

NORTHERN IRELAND OPEN ACCORDION CHAMPIONSHIPS

ORGANISER

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The Twenty First **NORTHERN IRELAND OPEN ACCORDION CHAMPIONSHIPS** held in the Belfast Loughshore Hotel Carrickfergus on Saturday 24 February 2018 was another huge success with reaction from spectators and competitors alike being very favourable towards the festival which ran like clockwork in a very relaxed and friendly spirit.

Organised by **Clyde Johnston** it is the largest accordion festival in Northern Ireland and again attracted a good entry. The Championships are recognised by the National Accordion Organisation of the United Kingdom as a qualifier for the UK Championships, held later in the year in Liverpool and Clyde was delighted to again welcome competitors from the **Chilton School of Music** in Co. Cavan and **Gerry Kelly's Accordion School** from Co. Meath as well as the **Keith Dickson Accordion School** from Scotland coming across for their second visit. They certainly enriched the Championships. There were also other entries from Co. Meath, Co. Dublin, Southern England and Glasgow in addition to the local competitors. In addition there were trade stands on display by **Sean O'Neill, Roy Hendrie, East Antrim Accordions and Scotland Accordions** which added great interest and atmosphere to the Festival.

This year's competition was the 20th anniversary and to mark the occasion an informal celebration concert was held in the Loughshore Hotel on the Friday night with an array of talented accordionists delighting the large audience with some sparkling playing. **Helen Rich** from Greater Manchester opened the show followed by former UK 15 & Under Champion **Roy Hendrie** from Troon. There was then a duet by **Nigel Pasby and Helen Newton** from Berkshire followed by local lad **Nigel Black** and his wife **Elaine**, on the penny whistle, from Ballymena. After the break **Sean O'Neill and Anne-Marie Devine** from Strabane got things going again followed by **Barry Smith** from Birmingham accompanied by **Mark Johnston** on drums. **Keith Dickson** and **Gordon Shand** from the Scottish Borders then took to the stage with **Malachi Cairns** from Coventry bringing the evening of delightful playing to an end. It was a great night of high quality playing with many music genres being performed.

At the competition on the Saturday the adjudicators, **Audrey Gillian, Philip Hammond** and **Sarah McEvoy** were greatly impressed not only by the high standard of playing but also with the smooth and efficient manner in which the Championships were run.

Outstanding star performers were **The Shand Family, Clelland, Blythe & Inver** from Scotland who are pupils of **Keith Dickson**. They entered a total of 11 sections and recorded an amazing 11 first places. They so impressed the adjudicators with their performance in the Scottish Traditional Group that they were awarded the prize for Best Overall Performance of the Day and **Clelland** was awarded second Best Overall Performance of the Day for his performance in the 13 & Under Championship Solo. He also won the 13 & Under Musette Solo and the Scottish Traditional Solo 13-15 years as well as teaming up with **Inver** to win the Higher Elementary Duet. Inver also won the Polka Solo 10 & Under, Musette Solo 11 & Under and the Scottish Traditional Solo 12 & Under whilst **Blythe** won the 11 & Under Championship Solo and the Higher Preparatory Solo Test and Own Choice Sections. A truly amazing day's performance by three very talented youngsters.

India Smith from Scotland also had a memorable day picking up 3 first prizes in the 15 & Under Musette and Frosini Sections and the Junior Tango as well as second place in the Scottish Traditional 13-15 Years. Other multiple prize winners were **Louise Boomer** from Islandmagee who won the Senior Frosini & Sacred Solos as

well as the Late Starters Higher Intermediate and teamed up with her teacher **Clyde Johnston** to win the Intermediate Duet and **Michael Daly**, (Co Dublin) winning three prizes, the Late Starters Higher Prep, and the Irish & Scottish Traditional Sections.

Double prize winners at the Championships were **Ciara Masterson** from Co Meath in the Senior Recital and Advance Solo Test Piece; **Madison Doherty**, Co Meath, in the Championship Solo 15 & Under and the Advanced Solo Own Choice; **Molly McKenna**, Co Meath, in the Intermediate Solo Test and Own Choice Sections and **Michael Leavey**, Co Meath, in the Higher Elementary Solo Test and Own Choice Sections; **Emma Dickson** from the Scottish Borders in the Senior Polka & Musette Sections; **Darroch Wood & Kyle Anderson**, also from the Borders who won their respective Polka Solo as well as teaming up to win the Intermediate Duet; **Charlotte McKenna**, Co Meath, in the Musette & Frosini 17 & Under Sections; **Anne-Marie Devine**, Strabane, in the Irish Traditional & Jazz Sections; **Jayden Elliott**, Larne, Preliminary Solo and Sacred Solo 12 Years & Under and **Margaret McLaughlin, Glynn**, Late Starters Preliminary Solo & Sacred Sections.

