

Press release for immediate use, Monday 10 March 2025

**Perth and Kinross Percussion Ensemble wins prestigious National Ensemble competition run by Scottish Young Musicians**

**The inaugural live final at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland on Sunday 9 March showcased 12 ensembles from across Scotland.**

**First The John Wallace Award presented to overall winners, and the Philip Jones Brass Prize presented to the winning Brass Ensemble Campbeltown Brass Senior Ensemble.**



*Perth and Kinross Percussion Ensemble and Campbeltown Brass Senior Ensemble celebrate their wins at Scottish Young Musicians. Photo credit: Alan Kerr*

Scottish Young Musicians, Scotland's festival of music competitions, gives young musicians from every corner of 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.

The competition which attracted entries from across the country culminated in the inaugural live final yesterday, **Sunday 9 March**. **Perth & Kinross Percussion Ensemble** has been announced as the 2025 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 the **South Ayrshire Chamber Singers**.

The winners of the overall ensemble prize were presented with the first **John Wallace Award** by the man himself.

The **Brass Ensemble of the Year** competition was won by **Campbeltown Brass Senior Ensemble**.

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 21 ensembles entered this year's competition. After three years being held online, the inaugural live final at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland was compered by one of Scotland's leading artists Jamie MacDougall.

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 panel of esteemed adjudicators at the final was led by composer and founder of the Cumnock Tryst Sir James MacMillan, alongside violinist, vocalist and composer Seonaid Aitken known to Jazz Night audiences on BBC Radio Scotland, and Head of Guitar and Harp & Interim Deputy Director of Music at the RCS, Professor Allan Neave.

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

**Sir James MacMillan, chief adjudicator for Open Ensemble and Brass Ensemble of the Year, said:** *"It's an almost impossible task to choose winners. It has been a great afternoon, and a very encouraging afternoon. We've heard a marvellous spread of music from these massive percussion sounds to brass to voices and woodwind and guitarists and so on. The judges were unanimous though and we are delighted that two such fine ensembles take home the prizes this year."*

**Lynsey Paterson, conductor of Perth and Kinross Percussion Ensemble and Instrumental Music Coordinator for Perth and Kinross, said:** *"We are absolutely ecstatic. It just means so much and the kids have worked so hard. There will be a big celebration and the whole of Perth and Kinross will know about it!"*

**Katrina Barr, conductor of Campbeltown Brass, said:** *"We are absolutely thrilled to have won the Scottish Brass Ensemble of the year for a second time and I'm so proud of all the hard work that the kids put in throughout the year."*

**Alan Kerr, Chair of Scottish Young Musicians said:** *"Performing in an ensemble requires many hours of individual practice before coming together as a group. This is a great illustration of what Scottish Young Musicians is trying to achieve in its objective of building life-skills both at a personal level and as part of a team."*

*"Today we were proud to present the first John Wallace Award for the best overall ensemble, established in recognition of his exceptional contribution to music education in Scotland. This alongside the fourth year of the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble Prize for the best in that category. It has been a tremendous day of outstanding talent and teamwork and we thank everyone on-*

*stage and off-stage for their passion and dedication to participating in music and the huge joy and benefits it brings.”*

**John Wallace, a major figure in music education and music making in Scotland added:** “*We Scots are always astonished when we find we are good at something. And I think this afternoon proved that we are really good at music. It starts in the home and it continues in the community and in the schools as well. It’s thanks to enlightened policy over many years and the advent of free music tuition in schools that we are now witnessing this absurd flow of talent that we have heard this afternoon. I don’t know how the judges managed to choose between these 12 brilliant groups. But I urge all these musicians to keep it up. You are playing for yourselves of course, for your family but you are also playing for your fantastic country of Scotland which is the most musical place on earth.*”

In 2024, local authorities covering 100% 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 25 May 2025. 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](http://www.scottishyoungmusicians.com) or follow the festival on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

The finalists of the Scottish Young Musicians Ensemble Prize who played at the Royal Conservatoire on Sunday 9 May 2025 were:

Perth and Kinross Percussion Ensemble, Perth and Kinross  
St Peter the Apostle Senior Brass Ensemble, West Dunbartonshire  
South Ayrshire Chamber Singers, South Ayrshire  
Glasgow School’s Clarinet Choir, City of Glasgow  
Campbeltown Brass Senior Ensemble, Argyll and Bute  
East Ayrshire Percussion Ensemble, East Ayrshire  
West Calder High School Brass Ensemble, West Lothian  
Midlothian Perc Project, Midlothian  
Hermitage Academy Musical Theatre Class, Argyll and Bute  
Hillfoots Music for Youth Brass Ensemble, Clackmannanshire  
Hillfoots Music for Youth Saxophone Quartet, Clackmannanshire  
James Gillespie’s Guitar Ensemble, City of Edinburgh