

## THE ROYAL SCHOOL OF CHURCH MUSIC

To exchange the security of the organ loft of Westminster Abbey for the great unknown is a venture of some faith, yet this is exactly what Sir Sydney Nicholson did in 1928. His new task was to devote his energies towards helping Anglican clergy and church musicians concerned with the practical implications of music in worship.

Nicholson envisaged his task in two ways – a small residential college for those intending to make church music their profession and, in a wider concept, help and encouragement for the amateur often working then, as now, in isolation and in remote areas.

Now, after nearly fifty years, we have a worldwide affiliation of over 8000 churches, schools and colleges – and, we are ecumenical in that we cater for the needs of all the major denominations.

The work of The Royal School of Church Music is centred on Addington Palace, a fine eighteenth-century house near Croydon, where, through the publication of music, books and other aids, we aim to provide a complete information service for the needs of the church musician.

This is implemented by a wide variety of practical work – instructional courses, festivals, lectures and workshops – all administered at local level up and down the country, and throughout the world.

Today it is still as much a venture of faith as it was in 1928. It is equally valid if seen in the context of the contemporary church and contemporary society. This we readily recognize to be our underlying task. Therefore, during the past two years we have been re-shaping much of our policy and in October Addington Palace opened as an ecumenical education centre for church music. In the first full year we shall have promoted nearly seventy courses taking in as many specialist and general aspects as possible. These range from one-day events to residential courses of up to six days, while during July and August we have announced a summer school programmed to the special needs of overseas church musicians.

In these ways we move forward with confidence, but always aware of the problems – and challenges – of a frustrating and bewildering world from which the Church is not exempt. We are spurred on by the fact that good church music adds to the meaning of worship whereas, by the reverse token, badly presented and badly performed music is both negative and harmful.

Above all else there is the need for help and encouragement and a healthy, forward-looking vision rooted in the best of the past. These are the things for which the R.S.C.M. stands and which were

summed up so aptly many centuries ago when the writer of the Book of Proverbs said, 'Where there is no vision the people perish'.

LIONEL DAKERS, Director

[We are grateful to the Director for his co-operation in giving this information about the work of the school.—Ed.]

Information concerning the work of the R.S.C.M., together with brochures giving full details of the courses mentioned above, can be had on application to the Secretary, R.S.C.M., Addington Palace, Croydon, CR9 5AD.