

Competition News

SOLO BRASS PRIZE 2007

7 November 2007

This inaugural competition, sponsored by the Musicians' Company, took place in the Royal Academy of Music's David Josefowitz Recital Hall. Since it was open to all brass students at the RAM, there was a very high level of interest with no fewer than a fantastic 21 competitors taking part.

Each participant was required to prepare their own choice of concerto with strict instructions not to exceed a total performance time of just 12 minutes - including tuning AND getting on and off!

With so many performers, a tight timetable was required and it was fortunate that the detailed running of the competition was in the extremely capable hands of Gemma Fowkes, the RAM's



James Woods-Davison

Concerts Assistant and Prizes Administrator. Considerable thanks also go to the sole adjudicator, Alan Hutt. Having studied trombone and piano at the RAM, Alan freelanced with touring ballet and opera companies, then the English Chamber Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and all major symphony orchestras in this country. After ten years working with the Royal Opera House Orchestra, Alan turned to teaching and, amongst other prestigious posts, was appointed Professor of Euphonium at the RAM. He was made an Associate of the RAM for services to music.

All the accompanists brought a high degree of professionalism to what must have been a taxing day. But particular praise from this writer goes to accompanist Helen Crayford - no mean performer in

her own right - who brought such flexibility, sensitivity and support to so many of the candidates. All these qualities were essential as the music selected included works by composers such as (in no particular order) Jolivet, Vaughan Williams, David, Paniel, Grøndahl, Torelli, Haydn, Neruda, Arutiunian, Strauss, Böhme, Telemann and Rota. Although the trumpet predominated, trombone, tuba and horn also featured.

Inevitably, with so many entrants there was considerable variety in experience, technique, stage presence and confidence in performance. Coupled with the wide range of music chosen and the rapid turnover on platform, this resulted in a kaleidoscopic experience for the listener. Nevertheless, several competitors shone out for their musicality, self-assurance and capability and it must have been difficult for Alan Hutt to reach a final decision. However, after some four hours of competition the results of the adjudication were announced. Pastmaster John Rubinstein presented the first prize to James Woods-Davison and second prize to Matthew Knight, who performed the *Rota Trombone Concerto*. Woods-Davison, a

19-year-old trumpeter, gave a brilliant performance of the Arutiunian concerto. He emerged via the Hart Young Musician of the Year Competition, for which members of the Company act as

adjudicators, winning the Philip Jones Memorial for the best brass performance three years running. James is currently in his second year of study on the BMus course under Professor Bob Farley, has received the William Thomas Stephen Award and has performed as Principal Trumpet with the Academy Symphony Orchestra. He has already enjoyed considerable success as a

recital and concerto soloist and, as a member of the QuintEssence Brass Quintet, has performed at the Royal Opera House, Grange Park Opera and the Royal Society of Arts.

Clearly the huge interest expressed in this inaugural competition and the high standard of all those taking part indicate that the Company's new Brass Prize is set to become a very important fixture in the Royal Academy of Music's calendar in the future.

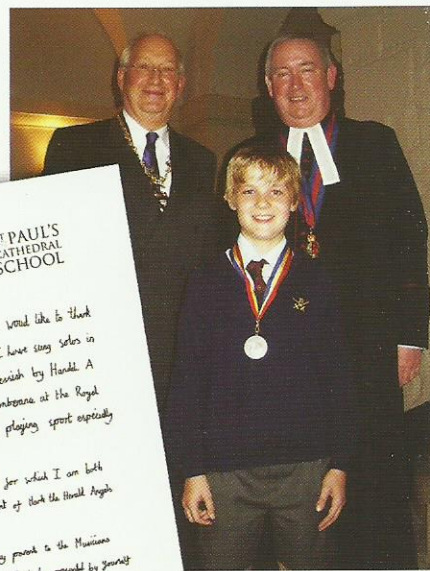
Liveryman Jeff Kelly



Royal Academy of Music

ST PAUL'S CHORISTER: 2007-2008

Since 1995 the Musicians' Company has made an award each year to a young chorister on the recommendation of the Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral. The funding for this award is provided from the Allcard Fund. The current recipient, George Raikes, is seen here with the Master and the Dean of St Paul's the Rt. Rev. Graeme Knowles at the Reception that followed our Company Evensong at the Cathedral on 3 October 2007.



Monday 17th December

Dear Master,

My name is George Raikes and I would like to thank you for sponsoring me. I'm 12 years old and I have sang solos in the Ceremony of Lights by Britten and the Messiah by Handel. A month ago I sang in the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall live on BBC1. My hobby is playing sport especially playing football.

I play the trumpet and the piano for which I am both grade 6 on Friday I am playing in the concert of Saint the World Angel Sing on the trumpet in the Cathedral.

Thank you for inviting me and my parents to the Musicians reception in October. It was an honour for my name to be presented by yourself and the Dean.

I would love to see you again in the near future.

Yours sincerely
George Raikes

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