

Search for North East talent

Date of issue 18th February 2008
Publication number LSC0708 – 164a
Embargo until For immediate release

Performing in front of a full house in the Sage Gateshead's main concert hall has inspired young North East entertainers to seek even greater musical challenges.

Aidan Jaye and Emilie Kate Fleming have each used their appearance at last year's Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North East's Celebration of Learning and Skills (CoLaS) Awards as a career stepping stone.

With a recording contract signed, Aidan 17 and from Cleadon, is now writing and recording his first album with top producers, while Emilie, 16 and from Boldon Colliery, is weighing up options including becoming a jazz singer or a West End performer.

Both said their opportunity at the CoLaS had been inspirational and now the search is on for more young stars to perform at this year's event.

Leaving no stone unturned, the LSC North East will again be staging the region's biggest ever talent contest for groups or individuals. Competitors will be asked to record a one minute audition film clip of the act they would like to perform at the glittering Oscar style event and submit it by 12th April.

From the initial group of hopefuls, a short list of talent will be drawn up to go head-to-head in live auditions at Newcastle College Performance Academy where an expert panel drawn from local musical circles will determine the winners.

They will get a prize that money just can't buy – the chance to perform live on stage at the iconic Sage Gateshead in front of a potential audience of 1,200 guests on 20 June 2008, working alongside TV star Kirsty Gallacher and other professionals.

The search is on for:

- Solo performers – singers or musicians.
- Duets or groups whether a string quartet or the next Girls Aloud?
- Dancers - urban or tap, ballet or ballroom.
- Off the wall - anything from jugglers to comedians, magicians to acrobats.
- World music/dance - Bhangra or Bollywood, country and western or Celtic.
- Grand opening and finale - amazing acts to open and close the show.

The CoLaS Awards, now in their third year, will be held at the Sage Gateshead on 20th June 2008. The awards highlight the often unrecognised achievements of individuals and employers who work 'behind-the-scenes' for their own personal development or to improve the skills of others.

Chris Roberts, regional director, LSC North East, said: "Through this competition we are offering up and coming stars in the North East the chance of a lifetime: to perform live at one of the largest and most glamorous events staged in the region. This is a fantastic opportunity for them to showcase their talents in front of more than 1,000 people and perform on one of the most iconic and spectacular stages in the country.

“The Celebration of Learning and Skills Awards are designed to recognise and reward achievement in the work place. It seems very fitting that people from the world of art and music should be able to share the spotlight.”

Emilie said: “I really enjoyed the whole event. I met fantastic new people, including Kirsty Gallacher, which made it such an incredible experience. Singing and performing is everything to me and hopefully it will be my career. I am currently preparing for grade eight classical and music theatre and also for auditions at conservatoires and music colleges.”

Aidan added: “The celebration event really helped me to understand what I really wanted to do. I was considering other options as well as singing but the buzz of performing in hall one shoved me firmly in this direction. Things have gone really well for me since then.”

Those wanting to enter the auditions or nominate anyone should upload their performance film at website www.lsc.gov.uk/colas08 or send it to The Audition, 87 Jesmond Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1NH. Include your name, age, category entered, contact address and phone number. The closing date for entries is 12th April.

ENDS

Editor’s note:

Picture captions: Aidan and Emilie Kate performing at the CoLaS event at the Sage, Gateshead.

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for planning and funding high-quality vocational education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world-class standards. Our vision is that by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. Established in 2001, we work nationally, regionally and locally from a network of offices across the country.

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