



National Centre for Early Music
St Margaret's Church, Walmgate, York

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NCEM YOUNG COMPOSERS AWARD

The annual NCEM Young Composers Award was launched in 2008 and is the only such scheme in the UK. It offers a unique opportunity for young composers to engage with the instruments and performance styles of early music, and to work with leading professional early music performers. In bridging the worlds of 'early' and 'new' music, the Award complements the NCEM's education policy by supporting and nurturing young composers and demonstrating to all participants that the music of previous centuries is relevant to today's creative endeavours.

This major national award is open to young composers resident in the UK, up to the age of 25 at the time that entry closed (this year, 7 March). There are two age categories: 18 years and under; and 19–25 years.

For this year the NCEM and BBC Radio 3 are delighted to welcome as partners **The Brook Street Band**, founded in 1997 by Baroque cellist Tatty Theo. The composers were invited to write a short piece for The Brook Street Band's ensemble of two violins, cello and harpsichord which reflected some of the characteristics of the Baroque trio sonata but without being a pastiche, and using the harpsichord as an equal partner to the three string instruments. Handel's Trio Sonatas, opus 5 were suggested as a reference point to explore this particular musical world in a work lasting between three and four minutes. Composers were encouraged to listen to recordings of The Brook Street Band and given access to videos to familiarise themselves with the instruments and sound world of the early eighteenth century.

YOUNG COMPOSERS: 2025 SHORTLIST

18 years and under

Ben Greenwood	<i>Drowsiness Changes</i>
Avram Harris	<i>Transient Variations</i>
Edward Harris-Brown	<i>Sir Trip-a-lot's merriment</i>
Laura Kesiak	<i>A Vintage Television</i>
Pol Macip Porter	<i>Fugue (Tristesa)</i>

19 to 25 years

Brandon Craig	<i>Petit Matin</i>
Parmida Eslaminazari	<i>Celestial Reverie</i>
Kit McCarthy	<i>Molten Kaleidoscope</i>

Earlier today shortlisted entries were presented by The Brook Street Band in a workshop with the composers led by **Christopher Fox**, composer and Honorary Professor of Music at the University of York.

Tonight, the pieces will be performed in front of a panel of judges:

Tatty Theo *The Brook Street Band*

Les Pratt *Producer, BBC Radio 3*

Delma Tomlin *Director, NCEM*

At the end of the evening the two winners will be announced, one from each of the two age groups. Composers will be judged on their:

- Skilful use of compositional techniques;
- Imaginative composition fused with an awareness of effective writing for instrumental ensemble.

The performances will be streamed live and will be available to view again at <http://www.youngcomposersaward.co.uk>

The winning works will be premiered by The Brook Street Band in a public concert a public concert as part of the *love:Handel* Festival in Norwich on Friday 3 October 2025. The performance will be recorded for later broadcast on BBC Radio 3's Early Music Show.

The Brook Street Band

Rachel Harris & Kathryn Parry *violins*

Tatty Theo *cello*

Carolyn Gibley *harpsichord*

The Brook Street Band, named after the London street where George Frideric Handel lived from 1723-59, was formed by Baroque cellist Tatty Theo. Its players have worked together for over twenty years, enabling a style of performing and music-making that is precise and spontaneous. Eighteenth-century chamber repertoire is the Band's driving passion, focusing particularly on Handel's music. It also collaborates on larger-scaled orchestral and vocal projects including a Venetian Baroque concert and recording project *Heinrich Schütz – a German in Venice* with tenor David de Winter and recordings with conductor John Andrews.

The Brook Street Band is passionate about exploring new repertoire written for period instruments. Composers including Errollyn Wallen and Nitin Sawhney have written for the Band with repertoire ranging from songs and trio sonatas, and it has received commissions for UK festivals.

The Band performs and teaches throughout the UK and Europe. It has established the *love:Handel* Festival which takes place biennially in Norwich, incorporating educational work supported through its charitable trust. The next festival takes place from 26-28 September and 3-5 October 2025. The Brook Street Band regularly broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. Its extensive discography has received accolades including *Gramophone* magazine Editor's Choice and inclusion in the chamber music/small ensemble selection category at the Grammy Awards. A world-premiere recording of *The Dragon of Wantley* (by Handel's bassoonist J F Lampe) won the Opera Award in the 2023 *BBC Music Magazine* Awards.

brookstreetband.co.uk

In addition to performing the new compositions (in the order decided after the daytime workshops), The Brook Street Band will play selections from the Trio Sonatas, opus 5 by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Brandon Craig b. 2003

Petit Matin

Petit Matin is named after one of my favourite fragrances, which evokes the crisp freshness of an early morning in Paris. I wanted to capture a similar feeling in this piece – starting with a slow, curious mood that reflects the stillness of waking up. As the music develops, it becomes more playful and energetic, before ending with a bold, assertive close. Some sections stay close to classical traditions, while others explore more contemporary harmonies and colours – a reflection of my mixed musical background. I often draw inspiration from everyday life – nature, fragrances, food – and many of my compositions are named after these kinds of sensory experiences. *Petit Matin* is a musical impression of a fleeting moment: a scent, a feeling, a beginning.

