

# THE MAGGIE TEYTE PRIZE COMPETITION

*From Liveryman Felicity Guinness The Administrator.*

**THE MAGGIE TEYTE PRIZE** was founded in 1968 by the **Artiste herself**, then 80 years old, "to preserve the traditions of classical singing". Dame Maggie's career began in 1906 and her singing, much of it still preserved on record, was of the bel canto tradition of the 19th Century. In vocal technique, she never abandoned the classical precepts of Jean de Reszke, her only teacher in more than fifty years of singing. She became an authentic interpreter of Debussy, who coached her for her debut as *Mélisande* at Paris Opéra-Comique in 1908 and accompanied her in recital. As an interpreter of French Song, she was influenced by her collaboration with Reynaldo Hahn in the repertoire with which we now chiefly associate her name.

In 1970 Dame Maggie suffered a severe stroke and was unable to maintain a close personal interest in the prize. Nevertheless the competition continued to take place until 1974 when funds were no longer sufficient to support it. By 1979, three years after Dame Maggie's death, enough money had been raised to revive the prize now in memory of her. A prize of £200 was awarded annually. In 1981 I took over responsibility for the Maggie Teyte Prize from Barry Hall, who administered the prize, until his retirement, from the BBC.

In 1982 my father, Past Master Sir Andrew Carnwath, designated generous financial support from the Worshipful Company of Musicians,

Carnwath Fund, to the Maggie Teyte Prize Fund. We were able to increase the prize money to £500. It was also decided to hold a tri-annual recital for winners. The first was held at the Purcell Room in 1982, the second at the Wigmore Hall in 1985. The 1988 recital at the Wigmore Hall took the form of a Maggie Teyte Centenary Concert at which Elizabeth Connell, who had won the prize in 1972, as well as the three previous years' winners all sang. Graham Johnson devised a marvellous programme for the occasion similar in style to his very popular Songmakers' Almanac recitals at the Wigmore Hall. Since 1979 winners have included Patricia Rozario, Helen Kucharek, Lynne Davies, Hyacinth Nicholls, Kym Amps, Catriona Smith, Anita Morrison and Alison Buchanan. Amongst the many distinguished judges who have served on the adjudicating panel during this period, one of the best known was Dame Eva Turner who, as guest adjudicator for almost a decade until 1987 (when she was aged 95!) gave invaluable advice and support – as well as sharing with us her rich fund of operatic stories. The panel currently includes Sarah Walker, Graham Johnson and Felix Aprahamian.

The Maggie Teyte Prize Competition remains an annual event open to women singers under 30 years. It places particular emphasis on the interpretation of French Song in addition to the classical repertoire. After several years, when the London Music Colleges took it in turns to house the competition, since 1989 it has been held at the Royal Opera House. The



*Felicity Guinness.*

prize money now stands at £1,000, £750 of this coming from the Worshipful Company of Musicians, Carnwath Fund, the rest from various sources including a small fund of my own. At present it is managing to remain solvent.

Since 1991 the Royal Opera House, as part of the Maggie Teyte Prize, has included the Prizewinner in their 'Young Singers in Recital' series which takes place at lunch time in the Crush Bar at the Royal Opera House. This year it will take place on Thursday 12th May as part of the Covent Garden Festival. The 1993 Prizewinner, Lisa Milne, a highly talented young singer from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama will give a recital with her accompanist Zöe Smith, who won the the Megan Foster Accompanist's Prize, which is awarded in conjunction with the Maggie Teyte Prize. This is funded by money raised in memory of Megan Foster (1898-1987), a pupil of Dame Maggie Teyte. Megan Foster's son Sir James Spooner, and Felix Aprahamian are joint chairmen of the Prize Fund.

I find it very rewarding to follow, and take an interest in, the careers of each Prizewinner. In particular, I am always looking for suitable venues in which young singers can perform until their voices are ready for the grander and larger scale opera/recital halls. What about the Worshipful Company of Musicians hosting the Prizewinner at one its functions? What a special evening it could be!

*Editors' Note: The Company awarded the Charles Santley Memorial Gift to Dame Maggie Teyte in 1963*

## THE COMPANY DIARY to October 1994

### ITEMS IN BLUE ITALICS DENOTE LIVERY CLUB EVENTS

13 Apr	Court and Dinner.
12 May	<i>Joint Musical Evening and Supper with Bakers' Society in Bakers' Hall.</i>
17 May	Maisie Lewis Recital.
1-4 June	<i>Music, Banqueting and Wine Tasting expedition to Richelieu, France, with the Bakers' Society.</i>
8 June	Midsummer Banquet.
24 June	Common Hall – Election of the Sheriffs.
29 June	Master and Wardens' Committee.
7 July	<i>Gala Evening at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.</i>
12-14 July	Livery Exhibition.
20 July	Court.
14 Sept	<i>Livery Club Annual General Meeting and Livery Luncheon.</i>
28 Sept	Master and Wardens' Committee.
29 Sept	Common Hall – Election of the Lord Mayor.
12 Oct	Court and Court Dinner.
27 Oct	Maisie Lewis Recital <i>and supper.</i>