

THE REDISCOVERY OF ARMSTRONG-GIBBS.

Tonight's Commemoration Service for Danbury composer Armstrong Gibbs is an occasion of deep satisfaction for many people. The dedication during this service of a memorial plaque to him is the culmination of many years of working towards this recognition. The Parochial Church Council of St. John the Baptist has joined in a joint initiative with the Chelmsford Borough Council, the Danbury Society and the Danbury Parish Council so that at last the manifold gifts and skills of this extraordinary man can be celebrated. It is good to be able to welcome not only the Mayor of Chelmsford and representatives of these other bodies to this service tonight, but also the composer's daughter Anne. Amazingly it was when the Diocesan Advisory Committee were meeting here in church to discuss the siting of the memorial plaque some months ago that Anne and Lyndon Rust fortuitously chanced to enter the building on an informal visit. Together with the research undertaken by Angela Aries for a forthcoming biography of the composer, there has been a growing sense that the time was now right for his contribution to English music to be acknowledged and evaluated. The splendid performance of his Choral Symphony "Odysseus" in Chelmsford Cathedral last night under the conductorship of Peter Cross provided a unique opportunity to hear the full range of Armstrong Gibbs' talents as a composer. After tonight's service there will also be an opportunity, at the Reception in the Meeting Room, to hear one or two of his songs and some cello pieces – the more intimate kind of music for which he has formerly been well-known. Tonight's service however also represents a very special kind of coming together: on the one hand of those who offer worship to God here regularly in this parish in our seasonal series of Choral evensongs: on the other

