

Piping and Drumming Qualifications Board



On Saturday 30 November and Sunday 1 December members of the National Youth Pipe Band of Scotland attended the National Piping Centre in McPhater Street Glasgow to sit piping and drumming examinations. These examinations offered by the PDQB in partnership with the SQA covered both Music Theory and Performance elements.

These examinations required the students to prepare a range of musical material from which they were assessed and they were also tested on their sight reading, monotones and ability to play a range of exercises. The Theory examinations, which ranged from one

hour to four hours in length, dependent on the different levels within the Scottish Qualifications Framework they were sitting, also provided a new challenge to many of the students. From written notation to instrument maintenance to the essential elements of sound, the pipers and drummers were put through their paces.



These young pipers and drummers are highly skilled musicians, many of whom have enjoyed competitive success and participated in a number of high profile concerts. This was however an altogether different type of test for them requiring them to cover a range of subjects they may have had little or no knowledge of prior to embarking on the course of study and preparations.

One of the PDQB assessors for the examinations was NPC piping instructor Wilson Brown who said, “ It was great to see so many of these talented musicians sitting the examinations and hopefully this will encourage other young musicians to see the benefits of preparing and studying for the examinations. From a piping perspective, it provides the young pipers an opportunity to learn different types of piobaireachd and also some of the more technical aspects including phrase construction, staff notation and canntaireachd. Without these examinations young pipers may not have the opportunity to further their knowledge in these important areas. Many thanks to the Director of the band, Alisdair McLaren for encouraging and supporting the band members to sit the examinations, highlighting the benefits to both their playing and musical knowledge”

If anyone is interested in studying for or sitting any of the PDQB examinations contact the National Piping Centre or go to the pdqb.org website for more details.

Some of the pipers taking part in examinations from left to right: Cameron MacPhail, Kyle Cameron, Andrew McCrindle and Thomas Young

