

Guildhall School of Music and Drama

The past few months have been busy and exciting for the GSMD viola department. In October we had our annual Viola Open Day, which was a great success, attended by 50 young violists from around the country and abroad. The day began with a warm up session with Professor Matthew Jones. This was followed by a variety of masterclasses by Guildhall Professor Rachel Roberts and Matthew Jones, as well as an orchestral excerpts masterclass with LSO violist German Clavijo. The GSMD viola students gave two viola ensemble concerts with works ranging from Schubert to Piazzola and John Hawkins.

The GSMD Max and Peggy Morgan Award is a prize which alternates between violin and viola students. This year was the viola award and the final took place in December, adjudicated by James Blair. I was delighted to perform the Bartok Concerto in the final alongside Freya Hicks who performed the Walton Concerto and James Flannery who performed the Malcom Arnold Viola Concerto. In February I gave the prize winners' recital in St Martin in the Fields as part of their lunch time series, performing works by Shostakovich and Brahms. I really enjoyed performing in such a wonderful space and we all agreed that the whole competition, including very helpful feedback from James Blair, was a great experience.

Many GSMD students were involved in the Royal Overseas League Competition this year, including violist, Alex McFarlane who won the ROSL Golden Jubilee Trust Prize. Alex gave his prize winners' recital at St Martin in the Fields earlier this month, performing works by Schumann, Brahms and Enescu. Other competition winners included violist Christoph Slenzka of the recently graduated Barbican Quartet, and current Chamber Music Fellow Marmen Quartet violist Bryony Gibson-Cornish: their quartets took 1st and 2nd prizes respectively at the International Joseph Joachim Chamber Music competition in Weimar.

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