

COBIS Music Festival 2024 – Composition results

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I believe there were 15 schools entering online, in addition to those who attended live in Bahrain.

My two great passions in music are choral singing and composing. The creation of texture, developing a melodic line and experimenting with the combination of timbre, or tone colour is such a gift.

Listening to the fine work of young composers is humbling – a true privilege. I was blown away by the level of both structural development and musical shaping – work sensitively constructed in both rhythmic and melodic terms.

With many fine and confidently written pieces, I was left with the difficult task of selecting winning works for the four categories: free, film, electronic and songwriting. The winning entries have been announced on the COBIS website, along with some extra commendations I gave and a rising star award, which went to a young student in Year 6 for the songwriting category whose song was incredible. I told the audience in Bahrain that these pieces were highly idiomatic and often recorded with incredible polish. The winning Film composition pulled me into the world of ancient Egypt with its enticing orchestral soundscape. Indeed, the Electronic composition was perfectly mixed, with interesting and exciting use of ostinato as the work developed. The Free Composition winner took me on an accomplished and exciting ride and the winning Song was stunning also; a piece with profound lyrical content working in perfect synthesis with its musical backdrop. Well done to all the winning pieces. Furthermore, development and the construction of harmonic progression was well attended to by the majority of entries, and this is wonderful to note – there were very few pieces that were stuck in a chordal pattern, or did not modulate. This shows a high degree of involvement with progression throughout the works and as a by-product, holds interest for the listener – taking them on a musical journey with a clear beginning, middle and end.

All the files I received were numbered – I had no idea what school/student had produced them and thus, it was a lovely surprise to see such a diversity of schools in the awards; leading to great evidence of clear attention paid to musical composition from Music Departments across the COBIS Network – great to know that it is alive and kicking!

Well done to all who submitted works, alongside the winners and special commendations, most especially our Young Composer of the Year, Elie, from Dubai English Speaking College whose piece was professional in production, highly idiomatic in control of musical events and development throughout her work.

I encourage all to listen to the submissions via the festival website - you will not be disappointed.

Congratulations young composers and thank you so much for the opportunity to hear your great work.