

# Euan Kemp, 17-year-old Saxophonist from East Dunbartonshire, wins prestigious nation-wide competition, Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year 2024.



17-year-old Euan Kemp, winner of Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year 2024. Credit Ian Georgeson.

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**Magnus Shanks (aged 16) from Aberdeenshire and Jake Johnstone (aged 15) from South Lanarkshire share second place.**

**31 of the best Young Musicians from across Scotland gathered in Glasgow on Sunday 26 May to compete in the third ever Solo Performer of the Year Final at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.**



Expertly compered by **singer and broadcaster Jamie MacDougall**, the third ever Solo Performer of the Year competition saw incredible performances from Scotland's young musicians wow an audience of hundreds at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

**17-year-old Euan Kemp, an S6 pupil from The Music School of Douglas Academy**, has been playing Saxophone since he was 11 years old. He impressed the judges with his rendition of *Improvisation No.1* by Ryo Noda and *Fantaisie-Improptu* by André Jolivet, leading to him being crowned the third ever winner of the prestigious competition, which this year involved local authorities covering 99% of Scotland's population.

**Euan Kemp, winner of Scottish Young Musicians Solo Performer of the Year 2024, said:** "I feel amazing having won this competition and honoured to have represented East Dunbartonshire and Douglas Academy. I've been making music in East Dunbartonshire for the whole of my musical career, starting with the children's chorus in P2 and then growing through playing in orchestras and ensembles both in school and the wider Local Authority. It's such a nurturing, supportive and enjoyable environment to be a part of and I'm proud to bring this trophy home to them."

Euan receives **£1,000** to spend on furthering his musical career and the **Maid of Morven** trophy made by the Kings's Sculptor in Ordinary in Scotland **Alexander Stoddart FRSE**. Euan 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.

**Jake Johnstone**, who left audiences enthralled with his accordion pieces which were accompanied by his younger sister on the piano, and **Magnus Shanks**, who wowed with his piano performance, both receive **£250** to spend on musical activities and a coaching session and masterclass slot at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

For the first time this year the winner of each of the other categories was announced live at the end of the final. **Hannah Pringle from Stirling** won the strings category, **Thomas Lamb from Clackmannanshire** won in brass, **Amelia Leishman representing Edinburgh** won for percussion, and **East Ayrshire's Aimee Sharp** was announced as the winner of the vocal category. They will each be awarded career-enhancing experiences thanks to the generosity of some of the UK's top music organisations.

The panel of judges was led by trumpeter **John Wallace CBE**, former Principal of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He was joined by soprano **Jane Irwin**, violinist **Greg Lawon**, clarinettist **Adam Lee** and pianist **Sinae Lee**. They had the difficult job of selecting the winner and two runners up from performances on a range of instruments including saxophone, clarsach, accordion, guitar, pipes, trumpet and more.

The day culminated in performances by the winning Scottish Young Musicians Brass Ensemble of the Year **Campbeltown Brass Ensemble** and Ensemble of the Year, **Belmont Academy Woodwind Ensemble** from South Ayrshire.

**Alan Kerr, Chair of Scottish Young Musicians, said:** "Today we've seen 31 incredibly affecting performances from young people representing 99% of Scotland's school-aged population. The standard of performances has been extraordinarily high and we've seen some very emotional playing that has left our audience, and adjudicators, absolutely enthralled."

The final is the culmination of individual school and local authority competitions. While today we witnessed some of our most gifted musicians, the festival's aim is to encourage the broadest participation of all talents through all communities. Credit goes to the enthusiasm of teachers who've embraced SYM, our incredible hard-working team that has made it happen, and the generosity of our supporters who have provided funds, prizes and assistance. We are again indebted to have the support of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, ranked as one of the leading conservatoires in the world, and doubtless a destination for many on the stage today."

**John Wallace, Head Adjudicator of the competition, said:** "You could put today's winner and runners up on any stage anywhere in the world and they would do the whole of Scotland proud. We have been completely blown away by the how standards continue to rise year on year and how these young people are keeping certain genres alive. It's been absolutely staggering to behold and we hope to broaden the competition to include even more genres and categories next year."

**Jamie MacDougall, who hosted the final, said:** “The standard this year has exceeded all expectations, with really mature performances that were really well presented. There was no sign of fear or nerves which was undoubtedly helped by the supportive atmosphere backstage, and the day really felt as though it flew past.

The way the different Local Authorities have embraced this competition and recognised it across the country has helped to give it the status and importance it deserves. For young musicians to have an opportunity to perform and be heard we must provide appropriate resources to schools and those who work with young people in music – without that there is no future of music in Scotland.”

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.

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