



NOTTINGHAM
GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL
BE EXTRAORDINARY



GDST Schools.
Where girls can

NEW £9M PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE OPENS AT NOTTINGHAM GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

A new £9m state of the art performing arts centre at Nottingham Girls' High School has been officially opened by Rosemary Squire OBE, the most prominent woman in British theatre.

Rosemary is currently founder and joint CEO of theatre company *Trafalgar Entertainment* and also a former pupil at the school, and the new centre has been named after her.



A special event was organised to mark the official opening of the Squire Performing Arts Centre, '**the space**', when guests were able to see this fantastic facility for themselves, and enjoy a gala performance of the school's theatre production of *Grease*.

The impressive development has been made possible thanks to the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), the leading group of independent girls' schools in the UK who contributed an initial £7.5m to the project. The remaining £1.5m was raised through a *Raise the Curtain* campaign chaired and supported by Rosemary Squire, and other donations from various trusts and patrons, including Nottingham philanthropist Sir Harry Djanogly, school alumnae, parents, students and friends of the school. Their generosity has been acknowledged by naming rooms in '**the space**' after them, including the main auditorium named after Lady Carol Djanogly (wife of Sir Harry Djanogly) and a studio named after Jenny Farr MBE - an alumna and former governor of the school. Generous support from *The Garfield Weston Foundation* is recognised with the naming of the 74 seat studio theatre. Individual and group donations have also been

acknowledged through gold, silver and bronze leaves on an art installation, the *Donor Tree*, which takes pride of place at the entrance to the centre.

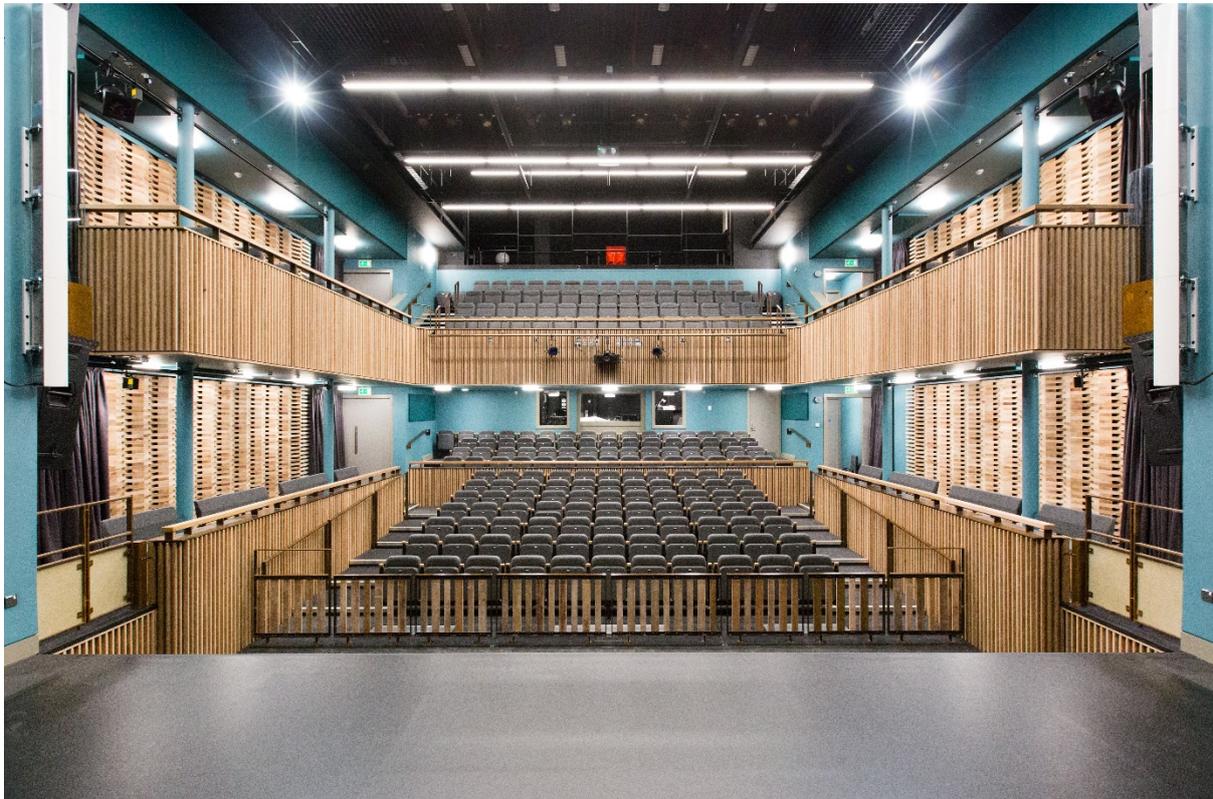
This modern, new addition to the existing facilities will be used across the whole school providing performance space for the youngest girls right through to the Sixth Form, enhancing the teaching, learning and performance of music and drama at the school.

