

THE PRINCE'S PRIZE 2007

Following the installation of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales as an Honorary Freeman in November 2003, the Worshipful Company of Musicians established 'The Prince's Prize' for the best young instrumentalist or singer chosen from the Company's Award Winners in the current year.



The Master congratulates Milos Karadagic

An audience of about sixty members of the Company together with their spouses and friends and the families and friends of the finalists gathered in the impressive hall of the City of London School on 5 July 2007.

This year's adjudicators, the Master Dr Andreas Prindl, Senior Warden Leslie East and the pianist and composer David Owen Norris had already selected the finalists from the current year's applicants.

Having attended the Prince's Prize Finals Concert for the first time in 2006, I knew we were in for a musical treat and did not envy the adjudicators their task at all! In both respects this was also the case in the 2007 competition. The technical excellence and the sheer musicianship of the four finalists were only matched by their evident passion and dedication.

The evening began with the Mezzo-Soprano Catherine Hopper, a graduate of Leeds University and the RAM. Catherine sang a programme of works by Loewe, Debussy, Gluck, Head, Bizet and Brahms. She launched into her first – difficult – song, Loewe's *Erkonig*, with confidence and caught its mood perfectly. Her cleverly chosen programme then went on to display the range and subtlety of her voice. The Gluck *Che faro* left me with the impression that she is already developing an accomplished stage presence. Bizet's *Ouvre*

ton coeur showed us that, when the music dictated, her voice has tremendous power. Catherine's last song, by Brahms, was an astonishing feat of breath control. I liked her faultless timing. She was very good to listen to and engaged superbly with the audience. What a start to the evening!

Then came the classical guitarist Milos Karadagic. Milos enrolled on the undergraduate course at the RAM at the age of sixteen and is now undertaking a Master's there. In 2005 he won the Julian

Bream prize. Milos' sense of focus was apparent as he took us through a programme of Bach, Sor, Gerhard, Barrios-Mangore and Ginastera. The Bach revealed his flawless technique alongside a very lyrical interpretation of the Prelude. By contrast, the Sor was almost orchestral in its power and variety. Milos made the most of the tremendous final section of the work with layer upon layer of virtuoso playing. The Barrios-Mangore *Limosita* showed off Milos' brilliant technique. But more was to come. The final work, by Ginastera, capped even that, with quasi-jazz rhythms of enormous complexity. Throughout Milos' performance I am sure everyone in the audience was struck by his composure, absolute concentration and his rather gentle self-confidence.

Next came Francesca Murray, a young organist who has done much to foster, by her own example, the vocation of organ-playing and choir training in churches among young women. She has already held the posts of Organ Scholar at St George's Chapel Windsor Castle, Assistant Organist at Caius Cambridge and Great St Mary's and latterly Organ Scholar of Manchester Cathedral. She was a prize-winner in the FRCO diploma and will, by the time that this article is published, have completed a post-graduate course at the RNCM. Francesca played works by Buxtehude, Franck and Matthias. Buxtehude's *Toccata in F major* demonstrated her command of

**Joanna Westers,
Catherine Hopper
and Francesca Murray**

