

Violinist wins Artscape Youth Music Competition

Frances Whitehead, a 15-year-old violinist, from Johannesburg has walked off with top laurels at the 2013 Artscape National Youth Music Competition.

After a challenging week of elimination rounds where 23 contestants from around South Africa came together to compete in the competition, Frances Whitehead from Dunkeld Johannesburg was declared the Overall Winner receiving R25,000 and a Gold Medal. She also won the Category prize for string instruments and the best performance of a Concerto in the final round.

Frances performed the Max Bruch Violin Concerto, Op. 26, Adagio and Finale with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Maestro Tim Murray from the UK at the finalists' gala concert. As part of her first prize she has been invited to perform in a concert at Hilton College, in Kwazulu Natal in 2014.

The competition, for classical pianists and orchestral instrumentalists offered prizes of more than R110 000. Over 60 young musicians between the ages of 14 and 19 auditioned around South Africa. 23 were selected for the first round, 12 for the second and six in the final round. The finalists' concert took place on Saturday 5 October 2013 in the Artscape Theatre.

Other winners

All the Category Prize Winners received R5,000 and a silver medal. They are Roelof Temmingh (16) from Stellenbosch for piano, Flutist Sakhile Humbane (17) from Durban for wind instruments and Emilio February (15) a percussionist from Thornton, Cape Town for other instruments.

The runners up who received R2,500 and a bronze medal are Henley Jun (16) from Stellenbosch for piano. Misha Favis (17) on cello from Johannesburg and Jonathan Mayer (18) a violinist, from Sandton were joint runners up for strings and from Port Elizabeth, Mieke Struwig (17) on clarinet for wind instruments.

In addition the category winners and runners-up received free entry to a UNISA grade examination in 2014.

The R2,000 prize for the best performance of a South African work went to Sakhile Humbane. He also won the R4,000 Leon Hartshorne Prize for the best wind instrumentalist.

The Yaltah Menuhin Award of R4,000 and medal for the best pianist went to Roelof Temmingh.

Lezanti van Sittert (17) from Pretoria won the Pauline Nossel Prize of R4,000 for the best performance of a classical work by a pianist.

Final Round participants each received R2,500. They are Henley Jun, Sakhile Humbane, Jonathan Mayer, Misha Favis, Roelof Temmingh and Frances Whitehead. They also received R2,000 for the Third Round together with Bronwyn Van Wieringen, Talisa Symons, Lezanti Van Sittert, Mieke Struwig Emilio February and Amy Stessl.

The UNISA Shadow Jury Prize of R2 000 for the best semi-finalist who was not a finalist went to flutist Amy Stessl (15) from Sandton.

Adjudicators for 2013 were prominent academics and musicians from across South Africa : Ella Fourie (Piano), John Hinch (Flute), Franklin Larey (Piano), Marian Lewin (Cello), Michael Maas (CEO of Artscape), Suzanne Martens (Violin), Kutlwano Masote (Violin), Brandon Phillips (Bassoon), Polina Burdukova (Cello) and Prof Erik Albertyn.

In collaboration with UNISA, Artscape last year introduced a Shadow Jury consisting of former contestants to train them to become future music adjudicators.

This year the Jury were represented by Matthew Ferrandi (Clarinet) Sang-Woo Jun (Violin), Myles Roberts (Flute), Lieva Starker (Violin), Louisa Theart (Flute) and the 2011 overall winner Eben Wagenstroom (Piano). They were advised by Sean Adams from UNISA.

The judges concurred that the standard of the Third Round contestants to be of an exceptionally high standard this year.

The National Youth Music Competition is presented by Artscape in association with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, the City of Cape Town, Rupert Music Foundation and Fine Music Radio.

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