



Thursday 19 May 2022 7.00 pm
National Centre for Early Music
St Margaret's Church, Walmgate, York

Supported by **Mayfield Valley Arts Trust**



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ENGLAND**

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 musicians. In bridging the worlds of 'early' and 'new' music, the Award complements the NCEM's education policy, to support and nurture young composers and demonstrate to all participants that the music of previous centuries is relevant to today's creative endeavours.

This major national annual award is open to young composers resident in the UK, up to the age of 25 at the time that entry closed (this year, 18 March 2022). There are two age categories: 18 years and under; 19–25 years.

This year the NCEM and BBC Radio 3 are delighted to welcome as partners BBC New Generation Artists, **Consone Quartet**. The Consone Quartet plays 'period instruments' using gut strings and young composers were invited to enter into the musical sound world of one of their favourite composers, Fanny Mendelssohn.

Earlier today the shortlisted entries were presented by the Consone Quartet in a workshop with the young composers led by composer **Christopher Fox** (Professor of Music, Brunel University).

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

Consone Quartet

Les Pratt *Producer, BBC Radio 3*

Delma Tomlin *Director, NCEM*

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

- skill of compositional techniques, including writing for string quartet;
- innovation of composition, fused with an awareness of the Consone Quartet's style.

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 Consone Quartet in a public concert at the Stour Music Festival on Friday 24 June 2022. The concert will be recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio 3's **Early Music Show** on Sunday 20 November 2022.

CONSONE QUARTET

Agata Daraškaite *violin*

Magdalena Loth-Hill *violin*

Elitsa Bogdanova *viola*

George Ross *cello*

The first period instrument quartet to be selected as BBC New Generation Artists, the Consone Quartet is fast making a name for its honest and expressive interpretations of classical and early romantic repertoire. The quartet's debut CD, released in 2018 on the French Ambronay Label, explores music by Haydn and Mendelssohn. It was met with great critical acclaim as a recording 'that instantly leaps out of the stereo at you as something special' (*The Strad*, 2019).

Formed at the Royal College of Music in London, the Consone Quartet launched its professional career in 2015, shortly after which it was awarded two prizes at the 2015 York International Young Artists Competition, including the EUBO Development Trust Prize and a place on the EEEmerging Scheme in France. The quartet went on to win the 2016 Royal Over-Seas League Ensemble Prize, and in 2022 was awarded a prestigious Borletti-Buitoni Trust (BBT) fellowship.

The quartet has been enthusiastically received at London's Wigmore Hall, King's Place, St Martin-in-the-Fields and at the Edinburgh, Cheltenham, and Buxton festivals amongst others. The English Haydn, Brighton and York Early Music Festivals

have been loyal supporters over the past few years and regularly host the group.

Further afield, the quartet has performed at the Paris Philharmonie String Quartet Biennial and the Lyon Auditorium in France; at the Concertgebouw Brugge and AMUZ in Belgium; the REMA Showcase; the Concerts d'été à St Germain in Switzerland and on tour in Bolivia and Peru. The group was selected for the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence Académie in June 2020.

The quartet has worked with students at the Royal College of Music and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and are currently Hans Keller Chamber Fellows at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama for 2020-2022.

During the pandemic, the quartet created its own online series – 'Barnstorming!' – performing chamber music in different barns around the UK. The project was kindly supported by the Continuo Foundation. The Foundation also selected the quartet as one of their Round 3 grant recipients and will be supporting it in a series of live performances of a new string sextet commission by composer Gavin Bryars this summer.

More highlights of the 2022–23 season include Queen's Hall, Edinburgh; Wigmore Hall, London; Stoller Hall, Manchester; De Bijloke, Belgium; Heidelberg Festival, Germany and a tour of North America. The quartet recently signed with the Scottish Label, Linn Records and will be releasing an album of music by Felix Mendelssohn in spring 2023.

YOUNG COMPOSERS: 2022 SHORTLIST

18 years and under

Phoebe Apfel	<i>Melancholie</i>
Christopher Churcher	<i>Arborescent</i>
Jonathan Love	<i>Seascape</i>
Scott Manson	<i>Theme and Variations</i>

19 to 25 years

Anna Disley-Simpson	<i>Anfang</i>
Thomas Kettle	<i>Beacon: Hallucination for String Quartet</i>
Adam Possener	<i>52°N 20.5°E</i>
Dominic Wills	<i>Fantasia</i>

In addition to performing these new pieces (in the order decided after the daytime workshops) the Consone Quartet will play:

String Quartet in D, op. 71 no. 2

Adagio – Allegro

Adagio

Menuetto: Allegro

Allegretto – Allegro

Franz Josef Haydn

1732–1809

Phoebe Apfel *Melancholie*

18 and under (b. 2003)

Phoebe Apfel is currently studying composition at the Junior Guildhall School of Music and Drama; next year she enters the BMus course in composition at the Guildhall. She has been composing for a number of years and is interested in many different genres of music, whether classical, jazz, rock or beyond, which is reflected in her writing. Phoebe enjoys having the versatility to be able to study and write in several styles rather than limiting herself to any one area of music. She has played the cello for 12 years, which greatly influences her composition as she is able to use her experience of playing solo and with others to inform her writing.

