



MEDIA RELEASE The 2008 PMZ Nick Thomas Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement

**A young female singer with a voice "guaranteed to give you goosebumps" has been crowned the winner of the 2008 PMZ Nick Thomas Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement.**

Minutes before being pronounced the winner, 18 year old Ellie Kellman had moved the audience to tears with a powerful performance at the event held to honour the life of a talented musician who died suddenly a few years ago.

Seconds later Ellie Kellman was in tears herself when she was finally handed the Award:

**"It was quite an overwhelming experience and an utter privilege to win this award because of what it stands for and who it's in memory of. Having all of Nick Thomas's family there really brought home to me how important it is. It means so much to me."**

The PMZ Nick Thomas Memorial Award for Outstanding Achievement was first created last year to commemorate the life of aspiring rapper and DJ, Nick Thomas, who died from an undiagnosed heart condition called SADS (Sudden Adult Death Syndrome). At the time of his death, Nick's family donated money to Plymouth Music Zone to ensure other young people had the chances they deserved through music.

Plymouth Music Zone's Development Director, Debbie Geraghty, says:

**"All the finalists should be hugely proud. There are so many outstanding young people that we work with and it was an incredibly difficult choice to narrow it down. For us though, The PMZ Nick Thomas Memorial Award represents the powerful musical journey Nick wanted to continue – a journey we hope will now live on in the hearts and minds of all the winners honoured in his name."**

The 2008 winner of the award was chosen from 5 Finalists who were picked not just for their passion and skill with music but for the way they have inspired and helped other young people and PMZ. Nick's family attended the evening and his mother Jenny presented the award.

Nick's mother, Jenny Thomas, says her family feels very proud to have Nick remembered in this way: **"Anyone who knew Nick knew him as a charismatic, energetic and positive person. He always looked for the solution to the problem instead of simply giving into it. What's amazing is that you can see that music is really a part of the people who win this award, like it was a part of Nick..."**

The Nick Thomas Memorial Evening was held at Plymouth Music Zone on Fri 11<sup>th</sup> July at 6pm-7pm.

**ENDS**

**See below for Notes to Editors**

**Plymouth Music Zone Ltd**

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### Notes to Editors:

For more information on the condition SADS please see [www.c-r-y.org.uk](http://www.c-r-y.org.uk)

**2008 AWARD WINNER – Ellie Kellman, 18** was described on the evening as the most naturally talented musician Plymouth Music Zone has ever worked with.

### **AWARD FINALISTS - attached photo, left to right**

Ellie Kellman, 18, Sam Doel, 14, Michael Gomes, 19, Josie McDonald, 13,

The 5<sup>th</sup> finalist, Jamie Rowland, 17, was unable to attend the event and made a video message in his absence.

### **THE AWARD**

The *PMZ Nick Thomas Memorial Award* attempts to recognise the outstanding achievement of a young person who has excelled at Plymouth Music Zone by using music to make a difference to their own and to other young people's lives. The winner of this award is someone who is dedicated and passionate about music and PMZ. The person must also demonstrate a desire to value music as a vehicle to not only empower themselves but to inspire people around them. However, it is not strictly about musical skill and achievement - and not defined by set criteria. The winner needs to be someone who embodies the spirit of being passionate about music and using it as the powerful force that it can be. And it needs to be someone who has had a recognisable impact on PMZ and the people around them.

### **PRIZES**

The actual main *PMZ NICK THOMAS MEMORIAL AWARD* was commissioned from local sculptor, Amanda Bluglass, in collaboration with Nick Thomas's family. The resulting piece is a perpetual award that will be displayed all year round at PMZ. Every year the name of the new winner will be added. This year's winner will receive an individual trophy especially designed by Katie Lake, a metalcraft artist from Frameworks.

**All 5 finalists receive a framed Certificate of Achievement. In addition, the 2008 Finalists will be invited to bring together their talents to create a unique piece of music to be performed at next year's award ceremony.**

Plymouth Music Zone hopes to extend the award ceremony in years to come to fully recognise the breadth and depth of the wonderful work being done by all the young people we work with.

- **Plymouth Music Zone** is a dynamic community music organisation providing high quality opportunities for young people and training for adults. We passionately believe in the power of music to make a positive difference to people's lives. We achieve this by working with highly skilled Music Leaders who can respond to the diverse needs of young people and deliver practical music workshops that are vibrant, engaging, inspiring and fun.

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