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BBC Northern Ireland

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Autumn and Winter 2005 Press Pack

BBC Northern Ireland

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Please Note: The information contained in this pack is subject to schedule changes.

Foreword from Anna Carragher, Controller, BBC Northern Ireland

As BBC Northern Ireland now enters its Autumn Season we are continuing to build on our reputation for quality programming across television, radio and online. Over the last year this has been recognised by the industry through our two RTS and five Sony Awards and was singled out for praise by the Department of Culture Media and Sport in a recent consultation.

This season is unveiled as a diverse mix of must-see programmes looking at everything from religion and ethics, sexuality and business to history and personal triumph. We will also be continuing our dedication to producing creative and imaginative content with new and returning comedy and entertainment programmes and through coverage of big events like Proms in The Park and Children in Need.

As always, the bedrock of our service is unmissable news programming. On television, BBC Newsline provides a comprehensive daily news service, our current affairs stable of Spotlight Hearts and Minds and Let's Talk brings the stories behind the headlines to our viewers and The Politics Show reveals what is going on at a national and local level. BBC Radio Ulster, meanwhile, keeps listeners up to date with Good Morning Ulster, Talk Back and Evening Extra and our audiences can log on to catch up the news with BBC Online, which is updated every minute of every day.



And, of course, there are home-grown programmes made by BBC Northern Ireland for audiences across the UK including Messiah, Just for Laughs, What Kids Really Think and Get Smarter. We look forward to making further announcements on our network portfolio over the coming months.

Anna Carragher,
Controller BBC Northern Ireland

Overview of programming from Peter Johnston, Head of Broadcasting, BBC Northern Ireland

This Autumn, we examine the nature of contemporary life in Northern Ireland, delve into history, look to the future in the company of some inspiring characters and showcase the passions and events which enrich people's lives.

We will be spending £29m on programmes of local interest for BBC ONE and BBC TWO NI during 2005/06. £13m of this is for our core news and current affairs service and complementing this we will produce 260 hours of brand new programming. This means we are producing more local TV programmes than ever before to ensure we continue to provide something of value for everyone.

Reflections of modern life emerge as we follow a group of Mormon missionaries on the doorsteps, find out how tough it is when a life-long employer closes down, question perceptions of homosexuality and see the social side of the city through the goings-on in the Europa Hotel.

Nolan Live will continue to allow people to debate the issues of society today and William Crawley will present a new series of ethical discussion programmes. The mysteries of the teenage mind will be exposed in a special season of short films



and, in a series created by school-leavers, find out the secrets of their school formals. There is a strong strand of documentaries looking at events of the 20th Century including the powerful and emotional story

of Teddy Dixon who witnessed the liberation of Dachau and the poignant tales of the Evacuees who left wartime Belfast for a life in the country. We also remember the Miami Showband massacre and the dramatic impact



it had on the music industry and cultural life of the time. Drawing on the Past is a gentle and hopeful account of the reunion of a group of boys who grew up together in turbulent times.

Going further back in time You Thought You Knew returns this time exploring the fact and fiction of the Border, Cuchulain and the Famine.

There will be a focus on physical and emotional journeys in a series of powerful profiles including the life of Father Kieran Creagh in South Africa, Leigh Alderson's struggle to become a world class ballet dancer and the painful steps to recovery for blind water-ski champion Janet Gray. There will also be a major documentary on painter Sir John Lavery and the epic journey of the Brent Geese concludes in Supergoose – The Return.

Only one man can combine all of the above with a passion, a journey and history – Gerry Anderson is in the Wild West giving his own unique take on that part of the world and looking at some of the links with back home.

There will also be a series of music specials and events including the Proms at Belfast

City Hall and extensive coverage of the Belfast Festival at Queens.

Comedy investment has been a priority this year and some new TV and radio series have already begun including a brand new comedy sketch show for the New Year.

In this season we will also see Folks on the Hill return and a very special Give My Head Peace Christmas Show.

Six self-confessed Mummy's Boys will seek help to become more independent in an entertaining new series. Psychologist Geoffrey Beattie is also back to advise six local families on how to come to terms with their difficulties and we will go under the sea with the crew of a nuclear submarine led by their commander from Belfast.

On BBC TWO, the Irish Language magazine series SRL returns. Sport continues to feature strongly in our programming with a

wide ranging portfolio including the NI v England World Cup qualifier, the magazine programme Season Ticket and a new four part series, Sporting Traditions.

And let's not forget that BBC Northern Ireland is growing a prolific portfolio of network output. Watch out for major announcements from our drama and news and current affairs teams in the coming months including some incredible Shakespeare co-produced by BBC Northern Ireland and more of Messiah and Murphy's Law.

This season shows the immense creativity, imagination and passion of programme makers in Northern Ireland, both inside and outside the BBC. I am proud of the rich mix of people, places and stories they have captured and I hope that viewers enjoy our new Autumn and Winter schedule.

