



Benjamin Britten centenary celebrations come to an end in Holt

Sophie Wyllie sophie.wyllie@archant.co.uk

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Favourite school dinners of Benjamin Britten were on the menu this weekend for a celebratory dinner to mark the centenary of the composer's birth.

The event at Gresham's School in Holt last night was one of four this weekend to remember the Lowestoft-born musician who attended the Norfolk school between 1928-1930.

His birthday was November 22 and last night the North Norfolk Chorale sang two Britten classics in the Auden Theatre, also at Gresham's.

The concert was introduced by former ITN political correspondent Michael Brunson, from nearby Letheringsett.

Paul Whittingham, member of the North Walsham-based North Norfolk Chorale, said: "For us as a choir the highlight was performing the Britten pieces."

The chorale sang A Hymn to the Virgin and Rejoice in the Lamb which were both technically difficult.

It was the first time the group had sung Britten in concert but Mr Whittingham said it might become an added feature in future performances.

He said: "Britten's music is very different. He wrote a full range of music from things children could sing all the way to major works. Singing Britten is very challenging but rewarding."

Mr Whittingham, from the Croft, Cromer, said Mr Brunson did a good job at linking the East Anglian composer with the other musicians featured in the concert.

The Britten Centenary Dinner in the big school at Gresham's was the finale to the school's year of celebrating the former pupil.

It was held in the big school and included steak and ale pudding and queen of puddings.

Nathan Waring, director of music at Gresham's Prep School, said: "Britten wanted everyone to play his music not just professionals. His music was for the masses and that is what has helped his legacy."

On Friday youngsters from six primary schools performed the song cycle Friday Afternoons in the Auden Theatre.

A Hymn to the Virgin was also performed by another group of singers on Friday evening at Gresham's Chapel for the annual St Cecilia's Day concert.