

Classified Section

# A house where music lives

by George Ward

THE door opened to a small, high ceilinged room where the first impression was of books, music and more books. The shelves, which crept up the walls like ivy and even shot off rambling over the second door, were stacked with volumes on music and religion, dotted here and there with the bright flower-like covers of whodunnits.

Taking up a third of the room was a grand piano, its lid open and a small bowl of water standing inside to combat the dangers of low humidity.

From the next room came the sounds of three voices singing an old Spanish folk song with such brilliant clarity and precision one could not help but linger and eavesdrop.

The voices, counter-tenor, tenor and baritone, paused before setting off again with a delicately pointed version of Jake Thackray's slyly bawdy Isobel Makes Love Upon National Monuments. So lightly did they handle the piece, it became hard to believe the indecency of the lyrics.

## FACE TO FACE

Opening the door into a room full of sunshine, dazzling after the gloomy book filled glade, one came face to face with the Canterbury Clerkes.

It is four years since these three men, then all Lay Clerks in Canterbury Cathedral Choir, decided



# Helping students in years to come

The vast field of further education available to today's school-leavers helps thousands of students each year qualify for the work of their choice, but does not necessarily prepare them for life in general.

But the home management and family care course at Canterbury College of Technology arms students with a wide range of information that will serve them in all aspects of their future lives.

The two-year course, run by the National Council for Home Economics, aims to give students the practical experience normally accumulated later in life.

Since most of the girls intend to work with children much of the course is centred around the young. They gain valuable experience through auxiliary work in many primary schools and playgroups throughout East Kent, helping the youngsters with craft work and reading.

They also visit the elderly, learning about the problems of old age through talking to old people, shopping for them or simply reading to them.

## The course

Course tutor Mrs Joyce Lewns explained that the course was essentially a practical one. As well as developing imagination and thrift through dress-making and craft work, the girls are taught to deal with the commercial side of running a home and with house-buying.

They are also taught basic home maintenance which will enable them to overcome small problems with drains or elec-

All students, aged between 16 and 18, had enjoyed the course and felt they had greatly benefited from the experience.

Susan Richardson, of 20 King's Road, Herne Bay, said she had especially enjoyed working with children in schools and playgroups, and would recommend the course to anyone hoping to work with the young.

"Although I have always been interested in children I was very wary of them, but now I feel quite confident to look after them," she added.

When she leaves the college in June, 17-year-old Susan will work as a nursing auxiliary at Herne Bay's Queen Victoria Hospital before going on to take her SRN in a London hospital.

## Bargains by train

Bargains for train travellers have been announced by British Rail. The cost of an Awayday ticket is cut and 40p fares for children are introduced in a bid to get people to leave their cars at home this summer.

Awayday tickets now cost up to £3 less, according to the station of departure. For example, from Canterbury East or West two children travelling with adults on an Awayday ticket would pay only 40p each, a saving of £2.60 on standard fares.

The offer, which lasts until September 9, also includes season ticket holders and holders of senior citizen Railcards. Senior citizens can buy half-price Awaydays on their cards and can take their grandchildren along

to team up professionally and offer their unique blend of music to a far wider audience.

Peter Giles, counter-tenor, sorts through the piles of songs, many arranged for the trio by himself, pulling out sacred songs, medieval rounds, folk songs, glees — the forerunner of the barber-shop style — madrigals, poems and music hall numbers.

With their musical feet set firmly in the medieval period and branches stretching out towards the present, comparisons with the King's Singers are inevitable.

## A SOLO

But, as Peter launches into a solo the difference became evident. Peter, Tony Bussell and Martin Renshaw are first and foremost soloists and members of a trio second.