Other competitors from the Republic of Ireland who won their solo sections were, **Ciara Parge**, 9 & Under Championship Solo; **Doireann Smith**, Higher Intermediate Solo Own Choice; **Heather MacKinnon**, Elementary Solo Own Choice; **Micheal MacKinnon**, Preparatory Solo Test Piece; **Roisin Smyth**, Preparatory Solo Own Choice and **Sarah & Ellen mcMenemin**, Co Donegal, who won their respective Irish Traditional Solo Sections as well as teaming up to take second place in the Irish Traditional Duet Section.

There was also success for Larne youngsters **Brody Elliott** in the 7 & Under Championship Solo and **Lucy McNeilly** in the 9 & Under Musette Solo and Scottish competitors **Brian Smith** in the Senior Scottish Traditional Solo and **Sheena Dickson** in the Senior Tango Solo.

In the Duet Sections **Nigel Pasby and Helen Newton** from Berkshire won the Advanced Duet as well as being awarded Gold in the Mozart Section whilst **Evelyn Moore & Clyde Johnston** teamed up to win the Higher Intermediate and Sacred Duets and were also awarded Gold in the Mozart. Laura Bradley and Finn Longmore from Co Cavan won the Higher Preparatory Duet whilst Ellie Arnold and Declan McGarva won the Irish Traditional Duet as well as taking second place in the Accordion and Another Instrument category. This was won by **Susanna Brooking** from Cambridge and **Helen Rich** with Susanna played an Accordina. They so impressed the adjudicators that they were also awarded third Best Overall Performance of the Day.

In the Graded Group Sections it was a clean sweep for the **Castletown Youth Ensembles** winning the Advanced, Intermediate and Elementary Sections whilst **The Eazy Skweezers** won the Irish Traditional and Sacred Group Sections and **East Antrim Sacred Ensemble** won the Sacred March section. The **K&S Senior Ensemble** from Co Meath won the Entertainment Section.

Once again the Orchestral Sections drew the largest audience of the day and they were not disappointed with the musical feast that was served. In the Marching Band Sections **Brunswick Accordion Band** from Co Down won the Senior Own Choice Section and the Sacred March Section as well as the Marching Band Drum Corps section. and were awarded Gold in the Showband Entertainment. **Pride of the Birches Accordion Band** from Co Armagh won the Intermediate Marching Band Test Piece Section as well as being placed second in the Intermediate Own Choice and taking second place in the Drum Corps Section. **Lily of the Valley Accordion Band** from Co Down won the Intermediate Own Choice section and the Intermediate Orchestral March Section as well as taking second prize in the Intermediate Marching Band Test Piece and third prize in the Sacred Marching Band and the Marching Band Drum Corps sections.

The Sacred Orchestra section was won by **East Antrim Seniors Accordion Orchestra** who were also awarded gold for their Showband Entertainment programme as well as winning the Senior March and Club Band Sections and taking first prize in the Orchestral Percussion.

In the graded Orchestra Sections **Castletown Junior Orchestra** from Co Cavan won the Elementary category with their Preliminary Orchestra winning the Preliminary Section. The **Castletown Youth Orchestra** were awarded Gold in the Showband Entertainment as well as being awarded second place in the Orchestral Percussion

The days music making was brought to a conclusion with the Grand Finale in the Causeway Suite when the three marching bands, **Brunswick, Lily of the Valley** and **Pride of the Birches** together with **East Antrim Seniors** formed a Massed Accordion Band with over 60 accordions and put on a great display to the delight of the appreciative audience. It truly was a 'Wall of Sound'!

The Prize Presentation at the Gala Dance that night was a truly memorable and special event. To mark the celebration of the 20 years of the Festival it was decided to showcase the talents of the young solo competitors with one from each of the four countries represented being asked to perform a short programme. **Anne-Marie Devine** was first on for Northern Ireland with **Madison Doherty** representing the Republic of Ireland, this was followed by **Ciaran Gilligan** for England and finally **Clelland Shand** for Scotland. All the young people played

without music and they performed marvellously getting a great reception from the audience. Then just after they had finished, to the delight of the audience there was a special guest appearance by the famous **Brandon McPhee**, this was the icing on the cake of what was a truly special day. Brandon captivated the audience with a sparkling performance which including two encores. Brandon shall be starring in The Jimmy Shand Story at Belfast Grand Opera House on Wednesday 7 March and in a magnificent gesture he presented the organisers with 24 tickets to be allocated to local prize winners. The prizes were jointly presented by **Brandon** and the Mayor of Mid & East Antrim Councillor **Paul Reid**. The Mayor congratulated the organisers on running the Festival for 20 years and presented Clyde Johnston with the Councils Coat of Arms and in recognition of this invited Clyde and his Committee to the Mayors Parlour for a reception.

