



Northern Ireland Young Musician of the Year 2012

PREVIOUS NORTHERN IRELAND YOUNG MUSICIANS OF THE YEAR

2011 Bradley Parker, Portavogie

Fourteen-year-old Bradley Parker from Portavogie is Northern Ireland's Young Musician of the Year for 2011. A pupil of Regent House School, Newtownards. Playing the bagpipes Bradley gave a rousing winning performance playing a selection of jigs.

Bradley has been playing the pipes since he was five-years-old, and has an already established reputation as an outstanding performer. He is tutored by John Wilson in Paisley and travels regularly to Scotland for his piping lessons. He has won an array of accolades, among them victories at Ulster, all-Ireland and international levels and including a world record – for three years in succession – winning the award for the best overall under-18 piper at the London Piping Society Championships.

2010 Craig Lutton, Antrim

Craig Lutton from Antrim gave a rousing winning performance of a piece entitled Bacchanale on timpani – also commonly called kettle drums. He has been learning percussion since he was seven-years-old and plays not only timpani, but also shows equal enthusiasm for other drums, the xylophone and marimba. He is tutored by Mr Jim Lutton – no relation – of Kells, and is a member of the Cambridge House School Band and Drum Corps, the NEELB Senior Orchestra, and the Ulster Youth Orchestra.

2009 Stephen Rankin, Ballymena

Stephen won at the age of 14 with a virtuoso flute performance of *The Great Train Race* by Ian Clarke. He went on to finish third in the Britain and Ireland-wide Rotary Young Musician of the year contest. Like the 2010 winner, Stephen is a pupil at Cambridge House School. He hopes to take up a career in music, and is kept busy with his involvement in the school band and with solo and band performances in a wide range of concert engagements. As a direct result of winning the NI Young Musician of the Year title he and his parents were invited to a private meeting with Sir James and Lady Jeanne Galway when they visited Northern Ireland for the BBC's Proms in the Park in 2009 – a meeting where he jumped at the chance when Sir James suggested he have a go on the famous Golden Flute. He was also among a number of Northern Ireland's young flute players who joined Sir James in concert at the Waterfront Hall in December to mark the maestro's 70th Birthday.

2008 Fionnuala Ward, Magherafelt

Magherafelt pianist Fionnuala Ward who won in 2008 had the extraordinary honour as a direct result of her victory of playing for The Queen at a reception in Hillsborough Castle. Still attending St Mary's Grammar School, Fionnuala completed her GCSEs with 11 As – eight of which were A-stars. Needless to say, one of the "stars" was in music. She is now studying at A-level and hopes to follow a career in music. Aside from her piano accomplishments, she has also achieved Grade 8 qualifications in violin and percussion. Fionnuala has appeared on the BBC's Radio 3 and Radio Ulster, and also plays at weddings and local events.

2007 Sean Rooney, Mayobridge

Sean Rooney from Mayobridge was only 13 when he won the competition in 2007 and continues his schooling in sixth year at Abbey Christian Brothers in Newry. He studies music under the director of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, internationally-renowned concert pianist John O'Connor and Dr Peter Tuite. Sean aspires to be a professional musician

2006 Sam Law, Ballymena

Pianist Sam Law from Ballymena Academy took the honours in 2006. He has since been travelling weekly to the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin, studying under its director, internationally-renowned concert pianist John O'Connor, and Professor Réamonn Keary. He was a finalist in the 2008 national BBC Young Musician of the Year contest, and is studying mathematics at QUB.

2005 Stephen Heagney, Belfast

Stephen Heagney, winner in 2005, has been studying law at Cambridge University and is believed now to be gaining work experience with a well-known London practice advising leading international companies, organisations and governments. He has carried on his musical interests on violin with the Cambridge Beethoven Ensemble.

2004 Ryan Gray, Belfast

Former Methody pupil Ryan Gray played the euphonium to take his title in 2004. Though the euphonium still gets a regular outing he is now more likely to be seen on trombone with the University Jazz Band at Newcastle where he is studying dentistry. But when study allows he can also be seen on regular solo gigs and with a small jazz group around the Newcastle clubs – and, when home, plays with the Ulster Youth Jazz Orchestra.

2003 Justin Livingstone, Belfast

Justin Livingstone, 2003's winner, is now firmly focused on English Literature studies at the University of Edinburgh. Having completed his undergraduate degree, he is now studying for his PhD. For a period in Scotland he continued his flute studies alongside a flautist from the Scottish National Orchestra, and played with one of the university's orchestras, but this now very much takes second place to his English studies.

