IBO Apprentice Scheme, offered for the first time in 2020, saw three places made available to students playing violin, viola and double bass. The launch of a new online teaching service in 2020 connects members of the public with IBO players for one on one lessons.



2025 OUTCOME

The IBO is an industry leader, providing opportunities for people of all ages to learn about historical performance both through digital resources and in person. The development of the HIP scene in Ireland is supported through a better-informed audience and expanded performance output, as more players advance their training through the opportunities on offer.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

As an incubator for talent, nurturing the next generation of professionals

- ▶ Support Apprentices through their transition into the profession, with individual mentoring and lessons from IBO players offered alongside access to resources.
- ▶ Broaden the Apprentice Scheme to include one player in each string section of the IBO annually.
- ▶ Expand the Irish Youth Baroque Orchestra membership to include wind and brass and players.
- ▶ Establish an intermediate version of the Irish Youth Baroque Orchestra to bridge the gap between first steps on period instruments and professional level playing.

- ▶ Work with students at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in an annual side by side project, promoting collaborative and creative exchange.
- ▶ Develop opportunities for students to try period woodwind instruments, in partnership with the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras.
- ▶ Set up a 'Handel Singing Competition' as part of Dublin HandelFest, to offer a platform to student singers engaging with HIP, as well as the opportunity to perform with a professional orchestra.
- ▶ Work in partnership with the Royal Irish Academy of Music to create a new generation of natural trumpeters in Ireland, to fill an existing skills gap nationally.

As an education provider for all

- ▶ Integrate workshop content into our regional festival partnerships, delivering meaningful educational content to spark interest in new audiences.
- ▶ Deliver a series of lecture recitals, in conjunction with our presence in the NCH to illuminate the research and ideas behind the orchestra's output.

For Amateur Musicians

- ▶ Champion and encourage amateur music making through weekly Baroque Strings classes led by IBO musicians.
- ▶ Launch a Baroque Strings Summer School to offer an intensive course for amateur string players seeking an inclusive and basic introduction to historically-informed performance.

For Children

- ▶ Develop a scheme with St Peter's National School, to bring ideas of historically-informed performance to children in a fun and engaging way, culminating in a performance at the NCH.
- ▶ Establish a 'Time Travellers' series for children, in conjunction with a partner organisation, providing events and concerts to entertain and invite imagination.



MALACHY ROBINSON



3. ENGAGEMENT AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

OBJECTIVE

To engage with new and increased audiences in Ireland and abroad, working with external consultants to promote access to our work.

CONTEXT

The cessation of live performance activity in 2020 has afforded the organisation a period of strategic re-evaluation to adapt its future work. This has led to a significant increase in digital output, broadening access and achieving greater audience reach than at any point in its history. In 2020 the organisation recorded 1.1 million engagements with its work across its live, digital, recording and broadcast output, and is on course to build on this in 2021. A closer relationship with Culture Ireland amid newly-elevated consciousness of Ireland in the US may provide opportunities for the IBO to lay the foundations for a North American tour within the next 5 years.

MARJA GAYNOR

2025 OUTCOME

A meaningful relationship is developed between the IBO and its growing Irish audiences, with new followers attracted to the group from overseas.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

As a national institution

- ▶ Engage with all four provinces annually to underscore our commitment to regional audiences.
- ▶ Form a relationship with a regular concert venue outside of Dublin.
- ▶ Increase our presence in Cork as Ireland's second city.
- ▶ Continue to develop long-standing relationships with regional festivals such as Ardee Baroque Festival and the Sligo Festival of Baroque Music.

As an orchestra for all

- ▶ Commit to an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) audit encompassing all areas of the organisation, seeking to identify and remove barriers to access and participation.
- ▶ Produce a high-end platform for the organisation's digital output to maximise the impact of IBO's content and its reach.