Melancholie is a piece written with the aim of highlighting the gorgeous timbres of the period instruments the Consone Quartet uses. The sound is unique and has a rich, soulful quality to it, and I wanted to bring this out in the music I wrote. I felt that the best way to do that would be to write a slow emotional movement where the musicians can savour the harmonies they are playing and carefully interact with each other. I was directly inspired by Fanny Mendelsson's quartet, especially its first movement, in regards to the way she introduces and develops a musical theme, so I tried to reflect this in my response to her work.

Christopher Churcher *Arborescent*

18 and under (b. 2004)

Christopher Churcher is an aspiring composer of classical music based in Birmingham. Having written his first compositions aged thirteen, he has won the Bach Choir's Sir David Willcocks Carol Competition and the Benslow Young Composers Competition in 2021. In 2022, Christopher was selected as one of the young composers for the Ludlow English Song Weekend's Young Composers Platform, for which he wrote a short song cycle – 'Three Songs from Mytilene' – setting translations of Sappho fragments for soprano and piano. Christopher plays the piano and bassoon, and hopes to begin studying Music at the University of Oxford later this year.

Arborescent: In January 2022, as I read Amanda Gorman's new poetry collection, *Call Us What We Carry*, I was struck by a triptych of poems entitled *Arborescent I, II & III*. In these poems she uses the image of a sprouting tree as a metaphor for humanity, with our inherent desire to 'twist forward all that shoots us through with sun' towards light and hope. I thought that this idea of something being 'arborescent' (tree-like) would be an interesting stimulus for a piece of music; starting from a place of unity, and slowly sprouting branches and gaining momentum – its gestures become more variegated and knotted – until reaching the sky above. This is the concept behind my piece, *Arborescent*. I invite the listener to imagine exploring a tree; your line of sight moving from the base, to the vibrancy of a mushrooming canopy through vertical ascent.

Anna Disley-Simpson *Anfang*

19 to 25 years (b. 1996)

Anna Disley-Simpson studied composition at the Royal Northern College of Music, and spent two years as the Graduate Musician-in-Residence at Radley. She is now based in London.

Anna's work ranges from uplifting vocal works and catchy pop songs to fragile electronic soundscapes and experimental multimedia installation pieces. Her work has been performed by ensembles such as the European Union Chamber Orchestra, No Dice Collective, Kantos Chamber Choir, Juice Vocal Ensemble, the ORA Singers, Hermes Experiment, Gesualdo Six, the BBC Singers and members of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. She has been working closely with the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain over this past year. Anna also recently completed her tenure as Composer-in-Residence for the London Oriana Choir after winning their five15 Young Composers Competition in 2019. Anna was composer with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain in 2015, after having won the BBC Inspire Young Composers Competition 2014 with her piece 'Underneath' for voices and beat boxer.

Anfang, the German word for beginning, is a short piece intending to capture the feeling of the start of something; of newness. A melody, at first fragmented, goes on to reveal itself as the piece develops, interspersing itself with ticking staccato gestures and rising pairs of chords.

Thomas Kettle *Beacon: Hallucination for String Quartet*
19 to 25 years (b. 1998)

Thomas Kettle is a Scottish violist and composer. As a violist, he studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland before pursuing further study at the Royal Academy of Music. During this time, he developed an interest in historical performance and is now continuing studies in the Historical Performance department at the RAM. His teachers have included Jane Rogers, Rachel Podger and Paul Silverthorne. He was the recipient of several awards and prizes including the Hans Keller Scholarship, Max Gilbert Prize and Nancy Nuttall Prize.

Thomas also enjoys a freelance career as a violist. In 2019 he was selected as a Scottish Ensemble Young Artist and in 2020 he was invited to join the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment Experience Scheme. He is a member of the Salix Quartet, which was selected for the Frost Trust ASSET scheme at the RAM mentored by Doric Quartet violinists. As a composer, Thomas was the winner of the 2015 Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Junior Composition Prize.

Beacon was born through exploration of the quartet as a single instrument or being. In particular, its ability to speak as one whilst simultaneously in dialogue with itself achieving, in some sense, a kind of consciousness. I drew inspiration from the radical viol consort sets of William Lawes (1602–45) and the rhapsodic and similarly forward-looking opening movement of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's (1805–47) String Quartet in E flat.

