Luna Simpson wins 29th Sennheiser LIPA Scholarship



L-R: Jon Thornton, Ben Harrison, Luna Simpson, Tim Sherratt

This year marks nearly three decades of collaboration between prestigious higher education institute, The Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA), and Sennheiser. The global audio specialist works in partnership with the college to run the Sennheiser Student Scholarship programme, offering its vast audio expertise and resources to students. The 2024 winner of the programme is the very talented Luna Simpson, a first-year student of the BA (Hons) Sound Technology course. As budding 18-year-old audio engineer with a deep passion for music and sound from a very young age, Simpson made a profound impression on the panels of judges, which included Tim Sherratt, Strategy Manager at Sennheiser, and renowned Theatre Sound Designer, Ben Harrison.

Classically trained in the flute since the age of six, Simpson now also plays the guitar, piano and drums. Her first job was at a local music venue when she was just 12 years old, working her way up to become Lead Audio Engineer by the time she was 15.

“My passion for music and sound led to me wanting to understand how it is created and used in different mediums,” she explains. “Alongside my A-Level studies in Sound Technology, Drama and Media, the hands-on experience of stage setup, mixing, and artist relations at the live music venue, The Drawingroom, hugely

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increased my technical ability. Before leaving to join LIPA, I taught the next generation of audio engineers at The Drawing Room and continue to provide mentorship to this day."

Simpson has "loved every moment" at LIPA, and the BA (Hons) Sound Technology course has already provided her with new opportunities and experiences, such as its masterclasses. "The 24/7 studio access LIPA provides has been something I've been keen to take advantage of, and I am frequently found in the studio in the early hours of the morning," she smiles.

"I absolutely see myself pursuing a career in this industry and have a particular interest in working as a studio mixing, mastering, and recording engineer. Having now experienced both live and studio settings, I feel that studio work is a great fit for my skill set and knowledge, and that it will give me huge personal fulfilment," she adds.

Joined by Harrison, an experienced Sound Designer best known for his work on West End productions and large-scale touring musical productions, Sherratt had the difficult task of selecting just one student out of the incredible pool of talent LIPA is renowned for.

"Every year, we're inundated with applications for the Scholarship and, every single time, we are left in awe of the quality of their work – it's unbelievable how talented the students are," Sherratt exclaims. "We selected Luna as the deserving winner of the 2024 Sennheiser Student Scholarship programme as she shows a profound passion and dedication to music and sound. We definitely want to nurture this and help her succeed in every way we can!"

Harrison agrees and adds: "This is my third year working with Tim on the wonderful task of selecting top students for Sennheiser's programme at LIPA, and it's always a pleasure meeting the students and discussing their goals and aspirations. Out of many great entries, we chose Luna's application because we felt that music was truly her vocation, one that she not only continues to hone for her own benefit, but also through her work at The Drawing Room, where she supports and mentors aspiring audio engineers."

As part of the process, Sherratt and Harrison prepared a creative task that was given to the short-listed candidates, who had three weeks to complete it. This year's task included creating a radio advert for one of Sennheiser audio solutions, inspired by the music of Daft Punk. "We wanted to see the students utilising AI in the creative and post-production process, as well as evidence of some source material that was captured live," explains Sherratt. "Whilst Luna emerged as the winner, we also want to commend the work of another student – Zoe Grabouski – who also produced excellent work and was the runner-up."

"Winning the Sennheiser scholarship means a lot to me; it's invaluable in the pursuit of my career, particularly with the association with the brand's international

network, access to events and the in-depth understanding I will gain of Sennheiser products," Simpson notes. "The scholarship also gives me financial freedom, both during and after my time at LIPA, so I can pursue projects that could provide experience and network opportunities, rather than solely financial benefit."

"Once again, the LIPA students didn't fail to impress the Sennheiser judges. The quality of their applications for the Scholarship programme was outstanding," concludes Jon Thornton, LIPA's Head of Sound Technology. "We are thrilled for Luna that she's received the award this year, and all the opportunities this will bring to her time at LIPA and beyond."

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