- ▶ Expand engagement with the 25-34 audience demographic through increased online output, and use of Instagram and podcasting to target this age range. Student ticketing offers are to be disseminated via national third-level institutions and the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras.
- ▶ Bring audiences on the journey from manuscript to music, through podcasts and radio/TV features highlighting the research element of the IBO's work.
- ▶ Develop new audiences, generating interest through practical education programming aimed at adult string players.
- ▶ Expand the IBO's digital offering with a range of broadcast performances online and enriching contextual content.

As an ambassador for Ireland's cultural scene

- ▶ Implement a step-change in our international reach by securing performances at European festivals, concert series and venues.
- ▶ Establish relationships with promoters/agents in the US as the foundation for a future tour.
- ▶ Build on the existing relationship with Culture Ireland as a potential facilitator of the IBO's international ambitions.



In 2021 the organisation will record more than 2 million engagements with its work across its live, digital, recording and broadcast output, and is on course to build on this in 2022.

CLAIRE DUFF



JORDAN BOWRON

4. FUNDING AND FINANCIALS

OBJECTIVE

Secure increased core funding from the Arts Council in line with expanding ambition. Diversify the IBO's funding base with greater private funding and corporate support, with the goal of establishing an IBO Development Fund.

CONTEXT

The IBO has secured the most sizeable Arts Council grant in its history for 2021, and has secured a substantial philanthropic gift to support programming of works by Bach and Handel in 2021-2023. This award is the largest sum secured privately by the organisation so far. Relationships with the Goethe Institute and the Italian Institute of Culture are also developing, with small grants from both organisations pledged for 2021. Support from the RAISE Academy programme in 2021-2022 recognises the IBO's progress in fundraising over recent months and aims to facilitate a step change in the scale and ambition of the organisation's work in this area.

2025 OUTCOME

The IBO is better equipped to deal with future challenges with an increase in financial resilience resulting from a broader funding base, and having established a Development Fund to support its strategic growth. The organisation is future-proofed against unforeseen circumstances through growth of reserves.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

As an attractive and rewarding prospect for sponsors

- ▶ Continue developing privately-funded programmes.

As an orchestra in the ascendant

- ▶ Continue to responsibly invest in marketing and PR to expand the orchestra's profile.
- ▶ Leverage the potential in the IBO's expanding profile to generate a greater level of support through philanthropic donations.

As a future-proof organisation

- ▶ Establish an IBO Development Fund to support strategic capital projects, distinctly separate from our operational finances.





5. ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE

OBJECTIVE

Maintain and further develop high standards of excellence in governance and management to match the organisation's development.

CONTEXT

There are currently five Directors on the IBO's Board combining expertise in the fields of accountancy, PR, recording production, digital humanities, law and history. The IBO Board adopted a new governance manual in October 2020, which is available online at www.irishbaroqueorchestra.com, and it operates in line with the guidance laid out by the Charities Regulator, the Arts Council and standards of best practice internationally. The IBO's management structure comprises a full-time CEO and a part-time, freelance Orchestra Manager/Education and Participation Officer. The Board of Directors provides excellent governance and connects members with specific mission-driven projects which reflect their interests and areas of expertise, cultivating a sense of belonging and ownership.

SARAH MCMAHON

2025 OUTCOME

The IBO has the governance procedures and structures in place to support its overall strategic objectives and expanding artistic reach and output. Organisational efficiency is maintained while management expands to better support the growth in the orchestra's artistic planning.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

As a well-governed organisation in line with best practice

- ▶ Maintain ongoing Board focus on sound governance.
- ▶ Evaluate and monitor our strategic growth in consultation with key stakeholders such as the Arts Council.

As an industry leader

- ▶ Attract musicians of the highest calibre as members, guest directors and visiting musicians.
- ▶ Develop the Orchestra Manager role into a full-time position to better support and extend the organisation's operations in line with increased artistic activity at home and abroad.
- ▶ Regularly review the organisation's management structure to ensure that increased ambition and output are supported and facilitated in the best way possible.



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