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**History Timeline**

**2022**

Holywood Music Festival takes place from Wednesday 19th January - Thursday 30th January, attracting a large number of entrants – despite Covid19 & the Omicron variant.

Covid protocols are followed to ensure a safe environment for all those participating in the festival.

Festival held in three venues: Belfast Operatic Company Premises, Heron Road; Holywood Parish Church; First Holywood Presbyterian Church.

The festival is considered to be a great success with competitors enjoying the opportunity to perform live music in public once again.

**2021**

Festival committee meets by Zoom.

Plans made for Festival 2022.

Syllabus & Programme revamped. New monetary prizes added.

New cover design for Syllabus & Programme created by Dunbar Design.

**2020**

Hilary Warnock becomes Chairman of Festival Committee

Festival cancelled due to coronavirus pandemic

**2018**

70th Anniversary year.

New cover design for Syllabus and Programme, marking this important year.

October 5, the cleaned up E Godfrey Brown plaque is unveiled by Lady Sylvia Hermon in its new position at the turn of the stairs leading to the Queen’s Hall, where every performer will pass it.

October 25, 70th Anniversary Concert featuring past prize winners, including local school choirs and orchestras.

**2016**

Extra classes added to the Music Theatre Section.

Two members of the Queen’s Leisure Centre staff, Kevin Lewsley and Neil McKenna find a forgotten plaque commemorating E Godfrey Brown, our first Chairman.

**2015**

Yvonne Friers presents Festival with the Rowel B Friers Memorial Trophy in memory of her late husband, the artist and political cartoonist. He designed Festival’s first medals and logo.

**2014**

Music Theatre gets its own section and own specialist adjudicator, David Beer.

Marianne Underwood becomes Honorary Secretary.

**2013**

John Young becomes Chairman.

**2012**

Signed Song section introduces; specialist adjudicator, Paul Whittaker.

**2010**

Linda Alexander becomes Secretary.

On 14th October we all met in Royal Belfast Golf Club for coffee with the stewards. Michael Alexander and Helen Neale played some duets for us while information was given out about the organizing of the festival and the stewards were able to learn about the tasks involved.

The Festival was launched on 19th November in the Queen’s Hall – an event attended by Lady Sylvia Hermon, Deputy Mayor and local businessmen from around Holywood, as well as Festival Stewards and committee members.

The Festival ran until 27th November with 620 entries. This brought about 3000 extra people to the town during that period.

Many classes through the week brought in full houses and the Gala night was attended by Lady Sylvia Hermon and the Lord Mayor along with many other local people and parents.

**2009**

Holywood Music Festival 2009 got off to a great start on the morning of Friday 20th November with a coffee event featuring the Alexander String Quartet. The event was attended by Lady Sylvia Hermon, Deputy Mayor Councillor Gordon Dunne and local businessmen from around Holywood, as well as Festival Stewards and members of the committee.

**2004**

April – new Festival 2004 Syllabus released and distributed.

May – second issue of Holywood Music Festival Newsletter sent to Music Teachers and libraries and music shops, again sponsored by Sainsbury’s.

**2003**

March – monetary awards included in syllabus for the first time.

April – Launch of the new Music Syllabus in the Holywood Library, cover designed by Priory Press.

May – Sainsbury’s and First Trust Bank offer to sponsor Holywood Music Festival. Mr Hastings offers accommodation for adjudicator

September – Barry Douglas becomes Patron of the Festival.

September – First issue of Holywood Music Festival Newsletter, sponsored by Sainsbury’s.

November – Holywood Music Festival reopens in the Queen’s Leisure Complex and runs for 6 days with 550 entries (1,000 children ), a record number in years.

Four sections: Piano, Vocal, Instrumental and Choral. New medal design, now in Gold, Silver and Bronze.

Adjudicators are Marilynne Davies and Robin Hewitt.

Chair, Peter Yarr.

Honorary Secretary, Sharon Yarr,

A Traditional Section is added.

**2002**

January – Music Committee is formed

Richard Pianos offer to provide pianos for festival

Michael Alexander from the Ulster Orchestra and the Holywood Sinfonietta becomes new President of the Holywood Festival.

