



Oct 03, 2014 00:00 BST

Stand-up and make some NOISE!

Students and graduates from Northumbria University's Performing Arts courses are enjoying national recognition after being shortlisted in two prestigious competitions.

Graduate Tom Burford was selected as a winning artist in the national NOISE Festival, a creative talent showcase that launched in the House of Commons on 9 September. Meanwhile, final year student, Lauren Pattison secured third place in the national finals of Funny Women – a female-only stand-up competition that helped launch the careers of Sarah Millican and Andi Osho.

Tom, 23 from Cumbria, graduated from Performance in 2013 and currently

works as a Music HLTA (Higher Learning Teaching Assistant). He also works part time as a Music Production Facilitator at Contact Theatre in Manchester. Tom has been selected as one of only 75 artists from over 5,000 applicants to feature in the NOISE Festival programme. The judging panel included legendary music producer, Brian Eno, renowned architect, Sir Nicholas Grimshaw and Thris Tian of Boiler Room TV – who personally selected Tom as one of five winning artists in the Underground Music category. Thris described Tom's work as: "Really good in vogue instrumental dance music that could easily be played on the dance floor as is."

Tom said: "I entered NOISE as it looked like a great platform to get work seen and heard by professionals. Being selected by Thris Tian was confirmation for me that I must be doing something right. I know I've got so much more to learn and still feel like I'm developing my sound and approach to music production, so it was nice to see someone at the top of their game hearing my stuff and appreciating my sound when there are so many talented musicians and producers out there."

"Studying Performance at Northumbria gave me the opportunity to experiment with and pursue new creative projects, be it music, theatre or other creative avenues. It definitely encouraged me to get involved in Newcastle's wider creative scene and gave me the confidence to do the same when I moved to Manchester. It was a very supportive environment and the lecturers would often attend any external events that the students were involved with."

One student currently in the midst of her Northumbria Performance degree is Lauren Pattison. Lauren, 20 from Newcastle is celebrating after securing 3rd place in Funny Women and is currently carving out a career in comedy having performed several gigs at legendary venue, The Stand.

Lauren said: "I really didn't expect to place in the Funny Women competition. I was so nervous when I stepped onto the stage but everyone keeps telling me that I looked really relaxed. I think that's where studying drama and performance has helped – I have learnt how to hide the nerves from the audience!"

"I first got involved in stand-up at Live Theatre in Newcastle when I was 15. They began running young people's stand-up courses and we were mentored by local comedian, John Scott. Gaining stand-up experience at Live, and

building my confidence at university really helped prepare me for professional gigs and competitions.

Lauren added: “I actually researched a number of competitions before entering and Funny Women really stood out as so many others seemed to be male-dominated. I knew that Sarah Millican had made a name for herself with them and I really admire the way she is changing the way people think about female comedians. I think it’s great to have a national initiative that promotes female comedians and it’s definitely the most supportive competition that I have entered.”

Steve Gilroy, Director of Performing Arts Programmes, Northumbria University, and Associate Director at Live Theatre said: “It’s great to see Lauren and Tom making a name for themselves on the national stage. We actively encourage our performing arts students to get involved with professional events during their study, and our partnerships with organisations such as Live Theatre and Northern Stage provide direct links to the arts industry. I believe that this support, our employment focused modules and the drive and enthusiasm of our students combine to create confident graduates who go on to launch exciting and successful careers.”

To find out where Lauren will be performing next, follow her on Twitter - @lauren pattison. To find out more about Tom Burford and NOISE Festival visit www.NOISEfestival.com/Festival/2014

Anyone interested in studying Performing Arts at Northumbria University, Newcastle can sign up for its open day on 25 October by visiting www.northumbria.ac.uk/openday.

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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