The centre will also be available for use by community groups, arts organisations, other schools and businesses, beyond school hours. It has been purposefully designed to widen access to the arts and for developing community led projects. Nottingham's schools and vibrant local dance, music and theatre groups will now have access to high-quality, affordable space for teaching, rehearsal and performance – a provision that has so far been limited.

The building has been designed by Nottingham architectural practice Marsh:Grochowski and was built by Balfour Beatty. It comprises a flexible 334 seat performance space with a 260 seat multi-purpose auditorium which, through the use of floor lifts, is divisible into two separate teaching and performance areas creating a separate 74 seat studio with dressing rooms, a multi-purpose rehearsal studio and green room as well as a café bar and breakout spaces. The acoustics are designed to ideally suit both musical productions and dialogue based performances and conferences.



The theatre also has an orchestra pit and control rooms with professional technical equipment, and a tension wire grid above the auditorium allowing safe access to lighting rigs and industry standard equipment, enabling students to learn the professional skills of the theatre technician.



The opening of '**the space**' has also created career and employment opportunities. Steve Ridgway, formerly of Nottingham Playhouse, has been appointed as the centre's technical manager and will be supported by additional technicians along with openings for café bar and front of house staff.

A management committee has been set up to oversee the centre's non-school use by the local community and external bodies. This committee comprises representatives from Nottingham City Council, local arts organisations and the school, as well as local residents. With their input, a programme of events including plays, seminars, musical events, dance, workshops and activities will be devised to help develop a thriving community space within the city.



Julie Keller, Head of Nottingham Girls' High School, said: "We are delighted to be opening our new performing arts centre and I'm sure it's going to be a great addition, not only to the school, but also to the local community, and that's really important. With the many different facilities available, our girls will be able to learn many different theatre skills. Whether they're interested in acting, singing, lighting or sound, there will be something for everybody."

Referring to the opening and naming of '**the space**', Julie added: "As a result of Rosemary's association with the school, the role she played in spearheading and supporting the fundraising and her status in the world of theatre, it is only fitting that the centre be named after her."

"I had a fantastic time at Nottingham Girls' High School, which instilled a love of the arts in me that encouraged me to pursue my career in theatre," said Rosemary Squire. "It is therefore a great honour to not just have been involved in the fundraising for this new performing arts centre, but also to have my family name connected to a place that was so important to me. I can't wait to see both the school and the local community benefit from it and to be in the audience for its many future exciting productions."

ENDS

Notes to editors

- 1. Nottingham Girls' High School is an independent girls' school located in the heart of Nottingham. Established in 1875, the school aims to provide high quality education for girls with a happy, challenging, supportive and caring environment. There are approximately 850 students between 4 to 18 years of age at the school who benefit from a broad and interesting curriculum, enriched by a strong and varied programme of extra-curricular activities. The school is part of the Girls' Day School Trust, which pioneered girls' education in the UK and is the leading group of independent girls' schools across the country.*
- 2. Rosemary Squire OBE is the most prominent woman in British theatre of the modern era. She co-founded Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG) in 1992 with her husband and business partner, Sir Howard Panter. Since then, ATG has grown to be the world's number one live-theatre group with over 40 venues in Britain and on Broadway and an internationally recognised award-winning theatre producer with productions*

worldwide. ATG is also the market leader in theatre ticketing services through ATG Tickets and LOVETheatre.com.

- 3. Construction started in March 2015 when Rosemary Squire OBE and fellow alumna and patron Dame Stella Rimington attended a ground breaking event.*
- 4. Balfour Beatty were the principal contractors.*
- 5. Sustainability is at the heart of the design and construction of the building with the auditorium being naturally ventilated to minimise noise, energy use and maintenance. In addition natural and locally sourced materials have been used wherever possible.*