

## A Feast of Commissions for the Colleges

Charles Hine

Charles Hine, Chairman of the BASBWE Education Trust delves into the archives of the College Commission Consortium and highlights an exciting series of premières at London's South Bank Centre.

No-one who reads the pages of *Winds* or who has attended BASBWE conferences, taken part in the National Concert Band Festival or who even has only a passing acquaintance with the repertoire of wind bands and ensembles, can be unaware of the tremendous amount and huge range of music written for the medium in this country during the past twenty years or so

The 'rolling stone' that commenced its inexorable journey back in the 1980's has certainly gathered no moss, indeed the momentum has increased over the past two decades spawning much that is now considered 'core' repertoire, some that may well be considered masterpieces by our descendants. It is probable that ours is the fastest growing musical medium of our times.

Much of the early impetus can be attributed to Timothy Reynish whose untiring and visionary efforts almost defy quantifying. Tim had, and still has, a unique and endearing way of achieving his aims. For example, back in the mid 1980's when I was an innocent new wind band director, just cutting my teeth on my first band in Colchester, Tim phoned me out of the blue with something like 'Hi Charles, looks like East Anglia doesn't have a regional rep on BASBWE - can you come to the next executive meeting and report how you are getting on ... ummmm, yes Tim ... what followed was a very

busy and fruitful history for me and led to my position now within the association, running the Education Trust and being fitted for the Chairman's robes of BASBWE

Well, Tim had another brilliant idea (amongst many) during the early 1990's. He and others had found, not surprisingly, that new works of sufficient stature and scope to suit the 'professional' market were often financially out of reach for our conservatoires and colleges who, having had a taste of what was coming out of the RNCM, were hungry for more. So a couple of telephone calls (and whatever we had before email) later the College Commission Consortium was born.

The idea of a commission consortium was not new, indeed it had been utilised most effectively in the United States for years, and consequently it has made a marked effect on our musical lives in this country. Other consortia have made significant contributions to repertoire development without which, important works by such as Ellerby, Gorb and Sallinen may not have seen the light of day! Dear Tim is at it once more at the moment with a huge (WASBE) consortium recruited over the internet contributing to a *Trombone Concerto* for Christian Lindberg written by Richard Rodney Bennett.

So, to return to the College Commission Consortium (CCC), a fruitful marriage was arranged between various consenting parties resulting in a strong union that has achieved its goals, lived in harmony and which has survived the test of time! Current members are: Birmingham Conservatoire, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London College of Music and Media, Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music, University of Warwick and the Welsh College of Music and Drama. Past members are the Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College.

The basic agreement is that each of the participating members takes the role of 'principal commissioner' each year. They in turn get the right to nominate a particular composer and give the première in that year. The other members then give subsequent 'first' performances - a good guarantee for composers and their publishers. The CCC has been fortunate in attracting further funding from other bodies including the Arts Council of England, the Carnegie UK Trust and the Foundation for Sport and the Arts.

This logical step in the renaissance of British wind music has led to an impressive track record of commissions with major works being written annually - see panel.

1994	Thea Musgrave	<i>Through a Japanese Landscape</i>
1995	Robert Saxton	<i>Ring, Time</i>
1996	Dominic Muldowney	<i>Dance Suite</i>
1997	Ilona Sekacz	<i>Let the Magpie Dream</i>
1998	John Woolrich	<i>Tuckets and Sennets</i>
1999	Elena Firsova	<i>Captivity</i>
2000	John Dankworth	<i>Hemming Way</i>
2001		chamber ensembles
2002	Martin Ellerby	new work in preparation
2003	Kenneth Hesketh	new work in preparation

# COMMISSIONS

Since its inception, the remit of the CCC has been to commission works for large wind ensemble/orchestra. However a happy idea by Peter Gane from Guildhall led to a new and exciting development, perhaps the result of a '7 year itch' within our happy union!

So the scheme for 2001 has been to invite composers nominated by each consortium member to write a wind chamber work, all of which were to be then premièred in a major 'showcase' concert. This scheme has been long in preparation and realisation, and is at last reaching its triumphant conclusion.

On Monday 26 November 2001 at 7:30 pm, the Purcell Room at the South Bank Centre, London will see the premières of these seven specially commissioned works in a Gala Chamber Winds Concert.

This will be a significant, unique and auspicious event. Significant and unique because of the number of world premières we are to hear performed by such a diverse representation of our leading music colleges. Auspicious for a

number of reasons, not the least the demonstration of fertile collaboration between our colleges and in the continued development of important repertoire for the wind ensemble medium.

All will be performed by groups from the participating colleges.

We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the PRS Foundation towards these commissions.

Do come if you can - tickets can be booked through normal channels at the South Bank Centre. If you cannot attend, do look out for reviews in the national press and in the next edition of *Winds*.

Thus these works now enter a vibrant and growing musical environment that has been enhanced not only by the CCC commissions but by a vast array of important works instigated by BASBWE and its members over the past 20 years.

Here's to the next 20 years and beyond ...

*Purcell Room box office - 020 7960 4242*



*Charles Hine studied clarinet at the Royal Academy of Music where he won many prizes and then pursued a successful career as a soloist and orchestral musician.*

*He was a founder member of the Vega Wind Quintet, the first such group to be invited to appear at the Proms and which has premièred and recorded numerous works for the medium.*

*Charles is much in demand as a conductor, adjudicator and clinician and is currently Head of Woodwind and Head of Performance Studies at the Colchester Institute Centre for Music and Performance Arts. He conducts the Wind Orchestra at Colchester and also at the Royal College of Music, Junior Department.*

*Since 1990, Charles has been Chair man of the BASBWE Education Trust and will become Chair man of BASBWE in March 2002.*

## GALA CHAMBER WINDS CONCERT 26th November 2001 – 7.30pm Purcell Room

### Guildhall School of Music and Drama

Alessandro Timossi	<i>Commedia</i>	conductor Peter Gane
Julia Gomelskaya	<i>The Riot</i>	conductor Peter Gane

### Royal College of Music

Alun Hoddinott	<i>Bagatelles</i>	conductor Janet Hilton
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### London College of Music and Media

Kit Turnbull	<i>Tetrasemic Interventions</i>	
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### Welsh College of Music and Drama

John Metcalf	<i>Wind Quintet</i>	
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### Birmingham Conservatoire

Guy Woolfenden	<i>Serenade</i>	conductor Guy Woolfenden
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### Royal Northern College of Music

Rodney Newton	<i>The Four Elements</i>	conductor Colin Bradbury
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