Chair Stella Northover.

Secretary Sharon Yarr

Cross community emphasis.

Priory Press design a new image for festival literature.

Plans to use Queen’s Hall instead of Parish Church Hall.

**2001**

September – Local music teachers make plans to reopen the Music Festival.

**1997**

Fiftieth year of Holywood Music Festival.

Music Section closed and cups were stored in a bank in Holywood.

Speech and Drama and Dance Festivals continue.

**1980s**

Decline of the festival- Very few entries (270)

Music Festival is short of money and support from schools.

Colour Television in every home now competing for people’s time and interest.

Possibilities of closing down or combining with Bangor Festival.

Decision made to continue as Holywood Music Festival.

**1975**

24 Feb Major Addy died at 82 (16 Apr 1892, awarded Military Cross in 1918).

Second Phase of the festival

Mr Northover – Chairman

Nana Houston – Vice-Chairman

**1966**

14 July, Sarah Grainger, Festival’s first President dies. Succeeded as President by Sir Francis Evans, G.B.E., K.C.M.G., D.L.

**1962**

Major Addy began to conduct the Messiah in the Queen’s Hall, Holywood, every Christmas in memory of his wife who died of cancer in 1962, helped by the Holywood Festival. £2000 raised for Cancer Campaign each year.

**1957**

Memorial Plaque erected by the Holywood Musical Festival Association in Queen’s Hall in memory of E. Godfrey Brown. Unveiled March 1 by son Michael Brown.

**1956**

10 day festival with 1500 entries

**1955**

Feb 2, Godfrey Brown died at 81, (born 15 June 1874, awarded OBE 1936).

Major Addy – new Chairman of the Festival

Nana Ward – Vice –Chairman.

March 11, Memorial Concert for Godfrey Brown, attended by Prime Minister Terence O’Neill..

1st Prize winner medal introduced.

**1953**

Festival moves to the newly built Queen’s Hall.

Adjudicator is Sir Douglas Hopkins, organist at Canterbury Cathedral.

October 14, Official opening of the Queen’s Hall.

**1948**

June 5: Opening of the “Holywood Musical Festival” by Prime Minister Lord Brookeborough. 4 days with 700 entries Venues: Grainger’s Shed and Church Halls, Grainger’s shed (where the Queen’s Hall and Leisure Complex car park is today) had the capacity for 1500 people.

Adjudicator Dr Frederick W Wadely, organist Carlisle Cathedral.

**1947**

Plans to set up a music festival in Holywood for Music, Speech and Drama; the following are elected to office:

Godfrey Brown OBE Chairman

Major John Victor Addy MC Vice-Chairman

President Mrs Sarah Grainger

Mr John Anderson Secretary

Mrs Maureen Barber Assistant Secretary

Sponsors:

Holywood Urban and District Council

Grainger Brothers Engineering Company.

**1933**

Ralph Vaughan Williams conducts the Philharmonic orchestra and chorus in a programme of his works, February 17; the preparation work is done by Godfrey Brown.

**1932**

Godfrey Brown brings Sir Edward Elgar to Northern Ireland to conduct a Belfast Philharmonic Society performance of ‘The Dream of Gerontius’. He is said to have brought him to Holywood Parish Church, where Elgar played the organ.

**1925**

Sir Henry Wood conducts the Belfast Philharmonic Society’s ‘The Dream of Gerontius’. Chorus and Orchestra prepared by Godfrey Brown. The concert marked the Society’s 50th anniversary and took place on Maundy Thursday, April 9.

**1924**

Godfrey Brown becomes first Music Director for the BBC in Belfast.

**1912**

E Godfrey Brown arrives in Northern Ireland. Appointed as the new Conductor and Director of Belfast Philharmonic Society made up of a choir and orchestra. Also appointed organist at Holywood Parish Church. It is said that when he was sailing up Belfast Lough, he saw the spire of Holywood Parish Church and decided that that would be a good place to live. He spent the rest of his life in Holywood.

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