

# Ulster Youth Orchestra Concert Review

Ulster Hall  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2011

Belfast Telegraph – 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2011

## Orchestra celebrates birthday in sparkling style

MORE than 90 young musicians celebrated the 18th anniversary of the Ulster Youth Orchestra (UYO) at two weekend concerts in Londonderry and Belfast.

The Belfast concert in the Ulster Hall on Saturday was attended by Lord Mayor Niall O Donnghaile.

The UYO, under the baton of Scottish conductor Gary Walker, began with a sparkling performance of Shostakovich's Festival Over-

### REVIEW

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★★★★

ture – one of the most scintillating entrees in the classical repertoire.

In the Rachmaninov Piano Concerto Number 2, Michael McHale added to his growing reputation with an assured performance of this popular

and demanding work. Initially the orchestra at full throttle threatened to overpower the soloist, but maestro Walker maintained a subtle balance.

The UYO changed pace with Rimsky-Korsakov's famous setting of the legend of Scheherazade.

The darkness of this tale was quickly banished by this UYO performance which flowed in a sea of gorgeous music, until its dramatic and finely subdued ending.

The orchestra's leader, Tara McNeill, was the excellent violin soloist throughout. Under Gary Walker's challenging direction the entire orchestra, with other outstanding soloists, combined superbly to guide the troubled but beautiful Scheherazade to her safe haven at last.

The prolonged standing ovation for this fine group of young musicians was thoroughly deserved.

**ALF McCREARY**