Citation for Professor Lionel Pike

Chairman of Council, it is my pleasure to present to you Professor Lionel Pike.

The reasons for this honour are his special contribution to Music and his outstanding achievement as College Organist.

Lionel Pike’s affection for church choral music began at the age of ten when he was a chorister at Bristol Cathedral. Six years later he became an organ scholar there. This title he also held at Pembroke College Oxford where he achieved a first-class BA degree in music. Before matriculating he was awarded his ARCO. By 1970 he had gained his DPhil and was awarded the Limpus Prize for the highest marks of the year gained for all the techniques of organ performance in the examination for the FRCO.

Coupled with each of the titles from Assistant Lecturer to Professor at Royal Holloway he was College Organist. He also was Dean of the Faculty of Music of the University of London from 1988-92. Throughout his academic career he has published an impressive number of books. His first in 1978, *Beethoven, Sibelius and Profound Logic* was adjudged by *Choice* magazine to be one of the best academic books of the year in any subject. A reviewer said it was lucid and closely argued and he had learnt more about these symphonies than from anything else he had read. Lionel has been fascinated by the logic of musical composition, whatever the period. He was congratulated for his detailed examination of the ‘Hexachord System’ since knowledge and expertise of this had diminished during the last 400 years. His *Hexachords in Late Renaissance Music* was published in 1998. Turning to the 20th, the widely held myth of amateurishness in Vaughan Williams’ compositions and orchestration was exploded by his full and comprehensive book entitled, * Vaughan Williams and the Symphony*. 
It was not perhaps surprising that as both a scholar and choral director he should make a study of the English ballet. His book *The Evolution of the English Ballet: Pills to Purge Melancholy* addresses the transitions in the repertory of English Renaissance secular music. We are familiar with the singing of madrigals during College Dinners; an idea suggested by Professor Ian Spink, encouraged by Tony Boog, the Catering Officer and executed by Lionel. Hence, we have the yearly tradition of the St Cecelia’s Feast.

Henry Purcell and Robert Simpson may seem to have little in common but for the attention given to them by Professor Pike. On the one hand, he was asked to edit the entire output of Purcell’s symphony anthems and on the other, through his personal acquaintance with Simpson, he was able to lecture and write on the analysis of the composer’s symphonies and chamber works. It was a befitting gesture that the Robert Simpson Society should offer the composer’s archives to Lionel for safe keeping at this College.

The position of College Organist includes the directorship of the Chapel Choir. For Lionel, the quality of sacred music offered in acts of worship has always been of the utmost importance for his Christian faith. Over three decades his personality and discipline in the training of organ and choral scholars have been far-reaching. Very many of them have become organists and lay clerks in our cathedrals. Additionally, so many former members of the unauditioned Chapel Choir continue to enjoy contributing to the country’s Church choral tradition. They carry forward his standards and values and so make a lasting contribution to the religious life of this country. Lionel composed a variety of works for the Chapel Choir, often in acceptance of a commission. Other composers have also written for the Choir knowing of the quality of its singing. However, as some works were too difficult to perform by all members these were taken on by the specialist arm he created, Schola Cantorum.

Apart from the daily singing in the Chapel, a tradition from the founding of the College, the Choir has given live broadcasts and sung in most English Cathedrals. The annual foreign tours have given the Choir opportunities to sing in many large churches and cathedrals on the continent including Notre Dame in Paris, St Peter’s in Rome, St Thomas Kirche, Bach’s church in Leipzig and Wawel Cathedral in Krakow.
Although invitations were extended from the USA, Russia and Latin America, these could not be funded. Much of the funding had to be raised each year through the sales of CDs; fourteen were made under Lionel Pike’s direction.

Chairman, it is interesting that the subject of his DPhil was the ‘Vocal Music of Peter Phillips’, since in his retirement Lionel is returning to examine the life of this English composer, who for religious reasons was forced to compose in the Netherlands.

Lionel has always been focused and faithful, innovative, and inspirational, a team builder and a talented musician.

In recognition, therefore, of his very special contribution to music and his outstanding achievement as College Organist, may I invite you, Chairman of Council to induct as an Honorary Fellow of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, Professor Lionel Pike.

Dr Richard Hancock
Honorary Fellow
17 May 2007