



NCBF Scotland Regional Festival

Sunday 11th January 2026

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Glasgow

It's with considerable excitement that we welcome you to the 2026 Scotland Regional Festival of the National Concert Band Festival here on our return to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow.

Today the bands are performing their programmes for our adjudicators who will measure what is seen and heard with a particular level of musical achievement as per the NCBF Criteria (*see last page*).

Those bands receiving a Platinum award (and maybe some Golds) will be invited to perform at the NCBF National Festival to be held at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th April 2026.

Our thanks to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland for hosting today's festival with special thanks to Heather Nicoll and the staff involved for the support we have received.

We hope you enjoy the day – you have a vital role to play in creating the atmosphere.

Have a go yourself at seeing how the bands performance meets the criteria printed at the end of this programme.

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Today's Programme

Adjudicators: Heather Nicoll

Bryan Allen

Compere: Ronan Watson

1230 Strathclyde University Concert Band (CWB)

Conductor: Chris Mitchell

Fiesta!

Philip Sparke

With Every Sunrise

Robert Sheldon

Boomba

Michael Barry

1305 Stewarton Winds (CWB)

Conductor: Hughina Naylor

Overture to *Candide*

Leonard Bernstein

Scottish Dances (movt.3)

Malcolm Arnold arr. Paynter

Vesuvius

Frank Ticheli

1340 Clyde Wind Ensemble (CWB)

Conductor: Diane McCrory

Transcendent Journey

Rosano Galante

Mountain Thyme

Samuel Hazo

Delirium

Paul Devlin

1415 Durham University Concert Band (OWB)

Conductor: Timothy Tsang

Washington Post

J P Sosua

Symphonic Episode 1

Satoshi Yagisawa

A Tameside Overture

Philip Sparke

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1450 North Ayrshire Schools' Senior Concert Band (YWB)

Conductor: Steven Cowling

Okeanos

Jack Bullock

Lift Off

Peter Meachan

Highlights from *Ratatouille*

arr. John Moss

1525 The Garnock Valley Community Concert Band (CWB)

Conductor: Alan Friel

Song and Dance

Richard Saucedo

Cry of the Last Unicorn

Rossano Galante

A Huntingdon Celebration

Philip Sparke

1610 PRESENTATION OF AWARDS



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Todays Adjudicators:-



HEATHER NICOLL is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) and was appointed Head of Woodwind in 2007.

In a diverse performing career as a clarinettist, she has given concerts and recorded with many of Britain's leading orchestras and held a principal position with Scottish Ballet for several years. Heather has appeared as concerto soloist on many occasions, making her professional debut with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO), and has featured regularly with a diverse range of professional contemporary and chamber music ensembles.

She has played on numerous soundtracks for films, working with composers including John Williams (Harry Potter: The Philosopher's Stone), James Horner (Enemy At The Gates), Craig Armstrong (Moulin Rouge), Elmer Bernstein and Jerry Goldsmith, and recorded with a diverse range of artists such as Bryn Terfel and Joni Mitchell.

In 2002, Heather gained an MA in Psychology for Musicians (University of Sheffield). More recently, she completed a PGDip in Performance Psychology at the University of Edinburgh, exploring the psychology of peak performance in a range of fields including music and sport. In addition, Heather is a qualified Mindfulness Now teacher, certified by the UK College of Mindfulness Meditation.

Heather has adjudicated extensively at regional, national and international festivals and competitions, such as the Yamaha Foundation Awards, BBC Young Musician, National Concert Band Festival & the Norwegian Wind Orchestras Championship in Trondheim. She has also examined and given masterclasses and workshops at leading Conservatoires in Britain and Europe.



BRYAN ALLEN enjoys a varied and multifaceted career as a trumpeter, conductor, teacher, adjudicator and festival director. From 1995-2011 Bryan was Head of Brass and Instrumental Performance at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where he directed numerous orchestral, wind, brass and jazz ensembles. He is now much in demand as a regular performer with orchestras such as the RSNO, BBCSSO, SCO and Scottish Opera and directs his own ensemble, The BrassLab. His conducting activities range from orchestras and contemporary music ensembles to wind bands and brass bands at professional, youth and community levels, including such ensembles as the RSNO Brass and Red Note.

As an adjudicator, Bryan has worked in a wide variety of fields, from solo performance competitions such as the Yamaha Foundation Awards, BBC Young Musician, Scottish and European Solo Championships to many Regional and National Wind and Brass Band competitions. Bryan has also examined for many of Britain's leading music colleges such as the Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Birmingham Conservatoire, and Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and has given masterclasses and workshops at leading conservatoires worldwide. He was given the British Bandsman Award for services to brass bands in 1995 for his Directorship of Brass Explosion Festivals in Symphony Hall, Birmingham, and was made an Honourary Fellow of the RCS in 2011.

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Our compare today:-



Ronan Watson:-

Ronan studied the viola at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Catherine Marwood, completing a BMus and PGDip Mus in performance. As well as being a prize winning soloist he also enjoyed representing the RCS at various chamber music events including: Quartetfest at the RNCM, The St Magnus Festival, Orkney, The Trondheim Kammermusik Festival, Norway and the Banff Chamber Music Course, Canada.

After enjoying a varied freelance viola playing career, Ronan focused his attention to his passion for Music Education.

Ronan has enjoyed delivering a range of educational music programmes across Scotland and working for the Music Services of local authorities.

As Senior Teacher of the North Ayrshire String Project, Ronan was involved in the development of string playing within the local authority, in partnership with the Junior Department of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Instrumental Teaching colleagues from the North Ayrshire Music Service.

