

## IVOR MAIRANTS GUITAR AWARD

The 1997 (and first) winner was Amanda Cook (RCM) who received £1,000; the runner up was Clive Carroll (Trinity College) who was awarded £400. It was considered that the high standard sought did not warrant the the award of a third prize. The Value of the awards was enhanced by cash prizes donated by Classical Guitar Magazine and Mel Bay Publishing Company.

The competitors were required to play either 'Evocation for Joe Pass' or 'Rhapsody for Raney'. Both works, composed by Ivor Mairants, were from the music book, 'Jazz Sonatas for the Solo Guitar'.

The adjudication panel under the Chairmanship of Assistant Philip Jones was augmented by Colin Cooper, Martin Taylor and Gilbert Biberian, all well known participants in the "Guitar World". While the initial intention was that the competition should take place every other year, plans are in hand for it to become an annual event. In addition, consideration is being given to arranging a concert to commemorate Ivor's life early in 1999.

Sadly, Ivor Mairants passed away the week before the presentation was made. Since obituary notices have already appeared in the National Press, we are printing this message prepared by his daughter, Valerie Jablon, and read by the Master to the Prizewinners:

*"Today should have been a special occasion for my father. It is a great tragedy that fate decreed otherwise.*

*Throughout his life as an established musician, my father loved to encourage talented young guitarists and give them a helping hand up the professional ladder. He was a missionary for the guitar, an instrument which was almost unknown when he first played it 70 years ago.*

*The Ivor Mairants Guitar Award is the fulfilment of his last wish to continue helping young guitarists not only during his lifetime but for posterity.*

*The auditions for the award brought my father great satisfaction who was most impressed by the skill and enthusiasm of the contestants. He was particularly impressed by the playing and personality of the winner for whom he predicted a brilliant future. He was so looking forward to presenting the prizes and would have offered his congratulations with the greatest of pleasure. My mother and I do so on his behalf."*

## The Master's

Life as a Master of the Musicians' Company is very busy, starting very suddenly at the Installation in October and stopping just as suddenly a year later. During the year one seems to be copying the Red Queen, running very hard to keep in the same place, but at the end it all comes to a sudden halt and there is time to look back on the year, try to make sense of it and think of all the things that have been done – or have not been done.

The picture on looking back is a confused one. In my case there were additional factors which added to the confusion; I had a heart by-pass while I was Senior Warden and a bout of pneumonia during my term of office, both of which affected my life to a greater or less extent and limited what I could do. None the less it was a fascinating year, full of interest, sometimes hard work and on occasions frustrating.

It is difficult to pick out any one aspect of the year which stood out, but I think that perhaps it was the various Church Services I attended which left the greatest impression. These took all sorts of forms and were held in (or sometimes outside) a great variety of places. There were of course the services that Liverymen are encouraged to attend every year; the United Guilds, the MBF, the Company's own St. Paul's and carol services; I found that these somehow take on an added dimension when one is closely involved with them: and the planning, if you are part of that, makes you realise the amount of organisation that goes into big services. There were many others which I would not normally have gone to; indeed I might not normally have known about them at all. Some in St. Paul's, such as the Festival of the Clergy or the installation of the new Dean, but many in other churches. The patronal festival at St. Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London; planting crosses in a British Legion Poppy Service in a Garden of Remembrance outside St. Paul's; St. Bartholemew the Great to start their annual Fair; the Licensing of the Vicar-General of

the Diocese in Europe as Priest-in-Charge of St. Michael's, Cornhill; and many others.

The popular idea of the life of a Master seems to be that it consists of an endless succession of dinners, and indeed there were many of them. Very often they were dinners of other Livery Companies, and these were very valuable and interesting for the insight it gave into how other Companies are run and some of the problems they face. Over the year of course I got to know many of my fellow Masters and discussed with them some of the difficulties they have; it is not surprising that many of them are similar to those facing the Musicians. But at the dinners – and of course the associated socialising before and after the meal – there was more opportunity to get to meet more of the rank and file of the Companies and learn something of their particular worries. At the Butcher's, for example, I was sat next to the Providitor of the Company: his views on the beef crisis and how it affected the Butchers were very illuminating. The various traditional customs of the different companies were intriguing, as were many of the Halls. The Master Mariners in their ship, the H.Q.S. Wellington, gave a memorable evening on what was fortunately a fine day. There was also a splendid evening at the Scientific Instruments Makers in honour of the 90th birthday of Stephen Barrett, who is of course one of our own Liverymen.

Then there were other Companies, not Livery Companies, such as the Parish Clerks and the Hackney Carriage Drivers, who entertained me royally. I was equally delighted to be a guest at a dinner of the Madrigal Society as I have always been particularly fond of madrigal and motet singing. And wider city functions: a dinner at Guildhall in honour of the Mayor of Chicago was typical.

My wife is a busy professional musician and was not able to attend as many of these occasions as she would have liked; I was fortunate when she was able to accompany me, though it was sometimes a

disconcerting experience for her. At one function a waitress asked her in all innocence (I think) whether her breast was large enough. Perhaps it was fortunate that I was not able to hear her reply.

Many of these dinners had an entertainment of some sort, generally musical, during the course of the evening; perhaps we are spoilt in the Musicians' Company, but this was one aspect of my year which I found disappointing. True, there were some outstanding performances, but



Welcoming the Livery to Lacock Abbey