All in all it was a fabulous day's competition and music-making with plans already afoot for next year's competition which shall be on Saturday 23rd February 2019.

Special thanks are due to the management and staff of the **Belfast Loughshore Hotel Carrickfergus** for providing the excellent facilities and their professionalism and helpfulness throughout the day which contributed greatly to the smooth running of the festival; the **Souvenir Programme Advertisers** for sponsoring the Championships and to the Stage Managers; **Ruth Campbell, Barbara Acheson, Evelyn Moore & Valerie Foster**; Competitions co-ordinator **Mark Johnston**; Ballot Organiser **Derek Preshaw** as well as **Ian Campbell, Bill McCartney & Gary Brennan** who manned the Information Desk and photographer **Andrew Montgomery** of **Churchfield Photography**.

CLYDE JOHNSTON
Organiser

26 February 2018

NORTHERN IRELAND OPEN ACCORDION CHAMPIONSHIPS

RESULTS 24 February 2018

Adjudicators:- Audrey Gillian, Philip Hammond & Sarah McEvoy

Senior Recital

Ciara Masterson 89

Championship Solo 15 & Under

Madison Doherty 90

Lauren Cassidy 88

Championship Solo 13 & Under

Clelland Shand 94

Michael Leavey 90

Molly McKenna 89

Cassie Honan 88

Alicia Carney 87

Laura Masterson 86

Ciaran Gilligan 85

Orla O'Malley 84

Championship Solo 11 & Under

Blythe Shand 88

Aedin Davis 87

Karl Parge 84

Championship Solo 9 & Under

Ciara Parge 86

Championship Solo 7 & Under

Brody Elliott 86

Advanced Solo Test Piece

Ciara Masterson 86

Ciaran Gilligan 85

Advanced Solo Own Choice

Madison Doherty 89

Niamh Markey 84

Hi Intermediate Solo Own Choice

Doireann Smith 85

Tara O'Sullivan 84

Late Starters Hi Intermediate Solo

Louise Boomer 85

Intermediate Solo Test Piece

Molly McKenna 88

Lauren Cassidy 86

Harry Caffrey 84

Intermediate Solo Own Choice

Molly McKenna 87

Lauren Cassidy 85

Lucy Farrelly 84

Amy Lynch 82

Harry Caffrey 82

Hi Elementary Solo Test Piece

Michael Leavey 87

Cassie Honan 86

Laura Masterson 85

Alicia Carney 84

Hi Elementary Solo Own Choice

Michael Leavey 88

Alicia Carney 86

Cassie Honan 84

Laura Masterson 83

Elementary Solo Own Choice

Heather MacKinnon 83

Higher Preparatory Solo Test Piece

Blythe Shand 86

Abigail Mallon 83

Higher Preparatory Solo Own Choice

Blythe Shand 88

Roisin O'Sullivan 86

Aedin Davis 84

Late Starters Hi Preparatory Solo

Michael Daly 82

Preparatory Solo Test Piece

Micheal McKinnon 82

Preparatory Solo Own Choice

Roisin Smyth 87

Gearoid O'Malley 86

Diarmuid O'Malley 85

Ryan Gilsenan 84

Diarmuid Smyth 84

Micheal McKinnon 83

Cormac McKenna 82

Preliminary Solo Own Choice

Jayden Elliott 87

Hanna Finn 86

Lucy McNeilly 84

Jayden Gillen 83

Amelia Allen 83

Ellie Denning 82

Matthew Taylor 80

Late Starters Preliminary Solo

Margaret McLaughlin 84

Senior Polka

Emma Dickson 88

Polka Solo 14 & Under

Darroch Wood 86

Polka Solo 12 & Under

Kyle Anderson 86

Polka Solo 10 & Under

Inver Shand 87

Senior Musette Solo

Emma Dickson 88

Ciara Masterson 86

Louise Boomer 81

Musette Solo 17 & Under

Charlotte McKenna 83

Musette Solo 15 & Under

India Smith 85

Musette Solo 13 & Under

Clelland Shand 87

Laura Masterson 85

Musette Solo 11 & Under

Inver Shand 87

Aedin Davis 84

Musette Solo 9 & Under

Lucy McNeilly	84
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Senior Scottish Traditional Solo

