



# THE YOUNG SONGWRITER 2020 COMPETITION

THE PLATFORM FOR YOUNG SONGWRITERS

*Express Yourself & Be Heard*

3rd May 2020

## Top 10 finalists of The Young Songwriter 2020 are revealed!

*Star Judges include Tom Odell, Imelda May, Chris Difford, Miranda Cooper, Emily Phillips & Eg White*

The top 10 finalists of the hotly contested Song Academy Young Songwriter (SAYS) 2020 competition have now been revealed. This year's competition attracted over 700 entries from aspiring young songwriters aged 8-18 across the world. As in previous years, 70% of entrants were girls. Goto [www.songacademy.co.uk/SAYS20](http://www.songacademy.co.uk/SAYS20) to find out!

This year's panel of award winning judges includes Tom Odell, Imelda May, Miranda Cooper, Eg White, Emily Phillips, Sacha Skarbek, Harley Alexander, Paul Adam, Dan Gillespie Sells, Sodajerker and Janet Devlin. They now have an extremely tough job to choose the winners! The Top 3 songs will be announced on the 2nd June and the winners announced on the 20th June! A live Young Songwriter 2020 showcase is planned for Saturday the 17th November at The Tabernacle, Notting Hill, London.

SAYS20 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 was a wide variety of genres across SAYS20 songs, from folk to jazz, soul, rock, punk, reggae & pop.

Founded 11 years ago, Song Academy is going from strength to strength as it provides a refreshing antidote to the fast paced, uncertain, competitive and isolated world that young people are growing up in. It is a force for good, nurturing and empowering young people at a formative time of their life. We believe that our creative outlet, focusing on the creative process of songwriting, not only inspires and develops the next wave of songwriters but provides all young people with a vehicle for self-expression, self-discovery, and overcoming challenges.

One of The Young Songwriter 2020 judges, platinum selling songwriter Emily Phillips listened to all the entries and here's an extract from the full feature on her experience of judging (which is on the Song Academy Blog at [www.songacademy.co.uk](http://www.songacademy.co.uk)).

I have just had the privilege of judging the Young Songwriter 2020 competition. It has been quite an experience to listen to 700+ original songs written by young people in a short space of time. Peoples' reactions to songs vary as we all have our own individual relationship to music, so on that basis, I hope that this process can be understood as a guide rather than a rule.

The values I have been listening out for are: captivating melodies, evocative lyrics, a coherent structure, a catchy chorus, emotive performances, clever use of rhyme, a sense of anticipation, and strong concepts. The chances of all these attributes ending up in one song are incredibly rare, even in the commercial music world, and beyond. I have co-written over 1000 songs commercially so I know from experience how hard it is to write a great song. That said, even if some or any of these aspects are successfully portrayed in a song, it is likely to keep the listener on board. I think it is important to also mention that songs which break all the rules and defy any expectations, can be the biggest hits of all. Therefore, in as much as there are so called "rules, they are also there to be broken.

I urge young people to collaborate on songwriting. Collaboration can be great fun, and you can learn from each other and help edit the best ideas together. Ed O'Brien from RadioHead once said to me, "If music is the greatest of the arts, then we the songwriters are its humble servants". And so, we can only do our very best to try and capture what we consider to be some kind of magic or emotion that we feel must be written. And once we have done that, the next best thing we can hope for is to improve and tweak until that idea is at its best. Then we move on and write another, for it is in the proliferation of art that greatness comes, and with that, joy, hard work and resilience. Success is the ability to fail time and time again with undiminished enthusiasm!



**Rowena Atkins, founder of Song Academy** said "In today's competitive, fast changing & isolating environment, with pressures on mental health, I believe that Song Academy's creative outlet has never been so important."

**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."

**Imelda May**, singer songwriter said "Good songwriting is the foundation of all good music. This competition is 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."

**Naughty Boy**, producer & songwriter, says "Young songwriters are the future of music. A great song will always stand the test of time far beyond our years. I think this competition is important because every songwriter I've worked with was always waiting to be discovered."

**Simon Barber & Brian O'Connor, founders of Sodajerker** says "It was heartening to see each judge devote such a great deal of time and attention to thinking about the qualities of each song, and whatever the outcome, all finalists should be proud to have reached that stage of the competition. We are delighted to play a small role in such a fantastic scheme led by such a generous organisation. The opportunity that it offers young songwriters to be heard by leading figures in the music industries is second to none."

**Azi Eftekhari, Head of Music Partnerships in the UK, YouTube**, says: "It's so important to nurture young songwriters, helping them harness their creative energy, express themselves, and be part of a community. YouTube Music is proud to support the Song Academy Young Songwriter competition and we can't wait to see how these talented songwriters grow through this truly impactful programme."

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

## NOTES TO EDITORS:

### Overview of Song Academy

Founded 11 years ago, Song Academy is the leading platform for young songwriters enabling them to express themselves and be heard. It is a force for good, nurturing and empowering young people at a formative time of their life. As well as generating and developing the next wave of songwriters we provide all young people with a vehicle for self-expression, self-discovery, and overcoming challenges. Our songwriting programmes complement and bring to life, young people's singing, creative writing, performance and instrumental skills.

Song Academy songwriting programmes include songwriting clubs, holiday workshops, school workshops, birthday parties a song feedback service and The Young Songwriter competition. The latest initiative is running online songwriting clubs to encourage cross-border collaboration and develop the creative talents of a vibrant community of young songwriters around the world. We have seen a measurable increase in confidence, self-esteem, creativity, literacy, motivation, well-being and technical songwriting ability from our members.

**Website:** [www.songacademy.co.uk](http://www.songacademy.co.uk)

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