

REALISING AMBITIONS

Ciorstaidh Pheutan, Harp

Ciorstaidh is a burgeoning 17-year-old harpist from the Isle of Skye, currently studying at the City of Edinburgh Music School. She has participated in NYOS courses since the age of 13. She has had the opportunity to take part in NYOS's flagship symphony orchestra, The National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and in 2009 she traveled to Poland and The Netherlands along with 120 other young musicians as part of the orchestra's Summer Course and Concert Tour.

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Originally from Kilmuir on the Isle of Skye, Ciorstaidh remembers always being surrounded by music, saying, "I think music has always been in my life in one way or another. As I live on Skye, I grew up surrounded by traditional music, and there was always a good ceilidh on the go!" She started having lessons on the clarsach (Scottish folk harp) at the age of eight, and Piano around the age of ten and was first introduced to the Pedal Harp at the age of 14, and ever since then she says "my musical knowledge has expanded into the world of Classical and Orchestral Music."

It was at the age of 13 in 2006 that she first participated in The National Children's Orchestra of Scotland (NCOS) Easter Course and Concerts and by the time she took part in NCOS' Summer Course she had turned 14. She very much enjoyed taking part in these courses but also felt nervous about attending, saying, "I remember feeling both very worried, but excited at the same time. It turns out I had nothing to worry about, as there were many people in exactly the same situation as me."

Ciorstaidh heard about NYOS and the opportunities the organisation offers Scotland's talented and aspiring young musicians from her Clarsach teacher, who encouraged her to audition for NCOS. She said: "The audition was a success, and I realised how much I had learnt from taking part (in NCOS)."

Thanks to Ciorstaidh's participation in NYOS orchestras she has worked with renowned conductors such as Christopher Adey, Christian Mandeal, Peter Stark and Takuo Yuasa as well as outstanding soloists, including cellist Alexander Baillie, pianist Ian Fountain and violinist Jennifer Pike.

Opportunities like this provide unparalleled opportunities for young musicians such as Ciorstaidh to gain orchestral experience with other young musicians of advanced proficiency, enjoy specialist tuition that is unavailable elsewhere in Scotland, work with internationally renowned conductors and soloists and experience a challenging repertoire, chosen to push the boundaries of their musical experience. This along with experiencing the rigours of touring and performing in renowned concert venues across the UK and Europe, develop key personal, social and team-working skills which benefit all students as they grow into young adults.

When taking part in the 2009 NYOS Summer Course and Tour, Ciorstaidh worked with the celebrated conductor Takuo Yuasa and again with Sandy Baillie. She said of the experience: "I enjoyed our visit to Poland during NYOS Summer Course 2009, after all the hours of travelling by bus and ferry, it was nice to have the chance to walk through the streets and markets, experiencing culture and enjoy the sun!"

Ciorstaidh thoroughly enjoys participating in NYOS courses and says, "The best thing about NYOS courses is that we have the opportunity to not only achieve and express a very high standard of musicianship, but also to share the experience of playing in fantastic venues all over Europe with young people our own age. I've made many friends through NYOS."

It is clear that Ciorstaidh has benefited from the inspiration and experience that NYOS affords its students via its residential training courses and concert tours which have allowed her to form friendships, develop her social skills and receiving specialist tuition and performance opportunities thus allowing her to realise her full musical potential.

