

# Birmingham Music Club gives scholarships to eight students

The Birmingham Music Club doubled the award money for its Scholarship Competition this year, recently doling out nearly \$10,000 to eight music students. The competition, which took place March 11, yielded winners in four categories — voice, piano, instrumental and organ — with Samford University students coming away with the most prizes. First-place winners each came away with \$1,500. Runners-up won \$1,000 each.

Vocalist Jessica Johnsey (University of Montevallo), pianist Jieun Jun (Enterprise High School) and clarinetist Melissa Garner (University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa) were the first-place winners. Runners-up were vocalist Jonathan Lett (University of Montevallo), pianists Dawson Hull (Samford University) and Young Bin Song (Vestavia Hills High School), harpist Kathryn Ann Hoppe (Samford University) and organist Joanna Vaughan (Samford University).

Garner netted an additional \$1,000 as the best overall performer, and vocalist Drew Pournelle (Samford University) received an honorable mention. There was no first-place winner in the organ category. Winners will perform April 1 at the Birmingham Music Club's annual luncheon.

## Phillips advances

The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions are the cream of all singing contests, at least on the opera side. Last Sunday in New York, Alabamian Susanna Phillips impressed the Met's judges, becoming one of nine finalists in the prestigious competition.

Today, she'll vie for one of the top spots, which in recent years have been limited to five. Winners will be announced after the Grand Finals concert, which starts at 3 p.m. They'll receive \$15,000 each and a chance to join the Met apprentice pro-



**Michael Huebner**

gram.

## Hultgren biennial

Another contest — this one for cello compositions — gets under way in May. But unlike judge-driven competitions, audiences will decide who wins the 2005 Hultgren Solo Cello Works Biennial, following the review panel's picks, of course. Works for cello alone or cello with electronics by living composers are eligible for prizes from \$500 to \$1,000. Finals will be held at concerts in Birmingham, Atlanta and Tuscaloosa. Deadline for applications is May 15. For fees, entry rules and other information, visit [www.artmusic.org](http://www.artmusic.org).

## New music, old music

Few performers are as devoted to new music as **Paul Bowman**. The German guitarist last came through town two years ago plucking out the modern sounds of 20th-century avant-gardists Charles Wuorinen and Elliott Carter. At his concert Monday at Samford's Wright Recital Hall, Birmingham composers were the focus of Bowman's virtuosity.

At the Birmingham Art Music Alliance event, Charles Norman Mason's stylish "Mirrors, Stones and Cotton" segued seamlessly between taped electronic sonorities and the live instrument. The out-of-phase rhythms and delightfully disorienting microtones in Monroe Golden's "Leaven," also for guitar and

electronics, created a kind of sonic cobweb.

Dorothy Hindman's "Needlepoint" was a pastiche of textures — strings snapping percussively against the fingerboard one moment, more lyrical but dissonant figures the next. Bowman held its patchwork design together nicely. Encores, music by Bach and Albeniz, showed Bowman's prowess in more conventional music.

Backing up three centuries, **Crispin Steele-Perkins** brought eight trumpets from England to Trinity United Methodist Church on Tuesday. Expounding on his instrument's evolution from long, straight and valveless to the compact tangle of tubing of a modern instrument, Steele-Perkins told of Herodotus' 5th-century B.C. comparison of trumpet sounds to "the bray of an ass" and played Handel's "Water Music" on a garden hose.

Entertainment value aside, Steele-Perkins proved a virtuoso on every instrument, but especially so in works from the 17th and 18th centuries. Trumpets with keys, slides and bored holes took turns in works by Hummel, Handel, Clarke and others. In Stradella's "Trumpet Sonata" the squatty "pocket" cornet came in handy; in Bishop's "Air with Variations," it was the keyed baroque trumpet. He ended with music by John Stanley, in which he moved seamlessly from valves to keys and back to valves.

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