2002 Darren Scroggie, Ballymena

Guitarist Darren Scroggie from Ballymena Academy won in 2002. Since then he has completed five years studying medicine at Queens University, and is now a doctor at Causeway Hospital, Coleraine. Though medicine now clearly takes up his primary focus, Darren still finds extraordinary time to devote to his music. He still plays classic and jazz guitar, and is a member of James Huish's Michael Bubl  Tribute Band. However his intense love of music also spreads to the flute – and in particular to the championship-winning Kellswater Flute Band. With them he plays remarkable range in the flute genre – from the piccolo at one end, through G-treble and concert flute, to the enormous sub-contra bass flute at the other.

2001 Kim Vaughan, Londonderry

Kim Vaughan from Derry who won in 2001, has completed her primary degree at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, and is in the middle of a two-year master's course in Geneva under Gabor Takacs concentrating on developing a new string quartet she and three others have formed. While in Geneva, Kim has been able to use the financial benefits of the Young Musician's Platform awarded her by the Northern Ireland Arts Council to continue personal private cello tuition from world class German tutor Christoph Richter.

2000 Hyung Kyung Koo, Belfast

Hyung Kyung Koo, a young Korean pianist won in 2000. She is believed to be studying medicine at Queen's University.

1999 Scott Foster Belfast

Scott Foster played the marimba to take his Young Musician title in 1999. He studied at the Royal College of Music and then taught and performed in London as a freelance percussionist before returning to Northern Ireland last year. A London highlight was participation in a theatrical percussion show called Noise Ensemble which took him to Russia, Korea, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Portugal, and Cyprus – and even to the Ulster Hall for its re-opening. Back in Northern Ireland he has been teaching piano and guitar; doing a bit of instrumental work with a number of schools; and trying his hand on jazz piano in a County Down restaurant.

1998 John Wilson, Lisburn

John Wilson, 1998's winner, teaches as Head of Piano at the Lisburn School of Music, having previously studied piano for ten years in Dublin at the Leinster School of Music. Apart from his classical training he also played in several rock and metal bands in his late teens and now provides the piano, keyboard and synth sounds for Risky Business – well known at gigs around Lisburn and farther afield.

1997 Jonathan Byers, Belfast

Belfast cellist Jonathan Byers who won in 1997 plays with the Badke Quartet, widely recognised as one Britain's finest string quartets. The Badke regularly performs at festivals in the UK and abroad, including the Aldeburgh and Verbier Festivals, Belfast Festival at Queens, Chichester Festivities and the London String Quartet Week. Jonathan works regularly with several other period instrument groups including the Irish Baroque Orchestra, and his other orchestral work includes Camerata Ireland, the RTE Symphony Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra.

1996 Jonathan Johnston, near the Temple, Co Down

Flautist Jonathan Johnston from near the Temple in County Down was NI Young Musician of the Year in 1996, and was successful in gaining a scholarship to the James Galway International Flute Seminar in Switzerland. He attended the Royal Northern Academy of Music where he completed his BMus (Hons) in 2000. He has released a number of solo CDs, and over the years has given numerous concerts and recitals throughout the UK. His freelance orchestral playing has presented the opportunity to play with the Ulster, City of Birmingham, London Philharmonic and London Symphony Orchestras. In more recent years he has focussed largely on performing as a "Headline Entertainer" on some of the world's exclusive cruise ships.

1995 Gillian McWilliams, Carrickfergus

Singer Gillian McWilliams from Carrickfergus, who won in 1995 did not take up full-time music as a career. Instead she studied politics and history for her BA at UU, and subsequently completing her Masters in HR management and personnel development. Nevertheless she continued to sing in Northern Ireland at concerts and weddings and as an enthusiastic member of the Loughside Choir until her husband's his work took him back to his native Scotland. There she works on the personnel side of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

1994 Jonathan Coffey, Antrim

Violinist Jonathan Coffey from Antrim won in 1994. A pupil at Antrim Grammar he departed for Cambridge to study music there, but after a few years changed course. He completed his undergraduate studies in politics, and moved on to complete a Masters and PhD in legal philosophy. He works as an assistant current affairs producer based in Belfast with the BBC. His musical interest continues in regular appearances with Barry Douglas' Camerata Ireland and occasional appearances with the Ulster Orchestra.

1993 Clare McKeown, Templepatrick

Clare McKeown from Templepatrick, who won the first competition in 1993, is now full-time co-leader of 2nd violins in the RTE Concert Orchestra. A recent highlight was when she travelled with the Orchestra and Chorus to Rome to perform Messiah for Pope Benedict on the 250th anniversary of Handel's death; and she individually took part in last year's Castleward Opera season. After winning her Northern Ireland Young Musician of the Year title Clare undertook both undergraduate and post-graduate studies at the Royal Scottish Academy and, until her appointment with RTE, freelanced in Portugal and Scotland.