Brian Smith	86
Ellie Arnold	85

Scottish Traditional Solo 13-15 Years

Clelland Shand	91
India Smith	87
Darroch Wood	86

Scottish Traditional Solo 12 & Under

Inver Shand	90
Kyle Anderson	89

Late Starters Scottish Traditional Solo

Michael Daly	80
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Senior Frosini Solo

Louise Boomer	85
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Frosini Solo 17 & Under

Charlotte McKenna	85
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Frosini Solo 15 & Under

India Smith	84
Ciaran Gilligan	82

Jazz Solo

Anne-Marie Devine	82
Matt Murdoch	78

Senior Tango Solo

Anne-Marie Devine	84
Sheena Dickson	84

Junior Tango Solo

India Smith	87
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Senior Irish Traditional Solo

Anne-Marie Devine	84
Sheena Dickson	82

Irish Traditional Solo 13-15 Years

Sarah McMenemin	83
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Irish Traditional 12 & Under

Ellen McMenemin	84
Jason Spence	83

Late Starters Irish Traditional

Michael Daly	76
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Sacred Solo

Louise Boomer	85.5
Evelyn Moore	85

Sacred Solo 12 & Under

Jayden Elliott	84
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Late Starters Sacred Solo

Margaret McLaughlin	83
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Mozart

Evelyn Moore & Clyde Johnston	Gold
Nigel Pasby & Helen Newton	Gold

Advanced Duet

Nigel Pasby & Helen Newton	87
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Hi Intermediate Duet

Evelyn Moore & Clyde Johnston	85
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Intermediate Duet O/C

Kyle Anderson & Darroch Wood	86
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Late Starters Intermediate Duet

Louise Boomer & Clyde Johnston	84
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Hi Elementry Duet O/C

Clelland & Inver Shand	85
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Eimear Lambe & Orla O'Malley	83
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Hi Preparatory Duet O/C

Laura Bradley & Finn Longmore	86
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Sacred Duet

Evelyn Moore & Clyde Johnston	86
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Irish Traditional Duet

Kate McKenna & Niamh Markey	84
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Ellen & Sarah McMenemin	85
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Ellie Arnold & Declan McGarva	86
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Accordion + Another Instrument

Ellie Arnold & Declan McGarva	87
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Susanna Brooking & Helen Rich	90
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Advanced Group

Castletown Youth Ensemble A	87
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Intermediate Group

Castletown Youth Ensemble B	89
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Elementary Group

Castletown Youth Ensemble C	90
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Castletown Junior Ensemble	89
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Scottish Traditional Group

The Sand Family	95
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Irish Traditional Group

The Easy Skweezers	90
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Wallace Hall Accordion Group	89
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Sacred March Group Own Choice

East Antrim Sacred Ensemble	88
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Sacred Group Own Choice

The Easy Skweezers	90
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East Antrim Sacred Ensemble	88
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Entertainment

K & S Senior Ensemble	90
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Elementary Orchestra Own Choice

Castletown Junior Orchestra	89
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Preliminary Orchestra Own Choice

Castletown Preliminary Orchestra	89
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Showband Entertainment Awards

East Antrim Seniors	Gold
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Castletown Youth Orchestra	Gold
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Brunswick Accordion Band	Gold
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Accordion Club Band

East Antrim Seniors Orchestra	89
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Senior Orchestra March

East Antrim Seniors	89
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Intermediate Orchestra March

Lily of the Valley Accordion Band	89
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Sacred Orchestra

East Antrim Seniors	89
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Senior Marching Band OC

Brunswick Accordion Band	90
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Intermediate Marching Band Test

Pride of the Birches Accordion Band	88
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Lily of the Valley Accordion Band	87
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Intermediate Marching Band OC

Lily of the Valley Accordion Band	88
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Pride of the Birches Accordion Band	87
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Sacred Marching Band OC

Brunswick Accordion Band	87
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Pride of the Birches	Accordion Band	86
Lily of the Valley	Accordion Band	85

Marching Band Drum Corp

- 1 Brunswick Accordion Band
- 2 Pride of the Birches Accordion Band
- 3 Lily of the Valley Accordion Band

Orchestral Percussion

- 1 East Antrim Seniors
- 2 Castletown Youth Orchestra

Best Overall Performance

- 1 The Shand Family
2. Clelland Shand
3. Susanna Brooking & Helen Rich