



Press release for immediate use

**Emily Barron, 16-year-old Clarinettist from St. Columba's School, Kilmacolm wins Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year 2023**

**Will Archibald from Dumfries and Galloway and Michael Gemmell from the Scottish Borders are awarded the position of equal runners up**

**31 of the best Young Musicians from across Scotland gathered in Glasgow today to compete in second ever Solo Performer of the Year Final**



Expertly compered by **Ian Mills**, chair of the MEPG Board of Trustees, the second ever Solo Performer of the Year competition saw incredible performances from Scotland's young musicians who enthralled an audience of hundreds at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

16-year-old **Emily Barron**, an S5 pupil from St Columba's School started playing clarinet when she was 8 years old. In the years since, she has picked up saxophone, piano and bass clarinet, and is a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland and RCS Junior Symphony Orchestra. Her winning performance of *Solo de Concours* by André Messager earned her the title of Scottish Young Musician Solo Performer of the Year 2023.

Emily Barron receives **£1,000** to spend on furthering her musical career and the **Maid of Morven trophy** made by the Kings's Sculptor in Ordinary in Scotland **Alexander Stoddart FRSE**. Emily also receives a package of opportunities provided by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland including a coaching session, participation in a masterclass and a studio recording session.

**Will Archibald** and **Michael Gemmell** both receive **£250** to spend on musical activities and a coaching session and masterclass slot at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Other finalists will be allocated a range of exciting prizes including performance opportunities, concert tickets, opportunities to sit in on rehearsals and masterclasses, mentoring, meet-and-greets with musicians, social media training, music shop vouchers and more. Every finalist will receive a career-enhancing prize.

The panel of judges was led by **John Logan**, Head of Brass at RCS. He was joined by **Sarah Ayoub** of the multi-instrumental composing and performing duo the **Ayoub Sisters**, internationally renowned soprano **Judith Howarth**, **Heather Nicol**, Head of Woodwind at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and **Ross Leighton** from the band **Fatherson**. They had the difficult job of selecting the winner and two runners up from performances on instruments ranging from euphonium to accordion, bass guitar to baritone horn, marimba to voice, and many more.

The day started with a special welcome from international classical violinist **Nicola Benedetti** and culminated in a performance by the winning Scottish Young Musicians Ensemble of the Year, **East Lothian Council Instrumental Music Service Senior String Ensemble**, and Brass Ensemble of the Year **Stranraer Brass**.

**Emily Barron, winner of Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year 2023, said:**

“It's been a really incredible opportunity to take part in Scottish Young Musicians and I never would have expected to win out of all of these wonderful musicians. There's a lot you can learn by hearing other musicians play and I've taken away a lot today from hearing all the other musicians who are all around my age. I've been really inspired to continue playing music and can't wait to see what lies in the future.”

**Alan Kerr, Chair of Scottish Young Musicians, said:**

“The 31 amazing finalists playing today represent only the top of the tree of talent that Scottish Young Musicians has encouraged. Now covering 99% of the Scottish population, our other winners and participants have benefitted from developing their music and life-skills on their journey with SYM. Our goal is to achieve the broadest possible participation and to be as inclusive as possible. We're delighted at how 2023 has turned out and we've even started to get ready to return next year.”

**John Logan, head of the judging panel who presented the awards, said:**

“Many people wonder how we can actually pick a winner from so many talented young people, and not only that, so many diverse instruments. Today we enjoyed everything from rock drums to guitar to classical guitar to baritone horn, to voice. At the end of the day, we’re in the entertainment business. We look for sound technique, but we also look for emotion and storytelling. They say that technique is the passport to storytelling in this language that we call music. And Emily Barron was the person who used it to really engage with the audience today.”

The Scotland-wide competition is run by **The Music Education Partnership Group** who work with every school and local authority to support music education and opportunities.

For more information, please visit [www.scottishyoungmusicians.com](http://www.scottishyoungmusicians.com) or follow the festival on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

**ENDS/ (Already copied into release)**

**IMAGES FROM THE 2023 FINAL AVAILABLE [HERE](#)**

**Press Contact:**

**For any press enquiries on Scottish Young Musicians, please contact:**

**Chloe Smith [chloes@thecornershoppr.com](mailto:chloes@thecornershoppr.com)**

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

Full list of finalists can be found [here](#) (Please note this is a live document and subject to change)

**About Scottish Young Musicians**

The story started over 20 years ago when brothers Alan and Brian Kerr founded the North Ayrshire Young Musician Competition. It has flourished ever since under the stewardship of Mae Murray and over 20,000 young musicians have enjoyed taking part. From this grew the idea of bringing the Scottish Young Musicians competitions to the whole of Scotland - and that is what they are now setting out to do. Alan is now the Chair of Scottish Young Musicians, which aims to have a music competition in every school in the country and to have as many students participate in the life-skills benefits that this brings.

**About MEPG**

The Music Education Partnership Group (MEPG) will oversee the running of the Scottish Young Musicians Competitions. MEPG brings together stakeholders in music and education across Scotland. MEPG is a registered charity and members organisation which aims to tackle inequity, help young people to realise their potential and challenge perceptions of music education.