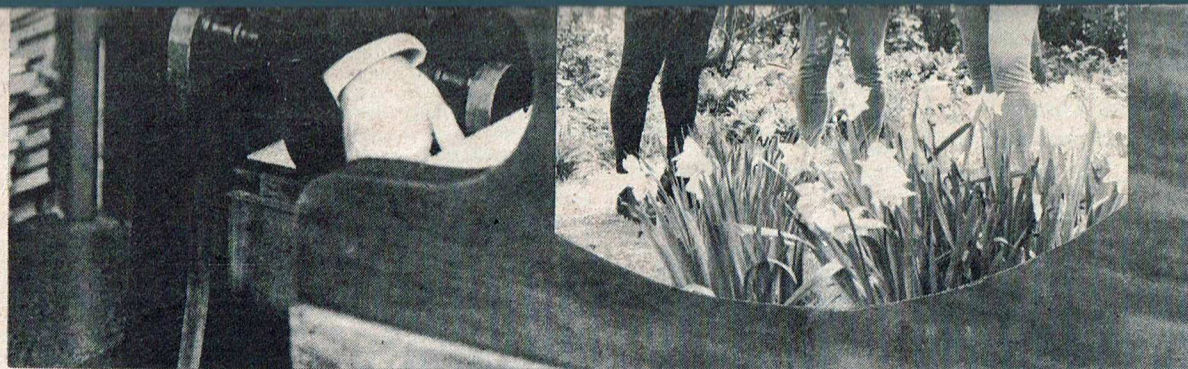
Their individuality gives them the scope to tackle almost any programme required. Apart from pop — which they do not sing and which one senses nothing short of burning at the rack would force them to sing — they will adapt their material to suit any audience anywhere.

Sometimes, their music will be entirely sacred. But when playing at dinner parties or small functions the programme has a much broader appeal, including the type of folk song rich in double, if not treble, entendre in which the British have traditionally delighted.

## LOOK LIKE

Between them, they can perform material in Spanish, Italian, German, French, Old Dutch, Greek, Latin and English, both colloquial and Queen's!

Some numbers are well known, some the result of hours of careful sifting through music libraries. Others have been specially arranged by Peter, and yet others, as their status grows, been arranged specially for them by contemporary composers.



Talking of organisers of concerts, recitals, services, society and private dinners, they can produce a tailor made programme to suit any occasion.

Tony, the very picture of what a baritone should look like, and tenor Martin, remarkably relaxed for one with so much energy, work together in Canterbury Organ Company. Peter is a part-time art teacher.

Thus, with some dexterous juggling of their working days and the long-suffering and invaluable help of their wives and families, they are able to find time for their singing commitments, now stretching well into next year.

Their tours have taken them to France, Holland and the West Country, including fringe performances at the Bath Festival. They are now looking forward to bookings in Germany, the USA and Canada.

Part of the attraction of the Clerkes' concerts is their mobility. They are not a trio noted for standing rooted to one spot for the entire recital. Instead, they like to spring up all around the audience, ringing it with their singing.

One wonders how much these tactics spring from a desire to move around and how much from necessity. One church where they sang was so small that half the audience was invisible to them. To give all a chance to see as well as hear the trio, they sang from five separate parts of the church — and con-

tinued singing as they scurried from spot to spot!

With their impeccable musical backgrounds, Tony, Martin and Peter are able to call upon a wide range of period instruments to complement their voices. They include harpsichord, spinet, chamber organ, piano, cello, recorders, bells, tambourines and vulgano.

For any readers thinking, "What on earth is a vulgano?" the first four words of this paragraph will give an acronym of its approximate sound!

But such light touches of showmanship also present the trio with one of their greatest quandaries. Just how far can one go in packaging such an act with all the trappings of showbiz without losing credibility in the eyes of fellow music lovers?

## BIT WARY

They are even a bit wary of being photographed in the Tudor costumes they sometimes don for part of their programme for fear of seeming too gimmick orientated.

But any such fears are dispelled as soon as they start to sing. In the words of a colleague of this paper, "Solidly based, delicately balanced, serenely topped, the gorgeous sound of their voices lingers in the memory."

Enquiries for bookings should be addressed to Canterbury Clerkes, 33a Gordon Road, Canterbury.

**The Canterbury Clerkes, a trio of soloists specialising in medieval music. Left to right: Martin Renshaw (tenor), Peter Giles (counter tenor) and Tony Bussell (baritone). Inset, the Clerkes in period costume. Pictures by Mike Waterman.**



Several of the students at Canterbury College of Technology await the examiner's verdict of their craft work. Left to right: Parvin Sheybani, Jean Maflin, Penelope Lyndon, Christine Body, Christine Perry, Hayley Gowers, Janice Priston, Hilary Baker and Glenice Brissenden.

tricity, and are instructed in cookery and English to complete the course.

Part of the field work for second-year students completing their course has involved a group project which they have organised themselves. One group designed and made a large alphabet board with detachable symbols, all made from scraps of material, at a cost of only 20p. An ideal educational toy, the finished article is to be given to the Mary Sheridan Centre.

Another project was a sturdy, open-plan dolls' house with furniture made from household junk. This will be handed to the Gingerbread day nursery, where some of the girls have been working.

for only 40p each. Children eligible for the scheme are those up to 14 who would normally be charged half the adult fare.

