

NYOS Symphony Orchestra, Caird Hall Dundee
08.08.19

Had you been led blindfolded into the Caird Hall on Thursday night, you could have been excused for thinking that the Royal Scottish National Orchestra or some such professional body were in performance. But you wouldn't have been surprised to learn that the performers were the symphony orchestra of the National Youth Orchestras of Scotland, under conductor Jessica Cottis.

It is no exaggeration to mention these excellent youngsters in the same breath as an adult professional outfit. They're every bit as good, and there will be more than one seasoned pro looking over their shoulders as the next rank of Scottish instrumental superstars come marching on.

The NYOS programme on Thursday was bold, adventurous, tough and demanding. But the huge orchestra took the music of Bacewicz, Shostakovich and Bartok in their stride with skill and natural talent allied with youthful exuberance. A heady mix indeed.

Each and every one of the players faced a daunting examination, and while the final work was Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra, the entire programme was full of frighteningly exposed passages. You could tell from the efforts on stage and the sound that emanated forth that the Bartok is some challenge, but the NYOS players delivered a magnificent performance that was full of aplomb and that glittered with mature professionalism

While the Bacewicz Overture was a mini-version of that, fairly bleak in parts as well, the Shostakovich that was the meat in the sandwich took the limelight off the orchestra and on to an amazing violinist. The composer's first violin concerto doesn't enter the "marvellous concerto" category – in fact, I find it a tad tedious.

However, if anyone was to propel it up the charts it was Daishin Kashimoto. His performance was outstanding. Skilful, exciting, dashing – all the superlatives you like don't go amiss after hearing this young man. It was the cadenza at the end of the third movement that sent the pulses racing, and you'll go a long way to hear a similar example of what was the ultimate in virtuosity.

Did some of that virtuosity rub off on the NYOS players? Maybe so, but these youngsters have tons of that of their own.

Garry Fraser, Perth & Dundee Courier