

Press release for immediate use

Juliet Robertson, 14-year-old pianist from Stirlingshire, wins first ever Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year

Yuan Wong from Renfrewshire and Ben Dickinson from East Renfrewshire share second place

22 of the best Young Musicians from across Scotland gathered in Glasgow today to compete in first ever Solo Performer of the Year Final



Deftly compered by singer and broadcaster **Jamie MacDougall** the competition saw incredible performances from Scotland's young musicians wow an audience of hundreds at the **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**.

14-year-old Juliet, an S2 pupil from Dunblane High School, started playing piano when she was four years old and is a part of RCS Juniors. She has previously competed in Japan and

Scotland. Debussy inspired her love of piano and Claire de Lune, which she won the competition playing, is one of her favourite pieces.

Juliet receives **£1,000** to spend on furthering her musical career and the **Maid of Morven trophy** made by the Queen's Sculptor in Ordinary in Scotland **Alexander Stoddart FRSE**. Juliet also receives a package of opportunities provided by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland including a coaching session, participation in a masterclass and a studio recording session.

Yuan and Ben both receive **£250** to spend on musical activities and a coaching session and masterclass slot at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Other finalists will be allocated a range of exciting prizes including performance opportunities, concert tickets, opportunities to sit in on rehearsals and masterclasses, mentoring, meet-and-greets with musicians, social media training, music shop vouchers and more. Every finalist will receive a career-enhancing prize.

The panel of judges led by **Christopher Bell**, Artistic Director of NYCOS and Chorus Director of the Grant Park Music Festival, Chicago alongside **Heather Nicoll**, Head of Woodwind at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, violinist **Jennifer Pike**, who made her concerto debut with the Hallé Orchestra aged eleven and won BBC Young Musician of the Year in 2002, and **Aaron Shorr**, Head of Keyboard at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland had a tough job to select the winner and two runners up from performances on marimba to bass guitar, piano, tenor horn, accordion, voice, saxophone, trombone, cello and flute.

The day started with a special welcome from international classical violinist **Nicola Benedetti** and culminated in a performance by the winning Scottish Young Musicians Brass Ensemble 2022 Stranraer Brass which was presented with its award by **Dr Ursula Jones OBE**, and finally the adjudicators feedback and announcement of the winners of Scottish Young Musicians given by Christopher Bell.

Juliet Robertson, winner of Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year, said: *"I was really shocked to hear my name called as the winner and I don't think it's sunk in yet! I wasn't even expecting to win my regional final, so to be holding this trophy now feels incredible. Everyone else was amazing and performed so well, I can't believe I'm the first Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year!"*

Alan Kerr said: *"We're so glad to have finally crowned our winner, and proud of Juliet who won today after a fantastic performance on piano."*

"Scotland's national festival of music competitions has spanned the length and breadth of the country, offering school students the chance to achieve their ambitions through their talent in music, develop their life skills and have fun. Today's final was a culmination of individual school and local authority competitions and involved some of Scotland's most gifted young musicians, but what we're really proud that we were able to reward all who took part as that is the bit that counts."

"Credit goes to the enthusiasm of teachers, our supporters and our team, who have all embraced the vision for this competition and provided funds, prizes and assistance, and created something that many thought was impossible against the headwinds of Covid. This is just the start and we are already making plans for an expanded version next year which will include even more musical categories to achieve even greater participation."

Christopher Bell, head of the judging panel who presented the awards, said: *“All four judges have been thrilled to witness such interesting and delightful performances today. Our decisions were unanimous. Everyone’s a winner in their own regional competition, and we wish them all well as they continue to develop their talent for the future.”*

Jamie MacDougall said: *“Well, I suppose when you say a whole day of young competitors has absolutely flown by then you’ll know that it has been an exhilarating experience. It has been wonderful to hear the range, the variety, the musicality, the very polished performances of these young players from all over the country.”*

Shonagh Stevenson, Chair of Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland (HITS), said: *“It’s been wonderful to celebrate the excellent instrumental teaching that goes on across the country. Considering the challenges that Covid has presented, it’s brilliant to see our young people maintain such high standards. It’s an exciting time for instrumental teaching with the Scottish Government’s commitment to free instrumental tuition, and the opportunities that await our young people indicate a very bright future ahead.”*

The Scotland-wide competition is run by **The Music Education Partnership Group** who work with every school and local authority to support music education and opportunities.

The competition was judged by a panel of highly experienced adjudicators sponsored by **ABRSM**, a global music education charity and awarding organisation which counts the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland as one of its partner Royal Schools of Music.