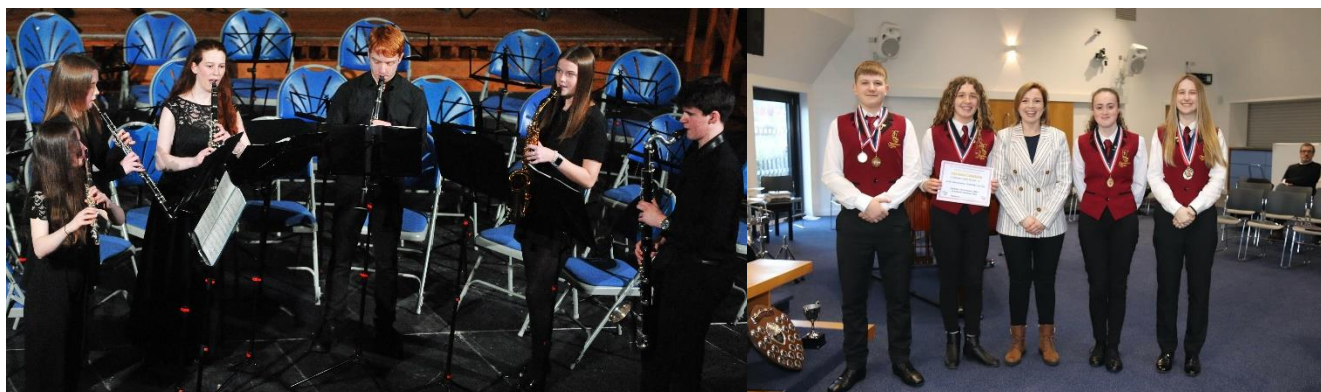


Belmont Academy Woodwind Ensemble and Campbeltown Brass win prestigious national ensemble competitions run by Scottish Young Musicians



L-R: Belmont Academy Woodwind Ensemble, Campbeltown Brass

Scottish Young Musicians, Scotland's festival of music competitions, gives young musicians from around the country the chance to **compete to win** career-enhancing prizes, perform live on a national stage in front of internationally renowned judges, and push their skills like never before.

After an online competition which attracted entries from across the country, **Belmont Academy (South Ayrshire) Woodwind Ensemble** have been announced as the 2024 winners of **Scottish Young Musicians Ensemble of the Year**, which was open to ensembles playing any genre or grouping of instruments. The runners up were James Gillespie's High School Senior Guitar Ensemble.

The **Brass Ensemble of the Year** competition was won by **Campbeltown Brass**, with South Ayrshire Brass Ensemble coming in second place. Thanks to a generous donation from Dr Ursula Jones OBE, this special prize was on offer to an exceptional brass ensemble donated in honour of her late husband Philip Jones CBE, who founded the widely celebrated Philip Jones Brass Ensemble.

A total of 23 ensembles entered this year's competition, with 7 competing in the brass competition and 16 in the open competition.

One ensemble in each category (Ensemble of the Year and Brass Ensemble of the Year) was selected to represent each local authority, recognised music organisation, and Scotland's independent schools. All members had to be school students in Scotland but there was no minimum age or standard.

The chosen entries then submitted videos of their performances to a panel of esteemed adjudicators led by Matthew Chinn, Associate Head of the Junior Conservatoire at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Ruth Morley, flute player with Red Note Ensemble, renowned percussionist Calum Huggan and Rachel Cooper, violin tutor who works with The Benedetti Foundation.

Both ensembles will now receive a cash prize to further their musical experiences, a Maid of Morven Trophy designed by Alexander Stoddart, The King's Sculptor in Ordinary, and an all-

expenses paid trip to play a prime slot at the Solo Performer of the Year National Final at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland on Sunday 26 May 2024.

Matthew Chinn, chief adjudicator for Open Ensemble and Brass Ensemble of the Year, said:

“The SYM Ensemble competition panel were delighted to receive a record number of entries, from across the length and breadth of Scotland, for both the Brass and Open Ensemble classes.

The quality of submissions were all of an extremely high standard with a diverse range of instrumentation/ensemble types entered: big band, brass, guitar, jazz, percussion, and strings, which is testament to the great work and variety of offering taking place each week in schools and local communities across Scotland.

As well as being skilled individual performers, the winning ensembles of both classes demonstrated impressive communication skills with one another, coupled with a cohesive understanding of balance, intonation, and musical character required throughout their carefully selected programmes.

The panel would like to congratulate every ensemble for their fantastic performances and look forward to welcoming this year’s winners of the Brass and Open Ensemble classes to the RCS on Sunday 26 May 2024 to perform during the SYM Solo Performer of the Year competition.”

Councillor Stephen Ferry, Education Portfolio Holder for South Ayrshire Council said: *“Well done to the young musicians at Belmont Academy and the South Ayrshire Brass Ensemble. To be recognised by the judges makes all the practice worthwhile. Music is such an important part of the curriculum in South Ayrshire and I have no doubt these talented musicians will inspire even more of our pupils.”*

Shonagh Stevenson, Music Service Manager at South Ayrshire Council, said: *“We are delighted to win this award and so proud of the hard work the young musicians and their instructor, Mr Gonzalez have put in. They are thrilled to be winners and look forward to performing at the RCS later this month.”*

Katrina Barr, conductor of Campbeltown Brass, said: *“We are absolutely thrilled to have won the Scottish Brass Ensemble of the year and I’m so proud of all the hard work that the kids put in throughout the year. We are very much looking forward to performing at the finals in a few week’s time.”*

In 2024, local authorities covering 99% of Scotland’s population are taking part in **Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year**, giving opportunities to more young people who would like to compete in Scotland’s only music competition where funding and expertise is offered to every school and Local Authority. The competition is open to all young musicians who go to school in Scotland, whatever age or standard, and each area will select their best local soloist to compete at the National Final at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland on Sunday 26 May 2024. The final will be hosted by **Jamie MacDougall** and the full list of prizes and internationally-renowned judges are due to be announced soon.

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