

St Mary's School, Cambridge: Young Pianist and Young Musician of the Year 2024

Comments from the competition adjudicator, Mr Oliver King

The standard of music making at St Mary's has always been high, so I was looking forward to adjudicating the Young Pianist of the Year and Young Musician of the Year Competitions with some trepidation! I was not wrong! I felt very privileged to have the opportunity to listen to 19 Pianists on Wednesday and 21 Musicians on the Thursday - all gave polished and confident performances of an astonishingly wide range of repertoire. I must admit that the decision for both the competitions was incredibly hard to make, and this directly reflects on the amazing music making that you do on a daily basis at St Mary's.

Young Pianist Competition:

Whilst it should be said that everyone performed well across the board, particularly exceptional performances in the Intermediate Class were given by Sofia C., Oshi K. and Emily K., who were subsequently awarded 'Highly Commended' certificates. The winner of the Intermediate Class was Maya T. who played 'Indigo Moon'. Maya really captured the sonorous character of this piece perfectly, whilst exploiting the full dynamic range of the piano – great work! In the Advanced Class, Hannah F. gave a sparkly clean performance of Sonata no.59 by Haydn, and Emilia M. played 'Arabesque No.1' by Debussy with a sense of vision and superb flowing phasing – both were awarded Highly Commended. The winner was Anson C. who played 'Liebesleid' with clear attention to detail and great panache. Bravo all!

Young Musician of the Year:

If the decision was difficult in the Piano Competition, this, if anything, was harder still! Isla K. sang 'Journey to the Past' with a great sense of character and stage presence. Alice K. gave an extremely dramatic and polished rendition of 'Blow, blow, thou winter wind' by Quilter, and Caroline F. sang 'Romance' by Debussy, demonstrating a sophisticated array of musical nuances with a clear, deep understanding of this piece. Amelie K. went on to dazzle us with her astonishing performance of the 'Rondo' from the Horn Concerto by Mozart. Anson C. once again played 'Liebesleid' with a good sense of musical fluidity and playful timing. All were awarded Highly Commended certificates. The overall winner was Hannah F. who played 'Allegro' from Violin Concerto in D major by Mozart. Hannah performed this demanding work with a clear and decisive command of both the instrument and the genre of repertoire. This really was a superb performance.

Once again, thank you so much for inviting me to listen to you all perform so wonderfully! I had an amazing time. Bravo to everyone who took part!

Oli King

Friday 15th November 2024