

Young vocalist Avril McLaughlin from St. Columba's High School is announced as Inverclyde champion and the next competitor to be confirmed for the Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year final



On 26 March at Inverclyde Academy, solo musicians from secondary schools across Inverclyde Council 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 secondary schools in Inverclyde were invited to take part by Inverclyde Council Music Service, and a total of 6 schools were represented in the local final, with 20 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 Inverclyde Academy S5 pupil **Avril McLaughlin from St. Columba's High School** was announced as the winner by adjudicator Donald Finlayson, Music Service Manager of East Renfrewshire Council. She sang *Gimme Gimme* from the musical *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and gave a masterful performance. Rachel O'Connor, an S6 trombone player from Inverclyde Academy, and

Stephen Nawrath, an S6 electric guitarist from Port Glasgow High School, were the runners up.

The next step of the competition takes Avril 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. The winner of this online music competition 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.

Donald Finlayson, adjudicator for the Inverclyde final, said: “This was an extremely tough job today. I have been blown away by the standard these young Inverclyde musicians and vocalists have performed to, they were all excellent. The music service is so lucky to have so many talented players”