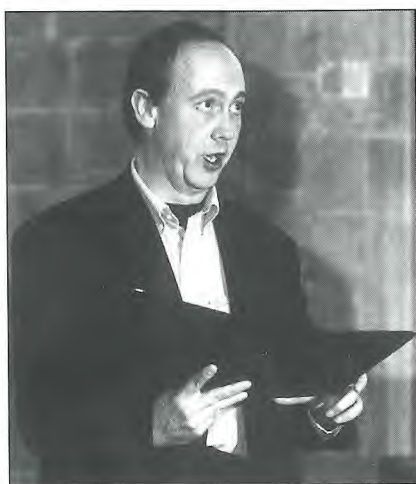


IT WAS A DREAM OF A YEAR

MUSIC REPORT



Above: Dress rehearsal for Dr Graham Jones, Julian Kaye, Verity Bullen, Mrs Bustard and Camilla, and 140 other singers, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra with a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* in Chichester Cathedral.
Below: College singing teacher Martin Elliott was a soloist



PIPES of varying sizes filled the pews as the 1998 summer holidays saw the start of the rebuilding of the Chapel organ. Further tonal modifications were made and a new Millennium-compatible computerised action, with an optical link between the

console and the instrument, was installed. As work continued into the Michaelmas Term, the choir concentrated on early unaccompanied repertoire for much of the time with resultant benefits to tuning, ensemble and balance. Evensong was again sung in Chichester and Winchester Cathedrals and the annual Midsummer Concert, given at the beginning of June, raised £300 for Save the Children.

Plans for our Millennium celebrations have included the commissioning of a new school hymn from Paul Wigmore and John Barnard, and a new carol from Grayston Ives, organist and master of the choristers at Magdalen College, Oxford. It is hoped that these will form part of a recording to be made during the year 1999- 2000.

The Department has been fortunate to receive as a gift a two-manual chamber organ which has been installed in the concert room. Built by Mr Gerald Sweatman it is voiced in the classical style and will not only be a

good continuo instrument but will provide an excellent foil to the more romantic chapel organ for teaching purposes.

The biennial Sixth Form Arts Festival took place in October and included a number of practical workshops coupled with performances by visiting professionals. There were workshops on folk dancing, percussion, vocal techniques and a piano master class for some of the Grade 8 pupils with international concert pianist John York.

The week opened with a concert by Spencer's Night-hawks, an eight-piece jazz ensemble led by OE Carl Spencer, and continued with 'Music from the Movies', including film clips, with the Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra in a packed Congress Theatre. College singers Camilla Bustard, Joanna Clarke and Cathy Collins joined soprano Molly Young for a performance of 'I Feel Pretty' from Bernstein's *West Side Story*. Other highlights included clips and music from *Titanic*, *Romeo & Juliet* and *Dr Zhivago*. John York concluded the programme with a moving performance of Rachmaninov's 2nd piano concerto.

The College Symphony Orchestra gave concerts in November and May, the highlight of which was Mozart's piano concerto no 23 (K488) with Year 11 Music Scholar Jonathan Bending as soloist. Jonathan's performance was mature, with poetic phrasing, and the orchestra provided a sensitive accompaniment. In February the Swing Band, Brass Group and Saxophone Quartet took part in a Jazz Concert in Big School Theatre. There were outstanding vocal performances from Jodie Heslop and Sophie Darley and a superb contemporary jazz ensemble which performed works by Lower 6th guitarist, Luke Potashnick. The success of the evening prompted two spin-off concerts in the Summer Term, including one for visiting prep schools.

The highlight of the musical year was the performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in Chichester Cathedral. The College Choral Society joined forces with the Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra and Chorus and the University College, Chichester, Chamber Choir in a performance to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the orchestra's founding. The soloists included College singing teacher Martin Elliott as the High Priest and Angel of Agony. The audience that packed the cathedral nave was treated to a performance described by the *Eastbourne Herald*

critic as 'not just a concert, but an experience'. Next year's choral concert, Verdi's Requiem), again in Chichester Cathedral, will take place on May 13 with soloists including Mark Le Brocq, OE.

