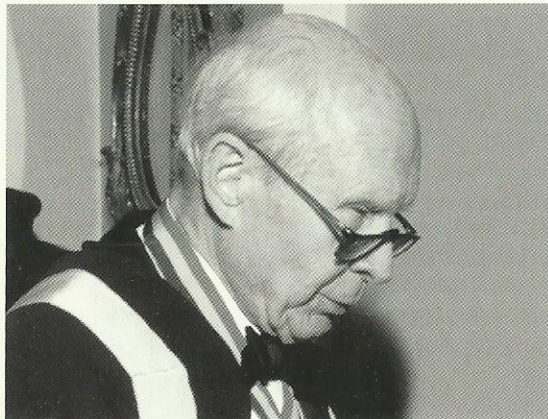


WALTER FICKER

Another Silver Medallist honoris causa lost to the Company this year was Walter Ficker, who died in June. He was an outstanding Treasurer, an office held from 1978 to 1993 in succession to Derek Lockett, who had had the foresight in the early 1960s to see that most of the Company's funds needed to be invested in equities rather than fixed-interest stocks. Walter had the wisdom and knowledge with which to develop this policy with a much larger portfolio, and on his retirement he left the Company's funds in excellent health.

But looking after its finances was only one small part of his contribution to the Company, to which he gave his total support in every possible way. If a liverymen's attendance-record had been kept in respect of Company events, Walter's name would've appeared at the top of the list, and in this he had the great happiness of the devoted companionship of his wife, Gina. (Those who



visited the Royal Marines' School of Music at Portsmouth in June will hold fond memories of that occasion as his last appearance at a Company function: see pages 4-5.)

Walter was the son of musical parents, his mother being a pianist and his father, who had emigrated from Germany before World War I, a lieder singer. He therefore grew up in a musical environment, but his own interests and skills as a young man tended towards football and skiing, languages and good food and wine. Switzerland played a special part in his life, for he left school in London at 15 and completed his education at the École de Commerce in Lausanne.

Skiing and mountain walking continued to take him back to Switzerland, and it was there that he met Gina, whom he married in 1952. Their daughters, Linda (who is a liveryman in her own right) and Isabelle, were soon introduced to the attractions of that beautiful country.

Walter's involvement with music continued in his career in the family firm – Lugton & Co, radio and record distributors – and his experience as a businessman added greatly to his value as a member of the Court. But he will be remembered by his colleagues chiefly for his great good humour and friendship, his calm certainty about things, and his dignity at all times.

His contribution to the Company, of which he was Master in 1982-1983, was of real significance. His greatest "public" moment was perhaps in 1968 when, as President of the Livery Club, he arranged a concert

of Handel's music at the Mansion House on the composer's birthday to entertain the Lord Mayor, Sir Gilbert Inglefield, who had just joined the Company. But it was probably during the long hours when closeted in committee that he made his most lasting impression on the Company's well-being.

ANTHONY RUBINSTEIN

The death of Pastmaster Anthony Rubinstein, in March, was a serious loss to the Company. Although he had retired from the Court and graduated to the status of Honorary Assistant, his presence at Court meetings and the advice that he gave were always greatly appreciated.

He was perhaps unique in the Company's annals, having been born into London's international music circle and belonging to it for the whole of his life – his godparents included Benno Moseiwitsch and Myra Hess, and in his childhood he met many great musicians when his parents held musical At Homes.

Joining his father's firm of solicitors, Anthony inherited as clients the Royal Opera House and Sadler's Wells (which led to the ENO). Many of the divas working there were taken to see him when they needed help. The list of his distinguished clients included Dame Eva Turner, Madame Prokofiev and Rostropovich.

Flourishing in such company, Anthony could hardly fail to be a "star" in his own right, and he was the most entertaining of men, with a wonderful ability to assess human nature. Thus he was able to suffer fools patiently, if not gladly, but also had the gift of appreciating both sides of any argument.

He was a formidable adversary in debate, and the quiet smile that was never far away was not infrequently that of the fencer whose latest thrust has hit its mark.

Despite the special and rather rarified world in which he spent much of his time, Anthony was devoted to the Musicians' Company, of which his father had been Master in 1966-1967 and he himself in 1979-1980. He was tireless in his efforts to direct charitable funds towards the Company, and it is entirely due to him that the Constant and Kit Lambert Fund, the Myra Verney Trust, the Gemini Fellowship (now sadly discontinued) and two of the Company's silver medal funds were established.

In recognition of this wonderful support for the Company's objectives, its Silver Medal was presented to him in 1999. RC



Peter Holland

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