

SPECIAL AWARDS COMMITTEE.

PERCIVAL HART FUND

This year, the Manchester Mid-day concert, supported by the Musicians' Company, had been disappointing although the organisation of it by Chris Yates and his team was good. It was considered that there might be a link with the Maisie Lewis performers and that we should make a suggestion for a recital next year.

The Master asked Pastmaster Jeffery Lockett to investigate the request of Opera North and make a cross-organisational suggestion, possibly relating Opera North with Clonter Opera.

WALTER WILLSON COBBETT MEDAL

From a list of seven distinguished names, the committee chose Richard Sotnick for his outstanding services to Chamber Music.

CD NEWS

"VENETIAN SPELLS"

We should like to congratulate Liveryman Martin Ellerby for the above composition and Liveryman Stan Kitchen of Polyphonic on the production of their recent CD.

BBC: THE LISTEN TO THE BAND COLLECTION

For Brass aficionados; Liveryman Frank Renton, presenter of BBC 2's program 'Listen to the Band', has compiled two recent releases, 'Quick March' and 'More Reflections for Brass'.

THE MUSICIANS' COMPANY QUINCENTENARY CD

More details will be released as soon as they are finalised.

*From Susan Sturrock
Acting Head of
Development and
External Relations,
RCM*

As the year 2000 approaches there can be few organisations and institutions not feeling a chill millennial wind ruffling their feathers. For most of us - whether locally, nationally and internationally - it is not only a time for reflection and appraisal, but also an opportunity for a fresh start, a change of direction, a renewal of energy.

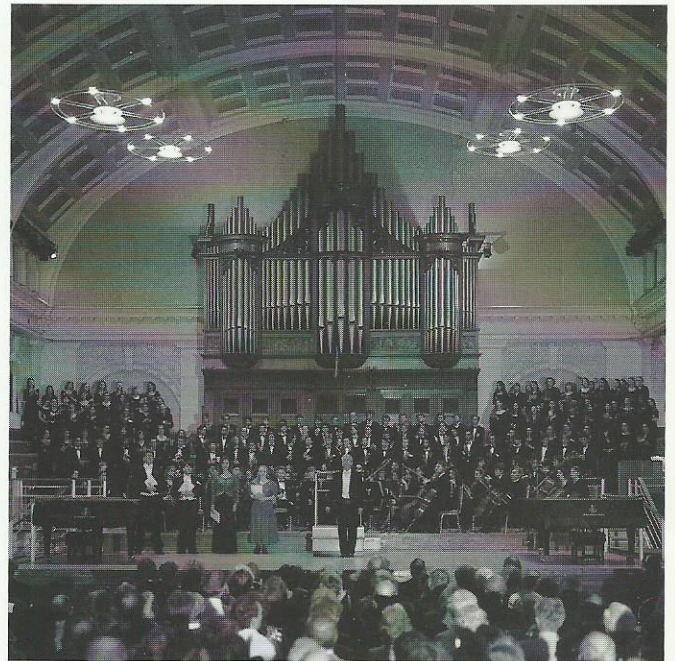
The Royal College of Music, set in the heart of South Kensington, is uniquely placed to experience at close hand both the looking back and the looking ahead which the turn of a new millennium provokes. Our handsome building, opened in 1894, sits directly opposite the Albert Hall, our twin-turreted facade an elegantly symmetrical foil for the grandeur of Prince Albert's dome. We are surrounded by the Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, and the Royal College of Art. A short walk down Exhibition Road leads to the indescribable riches of the Victoria and Albert, the Science, and the Natural History Museums. It is true to say that into an area considerably smaller than a square mile is packed more culture, more research, more excellence than anywhere else I know. It is a proud realisation of Prince Albert's vision.

The sense of history and heritage abounds, in South Kensington, and nowhere more strongly than at the Royal College of Music. Like all great institutions - and I believe that Britain's Royal Schools of Music may be regarded as such - we have our fair share of distinguished alumni who have influenced, inspired - and occasionally! daunted - their successors. I have a special sympathy for young composers arriving at the College for the first time. The names of some of Britain's most celebrated composers trip daily from the tongue - the Parry Room, the Britten Theatre, the Howells Room. Indeed, for those who care to look, there, is evidence everywhere of past glories. It must occasionally threaten to overwhelm.

And that's the problem with heritage. All too easily it can become the laurels on which we rest, the millstone which impedes progress.

But if evidence were needed that the institutions of South Kensington are

The Millennium



looking forward to the third millennium then the activity outside my office window provides it. As I write, a huge crane is gently lifting blocks of stone from the foot of the statue of Prince Albert, a preparatory step in the multi-million pound, five-year improvement project designed to give the Royal Albert Hall the facilities it needs for the twenty-first century. These facilities are part of an imaginative plan to help the nation's village hall fulfil its original designation as a place where arts and sciences meet on equal terms.

At Imperial College, there is a second giant crane, manoeuvring steel girders to complete a new arts centre on top of the library. What an imaginative scheme this is, allowing music, art and sculpture to put down roots in a scientific institution of international significance. Who knows what could blossom?

No such eye-catching work is currently at progress here. Nevertheless, we welcome the activity on our doorstep as an outward and visible symbol of change. We too are developing, though on a more modest scale. Partly, this is because the Royal College is already well-resourced. There is a Library with a reference collection of international significance; a Museum of Instruments which ranks among the most important in the world; a Department of Portraits and Performance History which has an unrivalled collection of images of musicians; and the magnificent Britten Theatre, opened in 1986 as a result of the Centenary Appeal. More mundanely, but no less important, we have over 200 pianos; a large and happy hall of residence with excellent practice facilities; and generous friends who are prepared to support our students financially and in other ways.

The vital changes at the Royal College are in student training. We are