

Draft News Release

15 June 2017

## **LEADING SCOTS EDUCATIONIST AMBASSADOR SEEKS PERFECT HARMONY**

### **Keir Bloomer to spearhead campaign to establish St Mary's Music School as a centre for youth music for pupils from throughout Scotland**

Leading Scots educationist Keir Bloomer has become an official ambassador for the Perfect Harmony campaign, which calls on upon everyone who cares about the nation's educational and cultural future to support the move of Scotland's national music school to the Old Royal High School on Calton Hill, Edinburgh.

Mr Bloomer will help lead the campaign to drive forward the Royal High School Preservation Trust's proposal - supported by one of the largest philanthropic arts gifts to the nation - to conserve and restore the iconic Thomas Hamilton building as the new home of St Mary's Music School, with a state-of-the-art public concert hall and public garden, taking the campaign message specifically to the education sector.

One of the authors of Scotland's 'A Curriculum for Excellence', he takes on the role as ambassador to help establish the school as a centre of youth music in the Capital and significantly broaden and enhance access to music and music education for young people from throughout Scotland.

In one of the first acts in his new role, Mr Bloomer will speak at the Perfect Harmony musical rally on the evening of 22 June at the Canongate Kirk in the Royal Mile. The event which is open to the public will feature music from the pupils of St Mary's Music School and seeks to garner public support for the proposed move for the school.

Commenting on his new appointment, Keir Bloomer said:

"I am proud to become associated with the Perfect Harmony campaign as Scotland's national music school is a perfect fit for the former Royal High School building. Both are Scottish icons and the move will allow St Mary's Music School to grow further as a centre of excellence for music and academic achievement in Scotland.

"The proposed conservation and restoration of the iconic Thomas Hamilton building as the new home for the school, with a state-of-the-art public concert hall and public garden, is backed by Dunard Fund in what is one of the biggest philanthropic gift to Scotland's education and heritage sectors.

"How can we as a nation possibly turn down such an incredible gift."

Keir Bloomer is an independent education consultant. As a member of the review group which wrote "A Curriculum for Excellence" (Scotland's national curriculum), he has been closely involved with curriculum reform and recently chaired the Higher Order Skills Excellence Group. He now undertakes curriculum and professional development work with the Scottish Government, local authorities, national agencies and schools.

He is also Chair of the Scottish Book Trust, Chair of the Tapestry Partnership (a professional development organisation for teachers), Chair of the Commission on School Reform and Vice-convenor of Children in Scotland. He was Director of Education and later Chief Executive of Clackmannanshire Council, a post from which he retired in May 2007 and until recently Chair of the Court of Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

The project, which has planning permission but is currently unable to proceed because of a rival hotel bid, will enable St Mary's Music School to grow its number of pupils from 80 to 120 of Scotland's most promising young musicians, while extending its existing outreach programmes, masterclasses and workshops to more than 300 children from throughout the country.

The new 280-seat concert hall will ease the undersupply of performance space in Edinburgh and be capable of staging over 100 public performances a year, attracting audiences of over 20,000 annually and contributing approximately £110m to the Edinburgh economy over the next 30 years.

The capital project is estimated to generate at least £22.6 million for Edinburgh with the ongoing contribution to the city's economy at around £1.6 million per year.

More information about the Canongate Rally can be found at [www.rhspt.org](http://www.rhspt.org).

**Notes to Editor:**

[www.rhspt.org](http://www.rhspt.org)   [www.facebook.com/perfectharmonyRHSPT](https://www.facebook.com/perfectharmonyRHSPT)   @rhspt

The Perfect Harmony campaign urges people throughout Scotland to show their support by writing to their MSP, MP or local councillor (if in Edinburgh), joining the facebook community and getting involved on twitter. Campaign t-shirts are available via the website, which has been set up to provide information about the campaign and supporters are encouraged to send in photos of themselves in Perfect Harmony t-shirts.

- The Royal High School Preservation Trust was established in April 2015 with five key aims for the development of the former royal High School:
  1. Conservation of the main building
  2. Protection of the setting of the site
  3. An economically sustainable use
  4. A culturally suitable use
  5. A substantially public use.
- The RHSPT is registered as a Scottish Charity and regulated by and compliant with OSCR
- The RHSPT board includes William Gray Muir (Chairman), Richard Austin, Ray Entwistle, Carol Colburn Grigor, Mike Thorne and Colin Liddell.

For further information, please call Elizabeth Lambley, or Felicity MacFarlane, Indigo, 0131 554 1230