Brandon Craig is a self-taught composer from London. His musical journey began at a young age as a producer creating R&B and hip-hop tracks. After stepping away from music for a time, a personal turning point in 2024 led him to discover Maurice Ravel's *La Valse* – a piece that reignited his passion and opened the door to classical music. Captivated by Ravel's sound world, Brandon began composing his own music by ear using notation software, and has since been developing his skills through ongoing study of music theory. His compositions reflect a personal and intuitive approach, often characterised by playful energy and impressionistic colours. Brandon continues to explore his voice as a composer and aims to build a professional career in composition and sound.

Parmida Eslaminazari b. 2001

Celestial Reverie

After listening to many trio sonatas by Bach, Corelli and Handel, I was inspired to compose one in my own compositional voice. *Celestial Reverie* reflects both tradition and exploration. This trio sonata has a playful character with lively themes and abundant ornaments. It balances continuity and transformation, using Baroque traditions while introducing textural and structural twists. *Celestial Reverie* follows an ABA form, with the harpsichord playing the traditional continuo role in the A section while the other instruments lead the melodic line. The figured bass allows the performer to embrace the improvisatory nature of the harpsichord. Contrary, in the B section, the harpsichord takes centre stage and performs the main melodic theme, shifting the balance of the ensemble. With the return of the A section, the music starts more slowly and gradually builds momentum. In addition, each instrument performs a new line, offering a new perspective on the familiar material.

Iranian composer and musician **Parmida Eslaminazari** began her music journey at age seven, attending private piano and music theory lessons. She moved to London and completed the International Foundation Programme in Music at DLD College London in 2021. In 2024 she graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from Royal Holloway, University of London. Parmida composes various pieces establishing a unique voice that blends traditional Persian harmonic techniques with her evolving sound world. Her music bridges classical Persian music and contemporary methods, reflecting her cultural heritage and personal expression. Parmida is pursuing postgraduate studies to further explore this relationship. In her Media/Commercial Composition module, she composed music for radio dramas and video games. As a member of the 2024-2025 Picture Gallery Composer-in-Residence Scheme, Parmida collaborated with the Choir of Royal Holloway to compose a piece for choir and electronics in response to a painting.

Ben Greenwood b. 2007

Drowsiness Changes

Drowsiness Changes was written in the form of a passacaglia, a popular Baroque form with one melody (and associated harmony) repeating throughout. The passacaglia theme is mainly kept as a basso continuo with the violins playing above, in the beginning and ending sections, but also with some harmony stripped down, and the melody moving between registers in the harpsichord, in the middle section. The inspiration is referenced in the name of the piece. The ‘drowsiness’ is simply a feeling that I attempt to reflect and explore in the music – the feeling of wanting to sleep, but being unable to for whatever reason. The ‘changes’ part of the title is a reference to the fact that the harmony in the passacaglia theme was crafted with jazz inspiration, owing to my recently found love of jazz harmony, and a sequence of chords in jazz music is often called a set of ‘changes’.

Ben Greenwood is 17 years old, lives in Dewsbury and attends Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Wakefield. He plays the piano and sings classically, with his interest in composition initially coming from songwriting in the style of progressive-rock artists such as King Crimson and Pink Floyd, before transitioning to composing in the classical tradition. More recently, he has also taken up playing jazz piano with friends at school and in the school swing band. On Saturdays, he attends the Royal College of Music Junior Department, where he studies composition with Simon Speare. He has been offered a place to study composition at the Royal College of Music from September this year.

Avram Harris b. 2008**Transient Variations**

Inspirations for *Transient Variations* include Handel's secret childhood clavichord practice (muffled in the attic!), the sparkling imaginative diversity of his opus 5 trio sonatas (especially the third), and his tragic loss of sight – halting composition and leaving him with only memories of his works. *Transient Variations* explores the ephemeral nature of sound, along with new possibilities for instrumental relationships. For example: at first the harpsichord leads, with strings gently amplifying to alter resonance, transience and decay; later, pizzicato strings and harpsichord engage in imitative dialogue. Size and scale are treated playfully – so a trill can be extended and a tune fragmented. Homophony gains democracy, as notions of melody and accompaniment become collaboration and sometimes disjunction or dissonance. The whole is a fluid series of variations in texture and emotion, ranging from quiet lament to joyfully bouncing energy; with harmonies and motifs developed from the original chord sequence.

