

Press Release

Saxophonist wows judges at Young Performer of the Year Award

Alec Harper wins Solo Performer of the Year award

Crowthorne, Berks, 12th July 2010:

The UK Jazz Radio Young Performer of the Year Awards were presented at the Marlborough International Jazz Festival in July by distinguished jazz figure Digby Fairweather.

A large number of entrants attended pre-heat selection processes at venues in Ascot, London and Cardiff to enable the radio station to secure the opportunity to appear live on stage before a judging panel of distinguished jazz professionals chaired by Mr Fairweather.

His fellow judges were recording artist Verona Chard, broadcaster Bob Draper and UK Jazz Radio presenter 'The Jazz Rep'.

The competition was divided into three categories comprising "Best performer", "Best group of performers" and "Best composition of original music." Entries could only be submitted by jazz musicians under the age of 23 as at 10th July 2010.

Brian Soundy, Music Director of UK Jazz Radio, and Awards organiser, welcomed the finalists and introduced them to a packed venue: "A major element of the UK Jazz Radio's mission is to develop young musicians, offering showcase opportunities, supporting their CD launches and encouraging them in a career in jazz."

"The Awards are also aimed at promoting live jazz to a young audience and to support young jazz performers in the early years of their career" he added. "The station will support the winners with on-air and on-line promotion plus a paid booking for a major UK jazz festival. Success will certainly give the winners' careers a positive boost".

The finalists were: Guildhall undergraduates 'The Sam Braysher Quartet', guitar and piano duo Rob and Dave, singer and pianist Kate Thelfall, Essex trio 'Infusion', six young NYJO members performing as 'CGS' and Guildhall student Alec Harper.

They performed live on stage at Marlborough to rapturous applause from an enthused audience. As Mr Fairweather explained: "All finalists are, in fact, winners having won their place through the regional heats. The quality of performance was excellent and the judges had a very difficult task but they were unanimous in their verdict which was

Best group Performance awarded to The Sam Braysher Quartet
Best Vocalist Award went to Kate Thelfall
Best Composition was awarded to Chris Neill"

The prestigious “Solo Performer of the Year Award” went to 21 year old Alec Harper, a third year undergraduate at Guildhall School of Music, whose performance on the saxophone wowed the audience.

Mr Fairweather congratulated UK Jazz Radio on organizing the Awards and the Marlborough International Jazz Festival for hosting the event. He said: “I am sure that these Awards will grow from strength to strength over the coming years and, with the exciting plans to take the regional heats nationwide next year, it has a great future in making a contribution to the development of jazz in the UK.”

The finalists have all been invited to perform at a major London jazz venue later in the year. Further information is available on the UK Jazz Radio station website, www.ukjazzradio.com.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

The finalists were:

Alec Harper

Alec, 21, is a 3rd year student at Guildhall and plays saxophone. He is entered in the Best Solo Performer and Best Composition categories.

CGS

A group of 14-23 year olds who met at NYJO. James Copus- trumpet & flugelhorn, Tom Garner - trumpet, Bennett Soundy- saxophone, Ash Hunt- piano, Tommy Claydon- drums & Pete Hutchinson – bass. They are entered in Best Group of Performers category

Infusion

A trio from Essex aged 16-18, They include, Chris Neill-keyboards
They have entered Best Solo Performer, Best Group of Performers, Best Composition categories

Kate Threlfall

Kate 22, is originally from Manchester and studied at LIPA, Liverpool. Her influences are Sarah Vaughan, Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell and Billie Holiday, she plays piano and sings. She has entered the, Best Solo Performer
Best Vocalist and Best Composition categories.

Rob & Dave

Rob and Dave are a guitar and piano duo. Dave Drake is a pianist who has aimed at the highest standards since an early age. The music of Bud Powell, Wynton Kelly, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Wes Montgomery and Bill Evans has inspired Dave to write his own compositions and arrangements.

Rob Luft has been performing jazz guitar professionally both solo and in various ensembles around his native Kent and further afield for the last eighteen His influences include John Coltrane, Lennie Tristano and Kurt Rosenwinkel as well as Derek Bailey, Eric Dolphy, Warne Marsh and Nigel Hitchcock

Sam Braysher

The Sam Braysher Quartet was formed at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where its members are all currently studying on the undergraduate jazz course. Sam, on alto

saxophone, is joined by Nick Costley-White on guitar, Belle Ehresmann on double bass and Joe Sweeney on Drums. Influenced by musicians such as Charlie Parker, Wayne Shorter, Lennie Tristano and Kurt Rosenwinkel, the band plays a mixture of standards and more contemporary compositions.
Pistachio (Sam Braysher)

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