



## **Scottish Young Musicians searches for Solo Performer of the Year and Brass Ensemble of the Year in Scotland's new festival of music competitions.**

Following the success of the North Ayrshire Young Musician Competition which has run for over 20 years and seen up to 20,000 people take part, The Music Education Partnership Group is now rolling two competitions out across Scotland. Anticipated as being the next big development in music in Scotland, Solo Performer of the Year and Brass Ensemble of the Year seek to find the very best young musicians in each Local Authority and from independent schools to compete against each other and perform in a grand final at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in 2022.

The competitions will give school students the chance to achieve their ambitions through their talent in music, develop their life skills and have fun. Entry is open to every school student that sings or plays an instrument, and it is hoped that thousands will take part. There are two competitions taking place with finals in 2022.

**Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year** is open to everyone who is learning to sing or play an instrument in a school in Scotland. Each local authority will receive funding and support to allow every secondary school to take part. Each will have a process of selecting a winner and there will be a finalist chosen from those attending independent schools. The first Solo Performer of the Year final will be held at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow on 29 May 2022 and will be judged by adjudicators with an international reputation.

The winner of the national competition will receive a stunning sculpture by Sandy Stoddart of the Maid of Morven playing the Clarsach, as well as the opportunity to work, play and learn with some world class musicians with links to music colleges for those considering a career in music.

**Scottish Young Musicians Brass Ensemble of the Year** is an online music competition open to ensembles of up to 10 players aged 18 and under who play together regularly in school or in their local youth brass band. There will also be an ensemble chosen from those attending independent schools. Entrance is by video submission and should include two contrasting pieces lasting no longer than 10 minutes. Closing date for entries is 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and the results will be announced on 25 April 2022.

The winning ensemble will get an all-expenses paid trip to play a prime slot at the Solo Performer of the Year final on Sunday 29 May at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. They will also receive a trophy and a prize of £750 to be spent on ensemble music related activities, generously donated by the late Philip Jones CBE and his wife Ursula Jones OBE.

To enable as many young people as possible to take part in the competitions, there is no minimum age or standard. All competition fees will be covered, and the finalists and their parent or carer will receive travel expenses and accommodation if required. The hope is that every school pupil will have the opportunity to take part should they wish, and there is

confidence that the finalists from across Scotland will be of a quality where they could become professional musicians.

Nicola Benedetti and Sir James MacMillan are both supporters of the competition.

As well as looking for support at a national level, Scottish Young Musicians is looking for businesses to get involved at a local level to support the Young Musicians competition in their local authority. Find out how you can help this new annual competition get off the ground at [www.scottishyoungmusicians.com/support-us](http://www.scottishyoungmusicians.com/support-us)

**Alan Kerr, Chair of Scottish Young Musicians, said:** “Providing performance opportunities for young musicians helps their confidence, wellbeing and abilities not just within music but across their life skills. This festival of music brings the benefits of music tuition into the spotlight as it supports learning across the whole curriculum. Playing in the same festival brings camaraderie through observing, meeting and learning from others, and can also be a lot of fun.”

**John Wallace, Convenor of the Music Education Partnership Group, said:** “Performing music to the best of our abilities whatever age we are is just about as good as it gets. This uplifting festival of music making gives Scotland’s young people the opportunity to fill our needy world with beautiful, healing and inspiring sounds.”

**Scottish Culture Minister Jenny Gilruth said:** “For the thousands of children who learn musical instruments in schools across Scotland, having the chance to take part in the prestigious Scottish Young Musicians competitions will not only boost their confidence as performers but potentially open doors to future careers.

“Music has such an important role to play in all of our lives and I’m sure the high profile of first Solo Performer of the Year final, to be held at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland next year, will inspire many more children to take part in the future.”

**Nicola Benedetti said:** “We are entering a rare and beautiful moment in Scotland’s history, where a phenomenal combination of individuals and organisations are tirelessly working together to achieve the highest possible inclusivity and excellence in music, all equally committed to enriching our national story and legacy, and furthermore, we have a new governmental commitment to free instrumental tuition for Scotland’s young people. It feels like such an exciting time for classical music in Scotland and the perfect moment to launch Scottish Young Musician to celebrate the brilliant young musical talent across the country. I am excited to see how this develops.”

**Sir James Macmillan said:** “I am excited to see the emergence of these new competitions which will be of immense help and encouragement for the aspirations of thousands of young Scottish musicians. As they say, it’s not the winning that counts - it’s the taking part and learning a lot about oneself as a developing musician, being able to contrast and compare one’s progress with one’s young colleagues.”

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

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**IMAGES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)**

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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### 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.

### 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.

### About Alan Kerr

Alan Kerr has been a trustee of both Orchestras Live, the UK's agency for orchestras, and for nearly 20 years, The Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the world's most recorded chamber orchestra. He spends much of his time helping young musicians by nurturing excellence amongst those from deprived backgrounds. With his brother he founded the Ayrshire Young Musician Competition, which has had over 10,000 participants, and has expanded this into the creation of Scottish Young Musicians, Scotland's national festival of music competitions. Alan is also a widely published music and charity industry photographer.