Avram Harris is a full-scholarship cello student at Junior Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London, and is further supported by national awards from Future Talent and Awards for Young Musicians. Winner of the North London Festival, International Grand Prize Virtuoso, and Duke's Young Musician, Avram has performed solo in numerous UK venues ranging from Buckingham Palace to the Royal Festival Hall. As a composer Avram is untaught, but is a Guildhall Young Artists laureate and BBC Young Composer 2023. In 2024 his commissioned work *Ark* was premiered by the BBC Concert Orchestra at the Proms and on BBC Radio 3. Another commission, *Shkoyach*, was performed at London's Roundhouse in April 2025, and features on an upcoming CD. Avram is especially happy to appear alongside his cousin Edward on this NCEM shortlist of aspiring composers!

Edward Harris-Brown b. 2006**Sir Trip-a-lot's merriment**

I intended *Sir Trip-a-lot's merriment* to serve as a paraphrase, or perhaps a metamorphosis, on the Gigue from Handel's Trio Sonata in G, op. 5 no. 4. No new notes are added from the original, in fact some are removed. Melodic phrases and harmonic progressions are taken and recontextualised (horizontally and vertically), while often being transformed to highlight previously unseen intricacies in Handel's writing. Rhythm is manipulated extensively; the chaotic mix of simple and compound meters in the opening soon makes way for a stable 6/8 in the central section, exploring stresses in the traditional gigue meter through extensive looping and phasing of Handel's rhythmic patterns. Additionally, many of Handel's most beloved compositional techniques can be found, most prominently those of the

chaconne (sometimes inverted), of imitation and of fugato. Regarding the title, imagine a mid-eighteenth-century courtier enjoying an aristocratic soirée; the night is young, he's had a little too much to drink and decides it might be fun to dance...

Edward Harris-Brown is 18 years old and from Shrewsbury, though is currently living in London where he is a first-year undergraduate pianist at the Royal Academy of Music, studying with Head of Piano Joanna MacGregor and taking composition lessons from Joseph Havlat. Previously, he attended Chetham's School of Music for eight years as a pianist and composer. Edward's composition successes include being Highly Commended in BBC Young Composer 2023, winning the 2023 Chetham's/CCOM Sino-British Composition Competition and additional prizes in the Bach Choir and Choir Schools Association competitions. His works have also been performed at venues in London, Manchester, Chester and Shrewsbury. Additional highlights include appearing as soloist in his piano concerto with the Chetham's Symphony Orchestra in 2024 and curating Project HexRAMeron for the 2025 RAM Students Create Festival, a large-scale work for six-hands piano collaborated on by eight Academy composers, including another NCEM competition alumnus. He is delighted to be joined in this final by his cousin Avram!

Laura Kesiak b. 2010

A Vintage Television

I composed *A Vintage Television* drawing inspiration from Handel's trio sonatas as well as BBC television shows from the 1980s, hence the title. The piece features several elements characteristic of Handel's style, including spirited dotted rhythms, conversational interplay between the two violins, and the use of imitation and sequences. While drawing from the colourful world of Handel's trio sonatas, I aimed to incorporate my own compositional voice, including frequent time signature changes, unconventional modulations and irregular rhythmic patterns. I was also keen to give the harpsichord its own independent role. To create the image of an old television, I wrote themes, rhythms and harmonies inspired by the following BBC programmes: Songs of Praise, Countryfile, Mastermind and BBC News. These form distinct sections of my composition, separated by 'channel change' passages with characteristic glissandos and harmonics, aiming to imitate the static sound. I hope you enjoy this Handel and BBC fusion!

Laura Kesiak is 14 years old and attends Chetham's School of Music in Manchester where she pursues her love for composition, violin and piano. She has won several competitions, including New York's IYMC (2022), The New Directions Composition Prize at the University of Cambridge (2024), Blackburn Cathedral Organ Composition Competition (2024), and most recently, Liturina's I040 Young

Composers' Competition (2025), writing a final movement for Bach's unfinished trio sonata. Laura was also a finalist of the BBC Radio 3 Carol Competition 2023, with her carol recorded by the BBC Singers. Her compositions have been performed by the Kvadrat Trio, Blackburn Cathedral's organist-in-residence John Hosking, the EYSM orchestra, and students from the Central Conservatoire of Music in Beijing and Chetham's. Laura aspires to become a film music composer and enjoys music production alongside her classical work, composing for solo instruments, chamber groups and orchestral ensembles.

