

**Young Marimba Player Akshar Abdullah, S5 pupil from All Saints RC Secondary School, is announced as Glasgow champion and the first competitor to be confirmed for the Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year final**



Today at City Halls, solo musicians from primary and secondary schools across Glasgow competed for a spot in the Scottish Young Musicians final which will take place on 29 May this year in the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. All schools in Glasgow were invited to take part, and a total of 4 primary and 15 secondary schools were involved in the local final, with 22 young people performing.

**Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year** is a new Scotland-wide music competition launched by The Music Education Partnership Group, Scotland's only music competition where funding and expertise is offered to every school and Local Authority, giving all pupils in the country the chance to take part.

Following a string of excellent live performances at City Halls, **16-year-old Akshar Abdullah from All Saints RC Secondary School was announced as the winner** by adjudicator Gerry Doherty. He performed *IV) Despedida (Farewell) – Rosauero Concerto for Marimba* on Marimba and gave a masterful performance. In second place was Elina Purina, S5 pianist from Holyrood Secondary School, and Allie McEwan, S5 singer from St Margaret Mary's Secondary School, was awarded third place.

Gerry Doherty, who judged the final, is a former Bellarmine pupil who studied at RSAMD, was a violinist with RSNO for 30 years, has conducted the Glasgow Schools' Symphony Orchestra and has worked as a music instructor throughout his career. The accompanist for the afternoon was Cameron Murdoch, an Instrumental Music Instructor with Glasgow CREATE and RCS Juniors, former BBC Young Musician of the Year finalist and conductor of the Glasgow Phoenix Choir.

The next step of the competition takes **Akshar** to the Royal Conservatoire to compete in the national final in May. The overall winner of the National competition will receive a stunning sculpture by Alexander 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 future considerations of a career in music.

The majority of Local Authorities across Scotland are also taking part in the competition, with many more hosting local finals in the coming months to determine who will represent their area in the national final.

**Scottish Young Musicians Brass Ensemble of the Year** is also taking place in 2022. This online music competition is 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 legendary trumpet player Philip Jones CBE and his wife Ursula

**Akshar Abdullah, Glasgow finalist for Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year, said:** I feel absolutely exhilarated. I have been playing percussion for three years now and I feel very proud of myself for winning today. It was nerve-wracking but competing today was a great experience and I'm really excited to represent Glasgow at the national final.

**Gerry Doherty, adjudicator for the Glasgow City Council final, said:** It's wonderful to get back to music-making face to face. All the children did really well and performed at a very high level. It's about projecting music and telling a story, and Akshar did that brilliantly in his performance and was technically on top of his piece.

**Pamela Black, Education Support Officer for Music, Glasgow City Council, said:** It's brilliant to have live music back and have everyone performing, we're just so excited about it. It's amazing that after 2 years of lockdowns and limited access to teaching, the standard of the competition has been tremendous. It is testimony to the will and talent of the pupils and their teachers.

