

# **GREGYNOG'S DETERMINED COMPETITORS!**

## **Competition Day - Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2013**

On a day when the north of Wales awoke to find itself practically buried in snow, Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March - young musicians from all over the principality and across the border were making their way to Gregynog Hall, near Newtown, Powys, for the 9<sup>th</sup> Gregynog Young Musician of the Year Competition. Despite heroic efforts, only four out of the nineteen contestants – two of them harpists - were kept away by the weather.

The music-making this year was of the highest calibre, each competitor having been selected by a panel of five judges in February for the semi-final round.

Throughout the day music reverberated around the historic hall as the competitors prepared for their auditions in the four practise rooms. Finally at 5.00pm the three eminent judges, David Theodore, Liz Partridge and Vanessa Latache, having listened and watched the young musicians perform on the famous Music Room stage, announced their decisions as to who would play at the Concert Final that evening.

This year the competition was divided into five instrumental categories; Strings, Piano, Woodwind, Brass and Harps, Guitar & Percussion with £500 being awarded to the winner of each category - thanks to the generosity of sponsors, Lloyd's Animal Feeds, Genix Healthcare and the Gregynog Cultural Fund.

The finalists were :

*Gregynog Young String Player of the Year - Charlie Lovell-Jones from Cardiff*

*Young Pianist of the Year - Iwan Wyn Owen from Anglesey*

*Young Woodwind Player of the Year - Daniel Shao from London*

*Young Brass Player of the Year - Rhiannon Symonds from Gloucestershire*

*Young Guitarist of the Year - Louis Brookes from Wigan.*

Tension mounted as the five finalists hid themselves away to furiously practise their performance pieces, whilst families and concert-goer's alike settled down to enjoy a pre-concert dinner, cooked for the occasion by Heiko Simmchen, Gregynog's head chef.

At 7:00 p.m. the Concert Final began with each finalist in turn taking the stage in front of a weather-depleted audience, whilst Professor Ieuan Jones, Patron of the competition announced their repertoires.

The judges certainly had their work cut out; each young musician played music with huge talent and confidence, bringing at once both tender feeling and strident resonance as they played their hearts out on the stage.

Violinist Charlie Lovell-Jones finished his last piece to a rousing ovation as he completed Vieuxtemps "Souvenir d' Amerique" with a flourish of his bow.

Time then for an agonising wait for the competitors, whilst the three judges deliberated in seclusion before announcing the results.

After the interval and with the audience voicing different opinions as to the likely result due to the high standard of musical ability, Chairman Gareth Jenkins rang the bell and everyone returned to their seats to hear the judge's decision.

Fourteen year old violinist Charlie Lovall-Jones was announced the overall-winner - claiming the Peter Garbett-Edwards trophy and prize money amounting to £3,000, with a highly commended award going to flautist Daniel Shao.

"This has been a truly remarkable day and, under the circumstances, a miracle that it happened at all considering the atrocious weather conditions this weekend", remarked organiser Ruth Walsh.

All seemed to thoroughly enjoy their time at Gregynog, as summed up by semi-finalist Meera Marharaj: "It's been an amazing experience and a privilege to be a part of it".

The Gregynog Young Musicians Competition began as part of the prestigious Gregynog Music Festival and has grown rapidly to become an important event in its own right in the national music calendar. Next year will be the tenth competition and already plans are in place to make it a vintage occasion. A provisional date of Saturday March 29<sup>th</sup> 2014 has been announced.

For further details contact Ruth Walsh on 01686 650105 or go to our website [www.gregynogymc.co.uk](http://www.gregynogymc.co.uk)

Attached photos:

- 1) Charlie Lovall-Jones, Violin, from Llanishen Cardiff, over-all winner of Gregynog Young Musician of the Year 2013
- 2) Daniel Shao, Flute, from London, Young Woodwind Player of the Year, (highly commended)
- 3) Iwan Wyn Owen, from Carreglefn, Anglesey, Young Pianist of the Year
- 4) Rhiannon Symonds, Tenor Trombone, from Yorkley, Gloucester, Young Brass Player of the Year
- 5) Louis Brookes, Guitar, from Leigh, Lancs, Young Guitarist of the Year