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PERFECT HARMONY CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO MOVE SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL MUSIC SCHOOL TO OLD ROYAL HIGH

Two of Scotland's national treasures are coming together in perfect harmony with a new campaign launched today (Monday, May 1, 2017).

The *Perfect Harmony* campaign calls upon everyone in Scotland who cares about the nation's cultural and educational future to support the move of Scotland's national music school to the Old Royal High School on Calton Hill, Edinburgh.

Supported by one of the largest philanthropic arts gifts to the nation, the proposed conservation and restoration of 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, is backed by Dunard Fund.

Managed through The Royal High School Preservation Trust, Dunard's exceptional gift to the nation will help protect Edinburgh's UNESCO World Heritage Site status and conserve the integrity of the neo-classical building that gave the capital the moniker, the Athens of the North.

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 position itself as a centre of youth music in the capital and significantly broaden and enhance access to music and musical education for young people throughout Scotland.

It will allow the 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.

The campaign launched today 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.

William Gray Muir, Chairman of The Royal High School Preservation Trust, said:

"This is an unprecedented opportunity to protect our heritage and support Scotland's cultural future, made possible by one of the most magnanimous charitable gifts that Scotland has ever received.

"Making the Old Royal High the new home for Scotland's national music school is the only viable scheme that sits in perfect harmony with the aspiration and original purpose of the Thomas Hamilton building. Our project will preserve and restore the building without compromising its classical beauty, while enhancing public access through the provision of a splendid concert hall and public garden.

“There is also a very tangible economic upside to our proposal that will bring direct financial benefit to the city. A report by independent experts found that moving St Mary’s Music School would contribute approximately £110m to the Edinburgh economy over the next 30 years. In addition, the capital project is estimated to generate at least £22.6m for Edinburgh with the ongoing contribution to the city’s economy at around £1.6m per year.”

Dr Kenneth Taylor, Headteacher of St Mary’s Music School, added:

“Scotland’s national music school exists to provide a centre of excellence for musically gifted youngsters from across Scotland, regardless of their financial circumstances. Our school provides the next generation of musicians and world-renowned performance artists across all fields of music from classical to jazz and traditional.

“The opportunity to move to the Old Royal High is too good to miss. It provides us with the rehearsal space we need coupled with an exciting performance space, which both in turn will allow us to develop our musical partnerships and extend our outreach programmes. It also provides the perfect stage for further international recognition for the performing arts in Scotland and enhances our credentials as a destination for cultural education and tourism.”

The Perfect Harmony campaign will run until a final decision is made on the future of the rival hotel development, which has already been refused planning permission by the City of Edinburgh Council. The developers now have two sets of plans on the table, the most recent of which received over 3,100 objections when made public earlier this year.

William Gray Muir commented:

“The Perfect Harmony campaign builds on the public support for these two national treasures to come together and to take advantage of the incredible generosity of Dunard Fund, which has agreed to gift the funds needed to renovate and conserve the Old Royal High School for the nation.

“We want everyone to come together in a chorus of perfect harmony.”

Notes to Editor:

www.rhspt.org www.facebook.com/perfectharmonyRHSPT @rhspt

- Economic figures were provided by BOP Consulting following its report published June 2016.
- 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