



**18th century flute made by Potters of London**

UK. Such sponsorship not only enables the theatre or opera company to concentrate on producing high calibre performances by providing the financial assistance that they cannot get from ticket sales alone, but also allows Coutts to offer its clients exclusive access to a diverse range of events. The

sponsorship also provides additional benefits such as after-show dinners hosted by the performers, giving clients access to an experience that is 'more than money can buy'. The relationships between Coutts and its arts partners are great examples of the benefits that first class corporate sponsorship can

have for all parties involved.

The current arts sponsorship programme was launched at the turn of the century, with finance being given to support Welsh National Opera's production of *Orpheus & Eurydice*, which toured cities throughout the UK. So popular was this amongst clients in London and the Regions that we are now in our sixth year of WNO sponsorship, a commitment that currently extends to the end of 2006. Such was its success, that the relationship with opera was expanded in 2003 to incorporate sponsorship of the Royal Opera's *Pagliacci*, with Placido Domingo, and the Glyndebourne Festival's *Marriage of Figaro*. This year Coutts supported Glyndebourne's *Magic Flute*, to the delight of its clients.

This type of sponsorship plays a vital role in ensuring that the arts continue to be communicated to audiences all over the country, while simultaneously allowing Coutts to entertain clients in unique ways. In the case of WNO, which relies on grants from the Arts Councils of

England and Wales, it has found that the grants alone are insufficient to support the opera. However, when combined with contributions from the private sector, the result is a vibrant, developing Company offering exceptional value to the audiences it attracts.

Photos by courtesy of Coutts & Co

*L'incoronazione di Poppea* and *Così fan tutte* and he soon became one of the most popular singers at the Festival. He took the title part of *Idomeneo* in every production mounted at Glyndebourne during his career, appearing in his final one during his sixties.

Being the wife of an artist at Glyndebourne has its down side, however; those dinner breaks when the singer is confined to his dressing room for two hours – (how many picnics did I have to prepare, how many fans to ward off?) – and it's certainly very different for the singer himself, whilst the audience sit by the lake with champagne and caviar!

One of Richard's last roles was the shepherd in Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, a character part that he took on only reluctantly, largely because of the difficult transition from lead romantic tenor to character tenor – he didn't think he was yet ready for it. But by then he was already sixty-two and I certainly felt the time was right. I managed to persuade him that he would do it well and in the end it was a huge success for him. Had illness not overcome him shortly afterwards, he might well have developed a fine late career as a character tenor.

After Richard died in 1990 it took me some time to decide what to do with the rest of my life. I had, of course, sung in America, in Europe and for the BBC and so for a while I enjoyed an Indian Summer, giving recitals, teaching and lecturing on the history of opera for adult education and Sussex University. One idea that, alas, was unfulfilled, was to found a touring opera company and Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngue agreed to become patrons, but unfortunately practical considerations made the project impossible.

Nevertheless, I still hoped to undertake a musical project of some sort and soon realised that Eastbourne, where I lived, had no choir; this lack had to be rectified, so I placed an announcement in the paper and by the end of the week I had sixty singers. I conducted the Eastbourne Choral Society from 1993 until 2003, building it up into one of the best choirs in Sussex. I founded an International Recital series, the Eastbourne Camerata, and was able to bring world-class performers to the town. Two years ago Julian Lloyd Webber took part and a little later Willard White brought his jazz ensemble. Happily, the Camerata continues to flourish and presents

concerts by many fine musicians.

As any concert promoter knows, presenting artists of such high calibre becomes increasingly expensive, so I have decided in future to concentrate on inviting winners of the Richard Lewis/Jean Shanks Awards at the RAM, thus giving them opportunities to try out new repertory before an enthusiastic audience. I hope very much also to include winners of the Musicians' Company's John Christie Award at future recitals.

The wonderful generosity of the late Dr Jean Shanks, the eminent pathologist, has been so much appreciated. With the recent linking of her Trust to the Company's John Christie Award, Richard's name will continue to be connected with Glyndebourne and talented young singers will benefit, which would have greatly pleased him. Richard was a winner of the Musicians' Company's Santley Award in 1961, recognition that he always valued highly, and being able to further the aims of the Company through this new sponsorship is something that I know he would have warmly welcomed.

Photo: Guy Gravett

**Richard Lewis (right) as Idomeneo with James Milligan as Arbace**