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Five fab finalists for Gloucestershire Young Musician of the Year 2020

Clockwise from top left: Darcy Beck, 18, from Prestbury; Edwin Ward, 16, from Cirencester; Souny Park, 15, from Cheltenham; Bethany Loader, 18, from Gloucester; Aaron Le Maistre, 17, from Cheltenham,

FIVE fantastic students, ranging in age from 15-18, have made it through to the finals of the Gloucestershire Young Musician of the Year 2020.

They include Royal Birmingham Youth Conservatoire student percussionist Darcy Beck, 18, who is on her gap year after attending Cheltenham Ladies College, and fellow Ladies College student cellist Souny Park, who at 15, is the youngest finalist for 2020.

Multi-talented musician Aaron Le Maistre, from Gloucester's Sir Thomas Rich's School has returned as a competition candidate this year and won his place in the finals on piano. Last year the 17-year-old from Cheltenham, entered with two instruments, including his violin.

Cirencester pianist Edwin Ward, 16, from Pate's Grammar School, has won through to the finals on his first attempt as has Gloucester-based Bethany Loader, 18, who is a student at the city's Denmark Road High School.

Adjudicating the first round was Professor Derek Aviss, former executive director of Trinity Laban and ex-principal of Trinity College. Based in the county, he is president of the Gloucestershire Academy of Music, which hosted the auditions.

He will chair the judging panel at the finals concert on March 3 at 7pm in Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham.

At the end of the evening, Professor Aviss will announce the Young Musician 2020 winner, who will receive a cash prize of £500, the Hewitt-Jones Trophy and will be given the opportunity to perform a

recital at the Cheltenham Music Festival, as well as two concerto performances with Gloucestershire Symphony Orchestra and Gloucestershire Youth Orchestra.

The runners-up will receive cash prizes of £50 each and there will also be an Audience Prize of £200 sponsored by the Carducci Trust - the charitable trust initiated by the prestigious Carducci String Quartet based in Gloucestershire.

Sponsors are Brimpsfield Music Society, Make Music Gloucestershire, Cheltenham Festivals and Ann Heron, mother of 2016 winner Adam Heron.

Tickets are £15 for adults and free for under-18s. Book in advance by ringing the Cheltenham Trust Box Office on 0844 576 2210; email boxoffice@cheltenhamtrust.org.uk; book online via https://www.cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk/ or on the door.