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PRESS RELEASE

New community music centre named *Clarendon Muse*

Watford's new music centre has been named *Clarendon Muse* it was announced today. The announcement coincides with the first week of opening of the new music centre to pupils of Watford Grammar School for Boys and Hertfordshire County Council's Music Service's Watford School of Music.

Following extensive consultation amongst key stakeholders the name *Clarendon Muse* was developed jointly between the two Schools reflecting over 120 years of shared history and connections with the Earls of Clarendon who have served as presidents and chairmen at various times during the two Schools development since the 1880's. The word *Muse* is derived from the ancient Greek muses who were considered patron goddesses of creative and intellectual endeavours.

Commenting on the name, the 7th Earl of Clarendon said, "I am highly honoured that the new music centre has been named *Clarendon Muse* and I am delighted to be Patron of this landmark community building."

The newly opened facilities create 2000 sqm of space that will deliver lessons to nearly 1500 students each week. The building houses a 200-seat auditorium; a double height foyer/entertainment space; multiple sound-proofed recital and practice rooms; teaching spaces for single students and classes; a recording studio; and administrative space for the Watford School of Music. The building will house the Watford School of Music, the music department of Watford Grammar School for Boys and community projects which encompass the musically-led arts.

James Dickinson, Head of Hertfordshire Music Service said "We are delighted that the long standing partnership between ourselves and the Watford Grammar School for Boys has resulted in such a spectacular music hub in the centre of Watford. We are looking forward to a close and creative partnership with the School as we collaborate on the development and provision of a comprehensive portfolio of musical activities and opportunities, with a renewed commitment not only to excellence but to access, inclusion and the musical entitlement of the wider community."

Martin Post, Headmaster, Watford Grammar School for Boys who has overseen the development of the project since its inception in 1997 said, "The *Clarendon Muse* is a significant milestone for music in this School and for the local community. Our pupils and staff have been looking forward to using these outstanding facilities which provide innumerable opportunities for all round musical excellence at the School."

An appeal recently launched to raise money to equip the centre has raised nearly a quarter of the total amount needed. Effie Stevenson, who heads up the fundraising effort said, "We have been overwhelmed by the loyalty, generosity and enthusiasm of friends and supporters of both School and members of the local community but we still need to raise an additional

£200,000 to ensure the *Clarendon Muse* delivers the very best in music tuition, performance and production.”

There are a number of sponsorship opportunities on offer including the naming of music centre bricks, seats, trees or rooms for loved ones or for corporate purposes. Local residents or businesses wishing to sponsor the *Clarendon Muse* should contact Effie Stevenson on 07789 653288.

All appeal proceeds will help fund the purchase of equipment such as:

- Recording studio equipment
- New musical instruments
- Furniture for the 24 practice rooms and communal areas
- Audio-visual equipment for the foyer and auditorium
- Computers and software for the music technology suite

For more information please contact Effie Stevenson on 07789 653288 or email her on stevensone@watforboys.herts.sch.uk

For Hertfordshire County Council press enquiries please contact Pam Meade, Press Officer for Children Schools and Families, on 01992 588535.

Watford School of Music' development of *The Clarendon Muse* jointly with Watford Grammar School for Boys, builds on a long history of both Schools serving Watford and its catchment.

The Grammar School was founded in 1704 at the Free School but, in the early 1880's went through a major constitutional change, becoming the Watford Endowed Schools. During the same years the Watford School of Music was being established, both institutions being guided by the same civic leaders.

The 1882 Charity Commission Scheme regulating the Endowed Schools named five 'cooperative' Governors. Two of them, Dr Alfred Thomas Brett and Dr Francis Henry Wilson Iles were members of the first Council of the Watford School of Music (appointed in 1880). Of the twelve members of that first Council, two others (Edward John Slinn and Charles Francis Humbert) were to become Governors of the Endowed Schools; and a third, Henry Morton Turner served there as Clerk from 1882 to 1913.

But, foremost in both institutions were the Earls of Clarendon. The fifth Earl was both President of the School of Music (from 1880) and Chairman of the Endowed Schools (from 1882) until his death in 1914, being succeeded in the latter role by Edward John Slinn, who combined this office with that of Treasurer of the School of Music also until his death in 1930.

The sixth Earl (a former pupil of the School of Music) took on its presidency, holding the office until it lapsed shortly before his death in 1955. He also became a Governor of the Endowed Schools until being appointed Governor General of South Africa in 1930.

In recognition of the 75 year connection between the Earls and the School of Music, the former pupils' Orchestra (formed in 1983) is named the Clarendon Orchestra.

In 1925, when the School of Music was threatened with eviction from its home, the Chairman, Dr Herbert Hall, addressing a public meeting speculated that, "if someone could make them a gift of a house as a School of Music, how rejoiced they would be to christen it, for instance, *The Clarendon School of Music*."