

# 100-year mystery revealed

**Court Steward Paul Campion writes:** An expectant atmosphere filled the Barbican Music Library on 15 May; not only was it the opening of the Company's first quinqucentenary commemorative exhibition – entitled *Apollo's Swan and Lyre* – but a mystery that had lain hidden for almost 100 years was about to be revealed!

As distinguished guests arrived for the launch they examined with interest Company archives that were on show for the first time. These included Elgar's manuscript score of the Company's *Elegy*, Edward German's manuscript of his music for *As You Like It*, some of our earliest documents including an 18th-century Treasurer's Book, and historic papers and photographs relating to the Collard Fellowship, one of our most prestigious awards.

The event that was to cause most interest, however, was the opening of 12 old envelopes,



considerable interest, however, was that of Sydney Nicholson, founder of the English School of Church Music (now the Royal School of Church Music), who was remembered by many of those present with respect and affection.

Among the guests at the launch was Ursula Vaughan Williams, author of the verse which was set by Pastmaster Herbert Howells in his *Hymn for Saint Cecilia* (the manuscript score of which was on show). Also present were representatives from some of the major conservatoires, libraries and music societies in the UK.

each of which contained the name of an Edwardian composer who had submitted an entry for the Company's Coronation March competition in 1902.

We still own the scores of these entries and, as the names of their composers had never before been revealed, it was hoped that we might discover a hitherto unknown work by a celebrated musician.

When the time came for the envelope-opening, a link was established to BBC Radio 3's *In Tune*, whose presenter Sean Rafferty was following the evening's progress with enthusiasm.

As each name was revealed it was reported direct to Radio 3 and the information relayed to the listening audience.

In the event, no major composer's work was discovered; a name that caused

● **The second Company exhibition** of 2000 – *Preserve Harmony* – is now on and runs until 4 December, again at the Barbican Music Library. Among the treasures displayed are Sullivan's manuscript of his song *The Lost Chord* and the score of Andrew March's new composition, commissioned by the Company to celebrate its quinqucentenary.

Letters and other memorabilia relating to Beethoven, Benjamin Britten and Gordon Jacob and other historical documents are also there – never having previously been on public display, and all from our own archives.

You might have to wait until the Company's millennium before you can see them again!



Above: Paul Campion, Ursula Vaughan Williams and Richard Crewdson. Below: ready to open the mystery envelopes, with pianist Gareth Owen.



Scores written at the start of the century have a first hearing.