

arts organisations. Glyndebourne Opera has performed in the Lyric, as have the Royal Shakespeare Company and many visiting ballet companies.

By a quirk of fate both Allen Percival and I found ourselves back in Hong Kong: Allen agreed to act as Interim Director before I took up the post in 1989. (This must be the only time that a director has twice succeeded the same predecessor, as I also took over from Allen as Principal of the Guildhall School in 1978.)

The Academy prepares students from professional careers in dance (ballet, modern, Chinese and musical theatre); drama; music (both Chinese and Western); and Technical Arts, which includes scenic, lighting and sound design, stage management, costume technology and prop-making; and in television courses for both technicians and programme makers.

All these disciplines under one roof offer exciting performance opportunities. Each year there are over three hundred public performances by Academy students in dance, drama and music. In 1990, we started an opera course, which has already performed *La Bohème*, *Così fan Tutte*, *Albert Herring* and *Mahagonny*. The next production will be *Carmen*, in November.

The Academy has always had an international teaching staff; but during the past three years it has attracted more and more overseas students: from Australia, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea and more recently from Vietnam. I was in Hanoi recently, auditioning students at the Conservatory. The standards were very high, and we are offering them six scholarships. Many of the students coming to study in Hong Kong need this scholarship support, which we have raised through the generosity of the Hong Kong business community. The Chairman of the Council of the Academy, our governing body, is Doctor Helmut Sohmen (a son-in-law of the late Sir Y.K.

Pao), who has himself donated two million Hong Kong dollars to our international students scholarship fund. Harry Weinrebe, the Hong Kong philanthropist whose initiative started the Conservatory and who acquired the Ernest Read Music Library for the Academy, has endowed a scholarship (named after Rachel Percival), to bring a student from Hong Kong to the Guildhall School each year. It would now 'even things up' if we could find a reciprocal scholarship from the UK which would allow a Guildhall student to spend a year in Hong Kong.

The international students fill the gaps where we have difficulty in recruiting in Hong Kong - male dancers, for instance, and oddly enough, cellists. They also keep the Hong Kong students on their toes, as only international standards are relevant to the performing arts.

During the past few months, the Academy has been accredited as a degree-giving institution. From September, we shall be offering degrees in Dance and Music, as well as diplomas. Drama and Technical Arts will follow in September 1993. This is a major step forward in raising the status of the performing arts in Hong Kong. In spite of growing popularity, parents still view careers in them with suspicion. Banking, business and the 'professions' are infinitely more attractive and lucrative.

I shall leave Hong Kong in a year's time, with concern and curiosity about the future of the Academy after 1997. The Ministry of Culture in Beijing has assured me that, in accordance with the Joint Declaration, the Academy will go on as it is for fifty years. On the other hand, it could become the major training centre for the whole of South China; and with the possibility of tapping that vast potential for talent, the Academy could emerge from being a major centre for S.E. Asia to becoming one for the world.

A scene from "La Bohème"



Priaulx Rainier Fund

Society for the Promotion of New Music

THE EDUCATION PROJECT will now take place at Christ Church, Spitalfields on Saturday March 6th 1993 as part of a weekend of events which culminates in the Anniversary Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall at 3.00 pm on Sunday March 7th.

Four composers having been linked with four youth string orchestras are each writing ten-minute pieces which will be submitted to the SPNM Selection Panel in mid-September to check the degree of technical difficulty required. Final scores and parts will then be prepared so that each string orchestra is able to begin rehearsing their piece in mid-October. In addition the composer Philip Cashian, recent winner of the Britten Award, has been invited by the SPNM to write a short four minute piece to be played by all the orchestras together (with a guest conductor) to open the concert.

The Bingham String Quartet, who are presenting a major concert at Christ Church, Spitalfields on the evening of March 6th 1993, are acting as consultants to the Project and will visit each area to give extra coaching and technical advice on the performance of each piece.

The composers, youth string orchestras and conductors are: Sadie Harrison, East Sussex County Music School, South Downs String Chamber Orchestra (Adrian Davies) Kevin Malone, String Orchestra of the Centre for Young Musicians, Westminster (Richard Fallas) Karen Markham, Manchester Youth String Orchestra (Martin Milner) Sohrab Uduman, Strings of the City of Leeds Youth Orchestra (Colin Jones)

This will be one of the most important projects in the Society's 50th Season. Thanks to the support of **The Worshipful Company of Musicians** through the Priaulx Rainier Fund. Roderick Watkins, winner of the Priaulx Rainier Prize (front page last issue) and now studying at IRCAM in Paris, was one of the composers involved at the SPNM's very successful Music and Architecture project, "Sound in Space", at the 1992 Bath Festival in which four composers collaborated with four architects. His electro-acoustic was very impressive and much admired.

