

MUSIC
NYOS SENIOR
ORCHESTRA
CITY HALLS, GLASGOW

★★★★

IT MIGHT only have been the NYOS Senior Orchestra's second public outing but if you'd been expecting a few simple tunes to ease it into existence, think again. This was a challenging, wide-ranging concert under the energetic direction of conductor James Lowe. And it not only pushed the band of 80-odd 11 to 18-year-olds to their limits, but also showed the remarkable musicianship they were capable of.

Hardly waiting for the audience's opening applause to die down, Lowe launched straight into an urgent, compelling account of Estonian composer Veljo Tormis's *Overture no.2*, the first of three contemporary pieces. And it was ideally chosen, its abundance

of solos showing off the skills of individual players, from leader Harry Gorski-Brown's sweet-toned violin melody to a finely turned tuba solo near the end from David Clark. The strings were hesitant at first in the serenely falling scales of Arvo Pärt's *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten*, but by the piece's resonant conclusion they'd found a throbbing, sonorous sound and a gripping intensity in their playing. To complete the trio, Lutoslawski could have hardly hoped for a more vivid, characterful account of his early *Little Suite*, full of life and mischievous wit.

After the interval, there were a few ragged moments in the Dvorák Sixth Symphony, but Lowe ensured a grand sweep to its expansive paragraphs, and the musicians responded with spirit and passion. It might be a young ensemble, but it delivered an evening of fine music.

DAVID KETTLE