



Scottish Young Musicians looking to crown Brass Ensemble of the Year in Scotland's new festival of music competitions

Anticipated as being the next big development in music in Scotland, Brass Ensemble of the Year and Solo Performer of the Year seek to find the very best young musicians in each Local Authority and from independent schools in Scotland to compete against each other. Having launched two new competitions across Scotland in 2021, The Music Education Partnership Group look forward to awarding the winners in 2022, with the winning Brass Ensemble being announced on 25 April 2022.

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. The performance should be an unedited video with all participants playing in one venue at the same time. Closing date for entries is 25th March 2022 and the results will be announced on 25 April 2022 online and on social media.

The competitions will give school students the chance to achieve their ambitions through their talent in music, develop their life skills and have fun. One entry is allowed from each Local Authority, Independent School Group and Youth Brass Band, and each of these groups is encouraged to have their own competition to select their final entry.

To enter, participants must contact the Music Service Manager from their Local Authority, the conductor of their band or [Louise Timney](#) at Dollar Academy, the independent school coordinator. They will upload the videos and music scores for judging by a panel of experts. The judges are **John Wallace**, Convenor of MEPG, **Arlene Macfarlane**, Director of Scottish Schools Orchestra Trust, and **John Miller**, ex-Head of Wind and Percussion at Royal Northern College of Music.

The winning ensemble will receive a stunning sculpture by Alexander Stoddart of the Maid of Morven playing the clarsach, and 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 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.

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 and playing collaboratively in a Brass Ensemble into the spotlight as it supports learning across the whole curriculum. Playing in the same festival brings camaraderie and can be a lot of fun."

John Wallace, Convenor of MEPG, said: "There's nothing quite as enjoyable as playing music with other people – especially brass music. This is an invitation to join us in a festival of serious fun, playing music you love, with people you love playing with, to the best of your abilities."

For more information, please visit 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 John Wallace

During his trumpet-playing career, John Wallace he held positions with the London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, and London Sinfonietta, as well as forming the Wallace Collection brass ensemble. He recorded all the major trumpet solo works on CD and premiered new concertos by Malcolm Arnold, Maxwell Davies, Macmillan, Muldowney, Souster, Schuller and Saxton amongst others. From 2002-14 he was Principal of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, after which he resumed his performing career. From 2015-18 he was the Royal Society of Edinburgh vice-president for arts, humanities and social sciences. In 2011 he was awarded a CBE for services to Dance, Drama and Music. In 2021 he was awarded the Queen's medal for music. Presently, in addition to his board membership of the Scottish Funding Council, he is involved with St Andrews Music Participation (StAMP) which has started off over 230 beginners on brass instruments since the beginning of the pandemic. He also convenes the Music Education Partnership Group, chairs the Glasgow Barons, a new orchestra based in Govan, and is President of St Mary's Music School. John also composes, and recently finished an hour-long Symphony for Brass Band and a one-act Opera for tenor, chorus, seven brass and percussion, on the subject of dementia - *Opsnizing Dad* - which will be performed in March 2022 with Jamie MacDougall in the starring role.

This is the first of three socially responsible operas designed as a *Trittico*. The second, *They Twa' Fush* is about political sleaze, and the third *So much hot air* is about net zero.

About Arlene Macfarlane

Arlene studied Trombone at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she graduated with a BMus Degree in Performance with Honors of the First Class, obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Performance with Distinction, and holds a Master of Music with Distinction. Following on from her studies, Arlene was appointed as Sub – Principal Trombone of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales where she spent five years. Arlene's other professional work includes appearances with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Opera, RTE Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. With a passion for music education, Arlene relocated back to Scotland and has held teaching posts for all of the Ayrshire Music Services and currently works for East Ayrshire Music Service. She is also Course Director for the West of Scotland Schools Orchestra Trust, Musical Director for the Dynamica Brass Academy and Lower Brass Instructor for the National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain. Arlene is also a musicianship tutor and brass specialist for the Benedetti Foundation. In addition to her current teaching positions, Arlene was also appointed as Director of the Scottish Schools Orchestra Trust in January 2022.

About John Miller

John Miller began his musical life playing cornet with Tullis Russell Mills Band, Fife, and the National Youth Brass Band of Scotland. He took up trumpet playing as a career, and was a member of the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble (1972-80) and the Philharmonia Orchestra (1977-1994). He is also a founder member of the Wallace Collection brass ensemble. He joined the staff of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1999 as Head of Brass, was Head of Wind & Percussion 2013–17, and is currently a part-time member of staff. John is a teacher, published writer and brass educationalist in high demand. He was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the Guildhall School in 1993, a Fellowship of the RNCM in 2006, followed by Professorship (personal chair) of RNCM in 2010. His work with young musicians, including the National Youth Orchestra, has been stamped by creative instrumental teaching and artistic innovation, and continues to be recognised internationally.

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.