Jonathan Love *Seascape*

18 and under (b. 2003)

Jonathan Love is a New Zealander, born in Taiwan, who has lived in Germany, France and now the UK. He is a recent graduate of the American School of Paris, where as a singer, pianist and French horn player he seized every opportunity to be involved in musical activities, from jazz and concert bands, and from choral ensembles to musical theatre productions, music theory and International Baccalaureate music courses. While at school he participated in International Honor Choirs in Beijing, Rome, Berlin, London and Frankfurt. Jonathan is now pursuing a master's degree in Computing and Music at the University of Aberdeen where he is actively involved as a member of the Chamber Choir and two a cappella groups, Aberpella and Caletoneia, of which he is also musical director.

Seascape is a piece for string quartet inspired by the painting of the same name by Claude Monet. The composition emulates the form of ocean waves, with great emphasis on rhythmic and dynamic freedom to instil a flowing, back-and-forth feeling, with an underlying restlessness that continues throughout the piece.

Scott Manson *Theme and Variations*

18 and under (b. 2004)

Scott Manson is a pianist, flautist and composer from Aberdeen. He began piano lessons at the age of seven, and has recently achieved a distinction in Grade 8 piano and flute. He has been a member the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland Junior and Senior Orchestras, Aberdeen Concert Band and Aberdeen City Youth Orchestra. His works have been performed by the Scottish Freelancers Ensemble, Red Note Ensemble, and soprano Sarah Leonard. He was a member of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra 2021–22 Notes from Scotland scheme for young composers, and has participated in composing workshops and courses through the charity Sound Scotland, where he has worked with composers from across the UK in a variety of styles. He is also taught composition by Jay Capperauld. Scott receives piano lessons at the North East of Scotland Music School, where he holds a full scholarship.

Theme and Variations is a work inspired by the classical perception of the string quartet. A set of variations often formed the central slow movement, and here I have tried to give a new and contemporary flavour to the form. The spacious theme presents three main ideas, which are then developed, individually and together, over the course of the four variations. The final variation is a short fugue, a structural element which is directly inspired by the classical period.

Adam Possener 52°N 20.5°E

19 to 25 years (b. 2001)

Adam Possener is a composer and violist from Oxford, where he is reading for a degree in Music, studying composition with Jennifer Walshe and Martyn Harry. In 2018 he was awarded a Royal Philharmonic Society Prize for Young Composers and commissioned to write for the RLPO's Ensemble 10:10. His music has been performed and workshopped by the CHROMA Ensemble, BBC Singers, Kreutzer Quartet, Hermes Experiment and Trio Farben.. He has had masterclasses with Nico Muhly, Anna Meredith, Paweł Mykietyn and Zygmunt Krauze. Adam also writes for American Jewish culture magazine *Hey Alma* on punk Jewish counterculture and cross-boundary Jewish music.

52°N 20.5°E are the coordinates for Radziejowice, a village in the Polish countryside where I wrote this piece. The constant *ppp* semiquavers shared between the instruments are meant to imitate the sounds of a sonar device which uses sound waves to detect objects. These semiquavers are played throughout the piece, but quietly enough that it doesn't dominate the texture. At one point towards the end, the semiquavers drop out and there is a bar of silence which allows you to feel their absence in a much stronger way than you felt their presence. As someone of Polish-Jewish heritage, I wanted to play with this idea of space, location and absence. There are melodic lines displaced between inner parts, microtonal sliding, harmonics, and *col legno*. These techniques can exploit the vulnerability of period instruments and expose the beauty that we can find in fragile constructions.

Dominic Wills *Fantasia*

19 to 25 years (b. 1999)

Dominic Wills is in his fourth year of the Joint Course between the University of Manchester and the Royal Northern College of Music. He has studied composition under Ewan Campbell and Joseph Phibbs and is now taught by David Horne and Adam Gorb at the RNCM. In 2017, he won the NCEM Young Composers Award; his piece was performed by The Tallis Scholars and broadcast on BBC Radio 3. Also in 2017, he was commissioned by the Aldeburgh and King's Lynn festivals. In 2021, his song cycle 'To know them gone' was premiered at the Ludlow English Song Festival. His string trio 'Indris' was performed at the RMA Annual Conference at the Conway Hall as part of the Clements Prize for composition. Dominic's work often explores links between old and new music and how one affects our understanding of the other.

Fantasia, is written for a string quartet playing with gut strings tuned to A=430. It is modelled after Purcell's Fantasias for viol consort which make use of a tripartite structure containing strong contrasts between homophonic and contrapuntal textures. The piece contains several canons and out of each of these, new material is generated. At the centre of the piece is a stylistically unexpected, diatonic chorale, punctuated by a recitative-like response from the first violin. The final canon of the piece concerns itself with integrating this highly contrasted material into the texture and, in doing so, finds itself caught an eternal cycle which fades away to end the piece.

PREVIOUS WINNERS

<i>Year</i>	<i>In association with</i>	<i>18 years and under</i>	<i>19–25 years</i>
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 Urben	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	