Kit McCarthy *b. 2002*

Molten Kaleidoscope

Molten Kaleidoscope is a piece about sugar glass, dandelions, YouTube adverts, the bergamot orange, treasure, ferns, copper phthalocyanine, transiKons, elderflower, the iMac G3, the impossibility of true randomness, a nineteenth-century Swedish harmonium, bonkle green woollen jumpers, iridescence, fragmentaKon, crows, and the Gigue from Handel's Sonata in G major, op. 5 no. 4.

Kit McCarthy is a composer from Fife, Scotland. He studied at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Laurence Crane and Hollie Harding, where he won the school's undergraduate composition prize. He graduated last year with a first-class honours degree. Kit is currently writing for the London Symphony Orchestra as part of the 2025-26 Helen Hamlyn Panufnik Scheme. Kit writes music about the natural world, landscapes, nostalgia, colour, dance, homesickness, chaos, fragility, familiarity (like a song you heard a long time ago), repetition, memory, strangeness, balance, glitches, distance. He has worked with the Ligeti Quartet, EXAUDI, Antonio Pappano, the Brompton Quartet and Jack Sheen, amongst others, and was recently commissioned by the St Andrews Renaissance Singers and the Bubblyjock Collective. Kit's practice crosses disciplines and genres; he produces for several singer-songwriters and is collaborating on a new musical about puffins. Kit loves open cello strings, birch trees, harmon mutes, ceilidh tunes and poems about crows.

Pol Macip-Porter *b. 2007*

Fugue (Tristes)

Tristes (Fugue) was written with intent to fuse Western Classical Baroque music with influences from Spain/South America. The title was inspired by Villa-Lobos' nomenclature of his *Bachianas Brasileiras*: the first word is the Baroque structure that I based my piece on, a fugue; the second word translates to 'sadness' from Catalan, my native language, I chose a neo-Baroque approach, using the fugue form and maintaining counterpoint and proper voice-leading wherever I could, but

varying the harmonic language, incorporating modal harmony and not entirely functional harmony, but not veering too far from tonality. I also utilised Latin rhythms throughout, and chose to write the composition in 6/4, with bars of 4/4 to avoid an entirely metrically centred feeling, which is also achieved through the syncopation. I wanted the composition to have a melancholic mood, though to still feel like a sort of dance, as if from a Baroque suite.

Pol Macip-Porter is a 17-year-old cellist and double bassist, hailing from Leicester, attending Leicester Grammar School where he studies A-level music. On Saturdays he goes to Birmingham Conservatoire for their junior programme. He also enjoys singing tenor with his school and Billesdon Church Choir and plays piano as well. He has been enjoying composing for the last couple of years, and it is becoming a prominent part of his musical life. Pol intends to apply for conservatoires as a cellist and universities with a focus on performing, after his A-Levels.

PREVIOUS WINNERS

<i>Year</i>	<i>In association with</i>	<i>18 years and under</i>	<i>19–25 years</i>
2024	The Tallis Scholars	Charlotte Robertson	Ryan Collis
2023	English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble	Jacob Jordan	Owen Spafford
2022	Consone Quartet	Christopher Churcher	Adam Possener
2021	Palisander	Jacob Fitzgerald	Delyth Naya
2020	The Tallis Scholars	Eilidh Owen	Fintan O'Hare
2019	Liam Byrne		Sarah Cattley Derri Joseph Lewis
2018	English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble	Lilly Vadaneaux	Andrew Blair
2017	The Tallis Scholars	Dominic Wills	Frederick Viner
2016	Theatre of the Ayre	Alex Dakin	Kristina Arakelyan

2015	Dunedin Consort	Joshua Urban	John Goldie-Scot
2014	The Tallis Scholars	Fraz Ireland	Hugo Bell Kerensa Briggs
2013	Florilegium	Lilly Vadaneaux	Joseph Howard
2012	The Tallis Scholars	Alex Woolf	Ben Rowarth
2011	Fretwork	Bertie Baigent Sarah Gait	Chris Roberts
2010	The Tallis Scholars	Owain Park	Alexander Campkin
2009	The Tallis Scholars	Elizabeth Edwards	Michael Perrett
2008	The Tallis Scholars	Kerrin Tatman	