



The New Faces of the Music Business announced last night at the AIB Blastbeat Final 17th May 2004

Over the last year, Transition Year students in 18 schools around the country have been competing for a place in the National Final of the AIB Blastbeat Challenge. The final took place last night, Sunday 16th May, in the Helix Theatre, Dublin, where Silence Jakk, from Cork were crowned the winning Band and Phonic TY from St Columbas secondary school in Stranorlar, County Donegal was named as the winning Mini Music Company. The Top Mini Music Company will win €5,000 and the winning band will receive an independent recording contract and a tour of Ireland with the Blast organization.

The day kicked off with a special Blast gig featuring 9 of the runners up, two of these bands Emesis and Illiad were chosen by public voting to go forward to the national final that night. The top 10 mini music companies exhibited their work of the last year in the Foyer of the Helix for the afternoon. Compered by Rick O'Shea of 2FM, the final 10 bands played to a crowd of over 800 supporters and invited guests, with the winner being chosen by a panel of industry professionals including Steve Brown (Record Producer), Brian Bradley (from MCD) and Ronan Fitzgerald (from Hotpress).

AIB Blastbeat is an intriguing business and music challenge where students are involved in running a Mini Music Company (M.M.C.) and organising a battle of the bands competition in their school. It is the story of true teenage endeavors; how they set up their music companies; how they overcame all the problems involved in a new business start up: how they developed their marketing strategies and business plans; how they targeted their success. This is the story of how teenagers around the country took on a major business challenge and made it work.

Angela Drum, Marketing Manager, AIB Youth Strategy, said: "AIB are delighted to be associated with this programme which supports and encourages young entrepreneurs and new music talent. Schools involved in the Challenge worked really hard on the project during the year and we were delighted to award Phonic TY as the winning Mini Music Company and Silence Jakks as the Best band on the night".

Robert Stephenson, creator of the programme and Managing Director of Blast Educational Arts Trust Ltd that managed the project said "This is one of the most challenging programmes and events that I have been involved in. I am very driven and rewarded by working with and bearing witness to, the fantastic efforts of so many young people and the dedication shown by many teachers. None of this would have been possible without the sponsorship principally of AIB and our associate sponsors Reads (printing), Esat BT, IMRO and Music Maker. It is great to see Irish Business getting involved in funding educational programmes of this nature. I see this as a model for the future of an important part and way forward for our education system".

See www.aibblastbeat.com to access all the relevant information and to follow the progress and activities of the challenge.

Further information is available on www.aibblastbeat.com

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