

## WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF THESPIANS

We are informed that a group are trying to set up a new Company. Being the only Company currently directly involved with the performing arts, we are anxious that there should be no conflict with our own aims and ambitions. The field of opera and ballet could provide difficult areas. It has been decided that, provided there is no trespass into the established traditions of our Company of Music and Dance, no objection should be made.

## THE LONDON HARP COMPETITION

First announced in our last issue, this is a new competition where the prize fund is administered by the Company and the competition is sponsored by Clive Morley Harps Ltd. It was held at Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road, London, in early September when entrants had to be under 17 years of age. There were two sections and the Master, Frank Fowler, presented the prizes as follows;

### Concert Harp

First Prize of £500 to Eleanor Turner,  
Second Prize of £300 to Victoria Davies,  
Folk Harp

First Prize of £300 to Ailie Robertson,  
Second Prize of £200 to Sophie Wall,  
Liveryman Clive Morley stated that the competition had been of a high standard and that it would encourage young harpists in the future.

## THE BRITISH LIBRARY APPEAL

The Court have approved a special grant of £2,000 from the Priaux Rainier Fund for the above appeal. Arrangements for a suitable recognition of the grant are in hand.

## THE CITY MUSIC SOCIETY

Our Company's close association with the Society is set to continue. Liveryman Alan Paul who wrote about his experiences as Chairman and Concert Promoter in our last issue has handed over to Liveryman Leslie East, and Liveryman Susan Gold has taken over the position of Membership Secretary.

# A National

## *The National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, a 50th Birthday Celebration.*

*By Liveryman Jill White Director of Music of the NYO of GB.*

Founded in 1947 by Ruth Railton, a visionary who wished to dispel the then prevalent view that Britain was "Ein Land ohne Musik" ("A Land without Music"), the NYO of GB (or NYO as it has affectionately become known), has provided these islands with one of the world's leading youth orchestras. Furthermore, since the very beginning, generations of the UK's international soloists, conductors and leading orchestral instrumentalists have spent invaluable formative years in the NYO of GB. Sir Simon Rattle, Iona Brown, Humphrey Burton, Howard Shelley, Mark Elder and Daniel Harding to name but a few.

However, not all the alumni have distinguished themselves in music, though they most probably could have. Instead, many chose the law, medicine, engineering, banking, business, etc but in each case they have carried their love of music into the society they live in. Many work abroad and all are still proud of their association with this remarkable institution which has remained outside of mainstream education. A hallmark or thumbprint of an NYO'er is that they will always give of their best – they are taught the value of excellence and are not ashamed of constantly striving to maintain it. This has not been easy in a world increasingly focussed on quantity rather than quality or indeed one where the question 'What is in it for me?' is asked, rather than, 'What can I give to it?'

The first concert was given in April 1948 in Bath. This was a time of austerity in Britain, rationing was still in force and musical instruments in short supply but these factors did not deter our Founder from persevering with her vision. Ruth Railton tirelessly toured Great Britain on her auditioning quest gathering together young talent of school age only, who would learn through music that self discipline, dedication, and a profound sense of team-spirit were the corner stones, not only for music but for life itself. Many of the educational ideas she instigated still prevail today – the NYO has not been afraid to maintain traditions whilst at the same time recognising that we live in a changing world.

There are some strict rules, which must be followed, for the benefit of



*The Author*

the whole, yet the individual is celebrated and respected. Hard work is the keystone to the orchestra's success. The young members who are only ever offered one year's membership per audition (everyone has to re-audition) may not be older than 19 years and no one may be at a Music College or Conservatoire. They each have an all-consuming love of music, in fact they wouldn't survive without it, as they give up their school holidays for the intensive two week courses working about eight hours a day in preparation for concerts conducted by international conductors in prestigious concert halls under the scrutiny of broadcasting microphones or the national media.

As well as the concert programme itself, they manage to find the time and energy to attend composition or conducting classes, prepare a chamber work which they give as tea-time recitals, present reviews which all too often (but always in a light-hearted way), make fun of their Director of Music (!) or, as in recent years, since I firmly believe that music expresses life, they have been offered presentations by world experts on art, theatre, dance, music or science. I always take care to relate these extra curricula projects to a work on the programme. e.g. at New Year 1998 we included Holst's *The Planets* Suite and so I invited Dr Peter Kalmus, a distinguished Astro-physicist to talk about "The Big Bang". We also invited Kate Robinson, a young sculptor and published poet, to work with members on an orrery – a mechanical universe which we then displayed in the foyers of the various halls!