

The City of Carlisle Orchestra delivered an excellent evening's entertainment at its winter concert on Saturday 2 December. The opening work, *Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, started the performance with a sense of majesty and was well negotiated by the orchestra, setting the tone for the concert and warming up the brass for the ensuing pieces. The colour of the different sections was well delineated, emphasising the dynamic variations this work requires to avoid the possible pitfalls of unrelenting full orchestra fortissimo.

*En Saga* by Jean Sibelius followed and once more the orchestra presented the tone poem very well. The violin section demonstrated a number of different styles as they subdivided into as many as 12 independent lines while employing the pizzicato, muting and double stopping requested by the composer. They also demonstrated a mastery of advanced techniques such as *tremolo* and *sul ponticello*, while *pianissimo*, producing a brittle and chilled eeriness, depicting the far northern lands in this folklore-based composition.

The evening concluded with an excellent performance of *Dvorak's Eighth Symphony*, where once again, the brass section had a prominent role. The contrast between the outer and inner movements was well interpreted, with some superb solos from the woodwind sections.

This was a very cohesive performance from the orchestra, which has made significant progress over the last few years as it has enjoyed and responded to the first-class direction of its young and talented conductor. Now in his third year with the ensemble, Leon Reimer has developed an understanding of and empathy with the players that leads them to deliver outstanding concerts such as this.

The City of Carlisle Orchestra's next concert, on Saturday 24 March 2018 features pianist Leah Nicholson playing *Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto*. This is a return visit for Leah, as she performed *Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto* with the orchestra in December 2016 to rapturous applause. This young, local talent has amazing presence and ability and this will most certainly be a concert not to be missed.

Jane Evans