

St Mary's Music School – finalists for the Directors' Recital Prize announced

St Mary's Music School has announced the names of its four senior finalists for the 2016 Directors' Recital Prize Competition: The finalists are all pupils at the school and include: Aaron Akugbo (trumpet), Violeta Cubarsi (violin), Hugh Mackay (cello) and Sophie Williams (violin).

The Directors' Recital Prize, now in its 16th year, takes place at St Mary's Cathedral, Palmerston Place, tomorrow Tuesday 14 June at 7pm.



The four senior finalist soloists will compete before a distinguished panel of judges for the award. This year's judges are Susan Tomes, pianist and writer, Anne Desler, singer, violinist, Lecturer in Music Performance at Edinburgh University and Paul Baxter, Managing Director of Delphian Records and Director of St Mary's Music School.

Dr Kenneth Taylor, Headteacher at St Mary's Music School, said: "This year we had 18 entries for the Directors' Recital Prize and I congratulate Aaron, Violeta, Hugh and Sophie for winning through to the final for this prestigious annual prize.

"It provides pupils with experience of public solo performance in a competition situation and for aspiring professional musicians, audiences are a real encouragement and stimulus.

"We would be delighted if people would like to attend and support our four talented senior pupils as they play music by Bach, Debussy, Brahms and other famous composers".

There is no charge for admittance to the Directors' Recital Prize and members of the public are welcome to attend.

Aaron Akugbo, aged 17, is an S6 pupil and has been playing the trumpet from the age of five. At eight years old, Aaron started his first year as a chorister at St Mary's Music School. After four years as a chorister, Aaron gained an instrumental place in S2 and is now in his ninth and final year at the school. Next year Aaron will be studying trumpet at the Royal Academy of Music. He is a past joint winner of the Junior Recital Prize on piano and the winner of the Sheila Tough singing competition and is a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

Violeta Cubarsi, aged 17, is an S6 pupil who started playing violin at three years old in her home city of Barcelona, Spain. In 2009 she entered Catalonia's only specialist music school IEA Oriol Martorell where she studied for five years before moving to St Mary's Music School in 2014. Violeta has been a member of several national youth orchestras in Catalonia including the National Catalan Youth Orchestra. She won first prize in the Chamber Music Competition Concurs l'Arjau in 2013 and 2014 and was recently awarded the first prize in the young string category in the Edinburgh Competition Festival.

Hugh Mackay, aged 16, is a Borders born S5 cellist who has been studying at St Mary's Music School since 2009 when he joined as a chorister pupil. He has been a previous winner of the Edinburgh Competition Festival's Winifred Gavine Medal for a fifteen minute string recital, as well as the school's Intermediate Recital Prize and Calvert String Prize for Service. Earlier this year, he received the school's prestigious Lord Clyde Memorial Prize for Solo Performance. Hugh is a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and will be playing with them in Holst's 'The Planets' at the BBC Proms this year.

Sophie Williams, aged 17, an S5 pupil from Edinburgh, started violin at the age of three and has been a pupil at St Mary's Music School since 2009. During her time at the school, Sophie has received awards such as The Calvert String Prize for Service and several medals in the Edinburgh Competition Festival. In 2016 Sophie was offered the position of leader of the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland (NYOS), as well as a place in the NYOS Symphony Orchestra to perform at the BBC Proms in London.