The annual Prep Schools Strings Day took place in May, with some 60 young string players joining those from the College for a day of rehearsals and activities. The weather was perfect for the lunchtime barbecue, after which activities including canoeing, archery and shooting were on offer. An audience of parents enjoyed the concluding concert, which also featured music from the College String Quartet as well as the massed string orchestra.

Among the ProMusic series of professional concerts it was good to welcome back OE James Geer, with his ensemble, Restoration! Following his studies at Magdalen College, Oxford, and Trinity College of Music, James has been busy establishing himself as a promising young tenor in opera and oratorio, specialising in Baroque repertoire. The concert was based on works of foreign composers who settled in London in the 18th century.

There have been creditable exam results throughout the year, but special mention should be made of Dorothy Fung, who achieved high marks in her Advanced Performer's Certificate piano exam.

Graham Jones, Director of Music

Chapel Choir

At the opening of the Michaelmas Term we were unsure whether the choir would survive the year as each section had been considerably weakened by the loss of 12 1997-98 Upper 6th Formers. However, as always, the solution quickly appeared, this year in the form of seven Year 9 boys. Five remained trebles but will eventually help to boost the tenors and basses. On



Huw Edwards plays the bassoon at an informal concert

the whole the choir has maintained its reputation as a strong, happy and vital team. As vital representatives of the school we have much to live up to, and it is fair to say that this year we have achieved all that was expected, and more.

The Michaelmas Term provided many challenges, not least the difficulties posed by the rebuilding of the organ. However, trusty, unaccompanied favourites such as Palestrina's *Missa Aeterna Christi Munera* and Mozart's *Ave Verum* saw us through the difficulties.

The annual pilgrimage to Chichester, which occurred on October 14, was almost brought to a standstill before it had really begun. It was discovered on arrival at the cathedral that half the choir's music had been inadvertently left on the coach, which had driven away. Fortunately for us, Chichester Cathedral has a large music library. With disaster averted, we proceeded to sing *My Soul There Is A Country* by Parry and *Wood in F* with flair and enthusiasm.

The Carol Services were, as always, a highlight of the year. The Advent processions ran smoothly and the music was enjoyed by all.

During the Lent Term the strength of the alto section (lessened by the absence of SuperSpencer) was increased when Julian Kaye switched from tenor to counter-tenor.

The death of Chris Wenham last summer was a shock for many choristers, past and present. Chris was a much loved member of the choir (despite Mr Jones's constant battles with him to stop him talking) and it was fitting that the choir should pay tribute to his life and that of his father in a memorial service. *Blessed City* was particularly poignant, as was the Prayer of St Patrick that rounded off the service. We included rousing hymns such as *Christ Triumphant*, and there was a point at which I could almost hear Chris singing along to the descant in his most charming falsetto voice. The organ voluntary, the theme tune to *Star Wars*, was a most apt end to the service.

Our choral evensong at Winchester was somewhat different to previous years. Due to renovations in the quire we had to sing from a makeshift stage at the back of the cathedral, but, despite our initial reservations, the acoustics were superb and we proceeded to sing Bairstow's *Blessed City* very well indeed. Mr Force particularly enjoyed playing the authentic-sounding electronic organ.

The beginning of the Summer Term saw the induction of our new Chaplain, the Rev. Chris Macdonald. The style of the chapel services was probably quite new to him, but he fitted in



Rachel McManus

quickly and by even mastered responses! This the first of the celebrations: I Gerontius at Ch Choral Society again to produce moving concert unusual venue of the music.

Our final Spenc rousing and r superb year. Th accompanimen tion as Stanford Glad and, of co above the rafters

The start of th be a busy tim premiere of the new carol at the will be an even have had a snea both beautiful). been heard ab another CD in th

I wish Julian Nicola Gadsder take over as the am convinced ness, musicality provide excell important year.

Being a memb commitment, an ously. Despite th behind the scen agree that it is time and effort. been my most er College, and on fondly. I would contribute to ma success - Mr Th Miss Donaldso support and Sy spends typing r My biggest than to Mr Force an hard work and year. I wish you