

ULSTER COLLEGE OF MUSIC
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2025 AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2024

Draft Accounts

Charity Number NIC101695

ULSTER COLLEGE OF MUSIC

TRUSTEES REPORT 2025 AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

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ULSTER COLLEGE OF MUSIC

MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

Registered charity name	Ulster College of Music
Charity number	NIC101695
Principal office	13 Windsor Avenue Belfast County Antrim BT9 6EE

THE TRUSTEES

The trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows:

Ms Angela Alonso

Dr Norman Cairns

Mr Ashley Fulton

Mrs Astrid King

Mr David Preston, resigned from the committee at the AGM (19/03/2024)

Mr Kevin McEnoy

Mr Conor Maxwell

Mr David Rutherford

Ms Nicola Wilson

Ms Kate Coyle, appointed 19/03/2024

Mr Sean Walsh, appointed 13/08/2024

Independent examiner

RBCA Limited

Chartered Accountants

Linenhall Exchange

26 Linenhall Street

Belfast

BT2 8BG

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2025 AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Reference and administrative details are shown in the schedule of members of the management committee and professional advisers on page 1 of the financial statements.

AGM 2024

The AGM was held on 19th March 2024.

The committee elected at the AGM were:

Ms Angela Alonso

Mr Ashley Fulton

Mr Conor Maxwell

Dr Norman Cairns

Mrs Astrid King

Mr David Rutherford

Ms Kate Coyle

Mr Kevin McEnoy

Ms Nicola Wilson

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The college is a registered charity and legally constituted as a Trust. The college is managed on a day to day basis by an administrator, an assistant administrator and a bookkeeper, who are in turn responsible to The Management Committee. This committee is made up of tutors, parents and students of the college.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

Ulster College of Music meets the Public Benefit as follows:

Advancement of education

The college's objectives are to promote the advancement of education through the promotion, development, maintenance and study, teaching and practice of music and dramatic art in Northern Ireland.

Advancement of the Arts and Culture

The Ulster College of Music meets this purpose by engaging students in musical activities and performing concerts to the public.

It is well established that students of the arts - of all ages - learn to think creatively and to solve problems. Musical training helps develop brain areas involved in language and reasoning. Playing an instrument requires students to work with others, developing valuable team skills which can be carried over into all aspects of their lives. Since learning an instrument takes time and effort, our students learn patience and perseverance. Feedback from students and their parents tells us that playing music leads to higher concentration levels, improved coordination, reduced stress levels and better social and listening skills. Musical performance is an important tool that leads to improved self-expression which, once again, transfers into all aspects of life. The College Trustees and Tutors believe that playing an instrument, singing or acting promotes confidence, self-esteem, improved mental health and leads to greater contentment.

DONATIONS

We received another generous donation of £2500 from Alastair Nelson. We have spent this on a new professional lever harp and a harp trolley.

Stefanie Bell included a legacy in her will to award the Derek Fleetwood Bell scholarship annually to a deserving student at the Ulster College of Music. We are very grateful to Stefanie Bell for her generosity and for the opportunities this will provide to future musicians.

The National Lottery Fund awarded us a grant of £4282.00 in October 2024 to run the Community Keyboard classes for two more years. We are very grateful for this funding.

Mary Higgins donated a piano as well as £300 for refurbishing it. We are very grateful to have this instrument for our new proposed teaching room next year.

In October 2024 we received £50.00 gift aid from HMRC

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The College provides music and drama lessons to people of all ages from all nationalities, social and religious backgrounds. We welcome students from all the equal opportunities groups based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, pregnancy and marital status. We provide individual lessons, group tuition, children's classes and GCSE and A-level music. The Chamber Music Class is a truly inclusive group of musicians from primary school to pension age. Our Musical Fun Foundation Course starts with Mini Music for the youngest children and progresses to Musical Games for the school age children. Many adults enjoy taking up lessons for the first time to learn a new skill or take up an instrument once more which they had not played for a while. We conduct lessons at times that suit people's busy lives - including afternoons, evenings and weekends.

Our Easter Recital on 16th March 2024 was very well attended and raised £21.97 towards expenses.

The End of Year recital was held at St. Thomas Parish Church on 8th June 2024. Ticket sales raised £336. The costs of putting on the recital were £300.86 for piano tuning, accompanist's fees and refreshments.

The three Christmas recitals on 14th December 2024 were very well received. Donations: £2.62. Expenses for refreshments and accompanist's fees £166.67

Our annual carol concert at the Kennedy Centre on 21st December 2024 was very enjoyable and raised £159.22. Thank you to the Chamber Music Group and their families who helped with the collection box and jingle bells for making it such a successful event.

The Chamber Music Group performed in Glencraig Camphill Community on 23rd November 2024. Our soloists played very well and the audience enjoyed the concert. We received a donation of £300 to add to our refugee bursary fund.

EXAM RESULTS

The College enters students for ABRSM examinations, GCSE, AS and A level examinations and festivals throughout the year. The theory students have been entering for online exams individually, and feedback has been good.

