



THE YOUNG SONGWRITER 2018 COMPETITION

Nurturing young songwriters and getting their songs heard

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#SAYS18 #StrengtheningMentalHealth #Community #Songwriting

Finalists are announced and are being judged by our star-studded judging panel including Tom Odell, Guy Chambers & Imelda May

The finalists of the hotly contested Song Academy Young Songwriter (SAYS) 2018 competition have now been revealed. The SAYS18 winners will be announced on the 14th May! All finalists and highly commended entrants will perform live in front of family, friends and the general public at Westfield, London on Sunday 10th June, from 2pm to 5pm and the Young Songwriter 2018 compilation album will be released in June 2018.

This year's panel of award winning judges includes singer songwriters Tom Odell and Imelda May, songwriters & producers Guy Chambers (for Robbie Williams, Tom Jones, Kylie Minogue, & Mark Ronson), Eg White (Adele, Duffy, Take That, Pink), Tim Laws (Gabrielle, Lighthouse Family), Jessica Sharman (for Ward Thomas), Nicky Cox (editor, First News) and Nigel Elderton (Chairman, PRS for Music). A number of the judges will be at Westfield on 10th June to watch their favourites perform live.

This year's competition attracted close to 500 high quality entries from cities across the world, from London, Dublin, Cairo, Helsinki, Johannesburg, Nashville, New York, Reykjavik, Zagreb to Melbourne. 16% of entrants were aged 8-12, 41% aged 13-15 and 43% aged 16-18. Girls were 70% of the entrants.

Analysis of entrants' song themes and lyrics demonstrates that song writing is a hugely valuable outlet for young people to express their feelings and concerns and strengthen mental health. The main themes were: frustrating emotions of being in love (16%), moving on from a relationship after heartbreak or when it's not working (14%), happiness of being in love (12%), anxieties and pressures of life (12%), importance of believing in yourself and being yourself (10%), being empowered in your life and being in control (8%). SAYS18 entrants expressed themselves with such power, imagination and creativity, both lyrically and musically, sharing their dreams, their pain, their hope & hearts with the world.

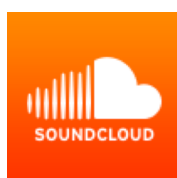
There were several noticeable differences between the age groups with the 8-12 year olds writing more about friendships and being empowered in your life and the 13-18 year olds focusing on the roller coaster emotions of being in love and moving on from destructive relationships. A much higher proportion of the younger age group wrote about mental health themes of anxiety and pressures of growing up in today's society, perhaps showing a need for more support at this younger age.

There was a wide variety of genres across SAYS18 songs, from folk to jazz, soul, rock, punk, reggae & pop. The younger age group wrote across a wider range of genres, with the pop genre as the most popular style. The older age group had a focus on acoustic folk (41%) with jazz/soul/blues and rock being popular styles.

The annual Song Academy Young Songwriter competition has gone from strength to strength since it's launch in 2011 and is now the leading song writing competition for young people aged 8 to 18 across the UK and Ireland with a strong sense of community. It's a springboard for the next generation of creative stars to get noticed by key players in the music industry, build confidence, have their voices heard and shine in the limelight.



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During the SAYS18 competition period, 16.5 million people were reached across the Song Academy social media platforms and website. 19,000 people were engaging with SAYS18 with retweets, posts, comments, email click throughs. During the entry period there were 4,480 listens to the SAYS18 songs.

Tom Odell, singer songwriter said "When I was 13 years old I started writing songs, and over the following years I became more and more obsessed with it. But the thing that always kept me awake at night was how to get them out there for people to hear them. This is why I think The Song Academy Young Songwriter competition is a great way to inspire and help through this process, and it's something I wish had been around when I was starting out."

Guy Chambers, songwriter & producer said "It's a huge pleasure to be a part of this year's judging panel for the Song Academy Young Songwriter 2018. I have always been a supporter and nurturer of young talent, so it will be great to see what this year's competition has to offer. Good luck."

Imelda May, singer songwriter said "I'm very glad to be part of The Song Academy Young Songwriter 2018 judging panel. Good songwriting is the foundation of all good music. This competition is also simply a great way for songwriters to meet other like minded people and I'm happy to encourage anyone to connect and excel in this beautifully expressive art form and cannot wait to hear the songs."

Director of PRS for Music, Myles Keller said "This wonderful competition empowers young songwriters, enabling them to showcase their talent and offering them a 'one of a kind' opportunity to gain crucial feedback from some of the very best British songwriters. In the early stages of a career, this kind of help is like gold dust and really enables industry newcomers to build strong, sustainable careers. Music is integral to our nation's identity and it is crucial that we nurture the next generation of songwriters now to ensure a creative future. PRS for Music is absolutely delighted to support such a positive and exciting competition."

Keep a watch for The Song Academy's spotlight blogs on each of the top ten finalists and hear the latest news on the Young Songwriter 2018 showcase and star guests to be attending via the Song Academy Twitter feed @SongacademyUK.

- Ends -

For further media information, photography, videos, interviews, etc., contact Rowena Atkins, Founder of Song Academy, rowena@songacademy.co.uk 07710 023743.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Who are we? A Song Academy overview

The Song Academy champions young people aged 8-18 and is nurturing the next generation of songwriters & creative leaders.

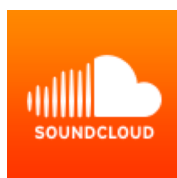
We believe we have a unique concept which focuses on the hearts and minds of young people, giving them the tools and platform to express themselves and have their voices heard. We celebrate their individuality. We unleash their creativity and inspire them with what's possible. We also connect them to a vibrant community of their peers who love writing original songs, as well as exposing their songs to key players in the Music Industry. Overall, we build young people's confidence and self-belief. Our focus is on the love of songwriting rather than the love of fame.

The Song Academy runs after-school sessions, holiday workshops, school workshops, birthday parties and an annual nationwide Young Songwriter competition. As a result of our programmes, we have seen a direct correlation in the increase and advancement of confidence, self-esteem, creativity, motivation, well-being and technical song-writing ability in our members. More information is at <http://www.songacademy.co.uk>.

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