

# Two young musicians win top prize at St Mary's Music School


This year for the first time in two decades there is not one but two winners of the Directors Recital Prize at St Mary's Music School.

The prize is awarded to senior pupils who have achieved what the judges regard as an exceptional quality of musicianship.

The competition had to be held virtually and all entries were pre-recorded for the judges to watch on Zoom and then evaluate them. The final broadcast was made possible with the help of the digital team at the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) who worked with the finalists to reproduce the atmosphere of a live performance without an audience.

Over 1500 have now watched the DRP concert online. You can see it below.

This year Cliodhna Scott (16) flautist from Edinburgh and Sofia Ros (18) accordionist from Spain.

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Left Sofia Ros and Right Cliodhna Scott  
Philip Higham, the first every winner of the prestigious award and now principal cello in the Scottish Chamber Orchestra

offered words of advice for the young players in the broadcast.

Dr Ken Taylor, Headteacher at St Mary's Music School, Scotland's national music school, said: "This was our first 'live' online concert broadcast and I would like to congratulate all the finalists for the way in which they approached the unusual circumstances of this year's competition. It was a very fitting finale to a challenging term with four wonderful performances.

"Like all schools we have had to adapt and find new ways to deliver music teaching to our pupils. alongside a full, remote academic timetable. This has been both a challenge and an opportunity to expand our thinking.

"Every level of the school engages with the presentation of recitals at the end of the session as a culmination of their year's work. The Directors' Recital Prize is a key event for those pupils looking beyond school and we felt it was essential to create a new arena in which our finalists could perform despite current conditions. I am therefore extremely grateful to everyone at the RSN0 who generously gave their time and assistance to this project."

Working with the RSN0 is St Mary's Music School's second major collaboration, having established String and Wind Academies with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, to help prepare young people for a career in the top flight of musical performance.

Alistair Mackie is the Chief Executive of the RSN0 and another former pupil of St Mary's Music School. He said: "This has been a challenging few months for us all. I know how much fun live performance can be and I have great sympathy for all those pupils who were looking forward to end of term shows, that now can't go ahead. The Director's Recital Prize has always been a key moment in the St Mary's Music School year, and the RSN0 is delighted to have worked with the school to

ensure that the event still went ahead this year.

“Produced and presented in a collaboration between the school and the RSN0’s digital team, we are believe that this production not only showcases the wonderful talents of the individual finalists but also stands as an enduring record of St Marys Music Schools determination to continue its outstanding support of young Scottish musicians through these most difficult of times.”