

OPENING CONCERT HELD AT NEW MUSIC SCHOOL

Gresham's School's Senior and Prep School children, together with its quartet-in-residence, the Albion Quartet, delighted the first audience to attend a concert at the Britten Building, the school's new music school and sixth form centre.



Benefactors, acousticians, surveyors, engineers and architects came together to celebrate their creation where they enjoyed a full programme of music featuring the school's choir 'Schola Cantorum', musicians from the Prep and Senior School and the Albion Quartet in the new Fishmongers Recital Hall. The Fishmongers Recital Hall features a splendid Steinway piano, hand selected from the home of Steinway & Sons in Hamburg. Named after Old Greshamian, (former pupil), composer Benjamin Britten, The Britten Building, is a culmination of a £6.5 million, five year project to improve the musical provision at Gresham's and is the most significant

addition to the school in twenty years.

The Britten Building has replaced the school's existing music teaching areas and has provided modern and comfortable practice and performance spaces including the 140-seat Fishmongers Recital Hall. Pupils will also benefit from the provision of an industry standard recording studio, seminar and teaching rooms and social spaces including a café. The café is dominated by a stern piece, kindly donated by the Fishmongers' Company and features their coat of arms. Built in 1773, the stern fronted a barge on the River Thames until 1856.

Fittingly, Schola Cantorum performed 'A Hymn to the Virgin' which Benjamin Britten composed while he recuperated from illness in the sick bay at Gresham's in July 1930, aged just 16. It is still one of his most frequently performed choral works.

In a thrilling finale, Gresham's Chapel Choir, accompanied by renowned violinist, Tamsin Waley-Cohen performed 'A Prophecy of Dawn', an anthem written for the event by choral composer, Bob Chilcott.

Gresham's School Headmaster, Douglas Robb, said: "The creation of the Britten Building demonstrates Gresham's commitment to providing the best, state of the art facilities for its pupils. The School has a famously strong musical heritage and this fantastic new building will ensure that music continues to be at the very heart of school life. The opening concert was a truly memorable occasion that marked an exciting new era for music at Gresham's."