Ronan has been working for North Ayrshire Council as an upper strings instructor for 14 years and was appointed as Music Service Manager in January 2020.

Despite a busy teaching life, Ronan still enjoys performing across different genres as a freelance viola player and getting involved in national music projects to promote music and the arts in education.



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NCBF Criteria

PLATINUM		GOLD		SILVER		BRONZE	
TONE	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent tone quality <input type="checkbox"/> Sound always focussed <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent range of tone colours	<input type="checkbox"/> Good tone quality <input type="checkbox"/> Sound generally focussed <input type="checkbox"/> Good range of tone colours	<input type="checkbox"/> Competent tone quality <input type="checkbox"/> Sound not always focussed <input type="checkbox"/> Reasonable range of tone colours	<input type="checkbox"/> Tone quality is limited <input type="checkbox"/> Sound occasionally focussed <input type="checkbox"/> Tone colours need further exploration			
TUNING	<input type="checkbox"/> A well tuned performance <input type="checkbox"/> Intonation is generally excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of instruments well tuned <input type="checkbox"/> Intonation is generally good	<input type="checkbox"/> Some lack of control with tuning is evident <input type="checkbox"/> Intonation is generally competent	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuning needs attention <input type="checkbox"/> Intonation is generally variable			
BALANCE & BLEND	<input type="checkbox"/> An excellent sense of balance is demonstrated <input type="checkbox"/> Soloists are accompanied most sympathetically <input type="checkbox"/> Sections blend well together throughout	<input type="checkbox"/> A good sense of balance is achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Soloists are accompanied well <input type="checkbox"/> Sections blend well together for the majority of the performance	<input type="checkbox"/> A competent sense of balance is achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Soloists are accompanied well in parts <input type="checkbox"/> Sections blend well for a portion of the performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Balance is adequate some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Accompaniment requires a greater degree of sensitivity <input type="checkbox"/> Sections and individuals tend to dominate			
DYNAMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> Wide range of dynamic variation is evident <input type="checkbox"/> Dynamic contrast handled most effectively	<input type="checkbox"/> Good range of dynamic variation is evident <input type="checkbox"/> Good control of dynamic contrast	<input type="checkbox"/> Competent range of dynamic variation is shown <input type="checkbox"/> Competent control of dynamic contrast	<input type="checkbox"/> Dynamic range tends to be limited <input type="checkbox"/> Some control of dynamic contrast is evident			
RHYTHMIC ACCURACY & ENSEMBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> Rhythmic accuracy is excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Pulse and tempo changes very well managed <input type="checkbox"/> Performance shows a high degree of cohesion	<input type="checkbox"/> Rhythmic accuracy is generally very good <input type="checkbox"/> Most pulse and tempo changes are managed effectively <input type="checkbox"/> Band and sections mostly well co-ordinated	<input type="checkbox"/> Rhythmic accuracy is mostly good <input type="checkbox"/> Some pulse and tempo changes are managed well <input type="checkbox"/> Band shows reasonable co-ordination	<input type="checkbox"/> Rhythmic accuracy is inconsistent <input type="checkbox"/> Tempo and pulse changes disturb the musical flow <input type="checkbox"/> Co-ordination is shown only in the more straightforward passages			
ARTICULATION & PHRASING	<input type="checkbox"/> Articulation is excellent throughout <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent attention to detail <input type="checkbox"/> Phrasing shows a high degree of understanding and presentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Articulation is generally good <input type="checkbox"/> A wide range of detail is portrayed <input type="checkbox"/> Phrasing is good and generally precise	<input type="checkbox"/> Articulation is competent <input type="checkbox"/> A reasonable range of detail is portrayed <input type="checkbox"/> Phrasing is competent	<input type="checkbox"/> A reasonable level of articulation is shown <input type="checkbox"/> Some detail is portrayed <input type="checkbox"/> Phrasing is in need of development			
STYLE & INTERPRETATION	<input type="checkbox"/> The band responds vigilantly to the conductor's directions <input type="checkbox"/> A mastery of style is evident throughout <input type="checkbox"/> Your interpretation produced a highly musical performance	<input type="checkbox"/> The band responds well to the conductor's directions <input type="checkbox"/> A good range of styles is displayed <input type="checkbox"/> Your musical interpretation enhanced a good performance	<input type="checkbox"/> The band respond to the conductor's directions most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Some awareness of the style of music is shown <input type="checkbox"/> The musicality displayed some of the time lifts the performance	<input type="checkbox"/> The band only responds to the conductor's directions for some of the time <input type="checkbox"/> The style of the music is limited in its characterisation <input type="checkbox"/> A basic understanding of musical interpretation is shown			
CHOICE / SUITABILITY OF PROGRAMME	<input type="checkbox"/> A challenging programme that really displayed the musicianship and technical skills of the performers	<input type="checkbox"/> A balanced programme that provided a good level of challenge, developing the musicianship and technical skills of the performers most of the time	<input type="checkbox"/> The programme provided a good level of challenge in parts. It could be better balanced, with the band appearing capable of tackling music of a higher technical level and/or musical challenge overall	<input type="checkbox"/> A programme that, perhaps, needs a little more thought in balance and/or technical and musical challenge for the perceived current ability of the performers			
IMPROVISATION	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent skills shown by the soloists	<input type="checkbox"/> Soloists display a good range of skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Soloists mainly use printed solos, but there is some attempt to free themselves from the copy; or display a basic range of skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Soloists only use printed solos			

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