Practical Exams Summary 2023

Board	Period	Total number of Candidates (UCM & other)	Results UCM	Results other
ABRSM Private Visit at UCM	March 2024	20	Pass 5 Merit 4 Distinction 11	
ABRSM Private Visit at UCM	June 2024	42	Fail 1 Pass 12 Merit 19 Distinction 3	Pass 3 Merit 4
ABRSM Private Visit at UCM	December 2024	35	Pass 2 Merit 17 Distinction 13	Distinction 3

GCSE and A level results 2023

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	A*	A	B	C*	C	D	E	U
GCSE	6	4			2				
AS LEVEL	6		1	1		3	1		
A2 LEVEL	5			3			1		1

Student Numbers 2025

Lesson Numbers								
Date	02/03/ 2018	14/03/ 2019	07/02/ 2020	25/03/ 2021	10/02/ 2022	24/02/ 2023	26/02/ 2024	03/03/ 2025
Piano	102	81	78	74	105	99	115	147
Voice	31	36	25	22	23	28	30	33
Woodwind	37	27	24	25	37	33	30	32
Brass	4	6	6	7	11	15	19	24
Guitar/Harp	29	36	32	28	40	40	49	46
Strings/Violin Viola	74	64	56	48	48	52	71	59
Cello/Bass	9	16	21	19	20	20	21	27
Individual Theory	4	5	2	2	3	6	5	8
Drama	4	5	9	6	5	4	4	6
Musical Games Mini Music	11	9	13	5	8	11	10	11
Recorder	12	15	15	13	15	12	13	14
Suzuki Violin	12	15	21	23	17	13	0	0
Group Theory	14	15	26	21	10	11	12	15
GCSE/As/ A level	22	25	16	11	23	12	18	14
Aural	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Chamber Music	13	10	11	10	14	13	15	13
Traditional	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Percussion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Choir			11	0	0	8	12	10
Sound Art Composition	-	-	-	-	6	0	0	0
Total	399	369	368	316	385	377	424	461
Number of Students	321	317	319	289	360	354	383	392

TUTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

We engage services of highly qualified and experienced tutors from all over the world and make this expertise available and affordable to as many people as possible. We are very pleased that the following tutors have joined us:

Oksana Churikova started teaching piano in September 2024, Maebh Martin started teaching violin and viola in September 2024, Grainne Meyer started teaching harp in October 2024, Kristina Hedley joined as bassoon and clarinet tutor in January 2025 and Conor Masterson joined as violin tutor in February 2025.

We would like to thank the tutors who have left for their contribution to the College: Nathan Howe, clarinet, left in June 2024, Neil McErlean, violin, left in June 2024, Ruth Millar, harp, left in October 2024, David Preston, guitar, left in December 2024.

We would like to thank our administrators, Patricia Pepper and Emily Knowles and our bookkeeper, Paul Megarity for their wonderful work. They make the College a pleasant place to visit and work in, ensure excellent communication and keep on top of a very diverse range of duties.

We are very fortunate to have an excellent cleaner, Monika Konik, who has been keeping the College beautifully clean for over a decade.

FOUNDING PRICIPLES

The College's philosophy reflects that of its founder Daphne Bell MBE, Hon. FTCL LRAM LTCL - that music should be accessible to all and we work hard to achieve this. 4 bursaries are available to some families and students who may otherwise not be able to afford music lessons. One bursary is available for a refugee to allow them to restart their music education. We have been fortunate to get nearly continuous funding for the Community Keyboard Skills class for a few years. This allows free access to music to people from diverse backgrounds, including refugees.

The wellbeing of children and young people is of the greatest importance to all the tutors and staff as well as the trustees of the College and our designated child protection officer arranges Access NI checks and child protection training for tutors and staff. Our designated officer is Miss Sheila Kerr. All our tutors have attended child protection and fire safety training courses and we have designated fire wardens on every floor of the building.

MAINTENANCE

During the summer break and at other times volunteers helped with repairing window sills and surrounds, washing carpets, repairing toilets, cleaning PVC, replacing lights, decorating and carpeting Ulster Orchestra room after water damage as well as gardening and line painting in the car park. Thank you to all the volunteers for their time and hard work.

J.B. McCoy Building and Decorating Service was engaged to fit boards to level the floor in Ulster Orchestra room, fix the front door and fire escape door and paint the outside window sills. The cost was £2328.00.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The College received a total income of £ 257,331 for the year 2024 from which there was a surplus of £ 31,007.

Reserve as 31st December 2024 totalled £199,092

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The college will continue to focus on enhancing the range of music tuition to be offered to students. As the building is often fully booked we are planning to add an extra teaching room by converting the garage into a sound proof studio. Planning permission has been applied for.

We have booked J.B. McCoy to replace the roof, including fascia and soffit boards and fit snow guards over the front door for safety during the summer of 2025. We may fit solar panels at the same time, providing planning permission is granted.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustee's annual report was approved on 2nd April 2025 and signed on behalf of the trustees by:

Mrs Astrid King, trustee

