



# Faces for 1978

# QUEEN'S

▼ **Clyde Hopkins**, just turned thirty, showed a strong group of brightly coloured paintings and bristling black pastel drawings in one of the better Spring Shows at the Arts Council's Serpentine Gallery last year. He has taught for a living all over England but lives and works in London. He is totally committed to the traditional means of painting and drawing in his search for a way of reconciling vestiges of the physical world around him with the definition, in graphic or painted abstractions, of his own most personal reactions to this world. What comes through is a kind of fantasy place, landscape, or interior which is also a situation – but he goes further than Bruce Russell in changing that situation into the weight and grandeur of a private ceremony. His paintings have the chunky vivacity of the best images of Howard Hodgkin – but the 'imagery' in Clyde Hopkins's paintings and drawings stems more directly from those apparently random but decisive tracteries of action and impulsive convergences of shapes which we first saw in abstract expressionism, in the earlier work of Pollock and De Kooning. But the radiantly expansive work of Hopkins avoids stylistic traps or any easy classification – this is English painting at its most dynamic. The drawings are done for their own sake and not to serve as sketches for paintings, and have a comparable splendour.



▼ **Bruce Russell** is a thirty-two-year-old artist whose diamond-shaped paintings elegantly poised in structure, decisively balanced in subtly cheerful colour set against sharp black areas, shone out conspicuously in the somewhat rambling miscellany of recent pictures in the final section of the Silver Jubilee exhibition of British art at Burlington House. His work was selected for that occasion by a fellow artist, John Hoyland; and Russell has himself given generous support to a number of other artists – and not only among his contemporaries – by presenting shows of their work at the Newcastle Polytechnic where for the past four years he has stimulated a lot of activity as Senior Lecturer. Having given contemporary art a big boost in Newcastle, he's just returned to London to live and work – with a show coming up in March at Ian Birksted's new gallery in Flask Walk, Hampstead. Last winter, Russell's show at the AIR gallery in London consolidated great promise shown in recent paintings, all diamond-shaped, called the *Gallowgate* series and named after the Newcastle football stadium. A cheerful, energetic, extrovert man, Russell is keen on sport and runs several miles every morning before tackling the work on hand. The content of his painting is abstract; it also expresses a strong sense of energetic movement, caught in equilibrium. The pictures are enjoyable and convincing because Russell's use of paint and colour is so sure and acute – and this sensibility will doubtless triumph over a tendency to design rather than compose, a tendency accentuated by his trust in the systematic exploration of format: a circular shaped canvas has now replaced the diamond.



► **William Henderson**, in his mid-thirties, received a minor Arts Council grant this year purely on the exceptional merit of his current painting; but over half the grant – designed to relieve him for a short spell of an excessive teaching load – must go to meet the costs of bringing in electricity to the Spartan converted garage in which he lives and works, in Brixton. Quiet in manner, modest and composed in bearing, Henderson is like most of his contemporaries: uncomplaining and getting on with it, but teaching – wherever he can find work – most of the week to survive economically. Authority of talent must find its own vitality in Henderson's case, because his painting has immense panache, recently achieved after a decade or so spent in a very exactly modulated investigation of monochromatic grid structures and variations on a single theme, changing all the time, in paintings and drawings. The great thing about Henderson is the fact that he's working at a time when the very act of painting is still struggling to re-establish its validity after a long period when other media, from video to performance art, have secured the attention of official-

► **Kate Flowers**. When she sang *Despina* on the Glyndebourne tour last autumn, in Peter Hall's production of *Così fan Tutte*, the question was why wasn't this thoroughly assured and freshly detailed performance being seen at the festival as well? The voice has only just settled down: at college she was a mezzo; at the Opera Centre she was type-cast as a 'soubrette' (ghastly term) and seemed destined for a career of singing pert maids; now she has emerged as a lyric soprano with creamy, even tone under perfect technical control. The voice still has to expand, she thinks, and eventually she will go on to the lighter Puccini and Verdi roles, and, of course, Mozart – but not yet. This year she sings in Henze's *Don Quixote* at the Round House, and has a comic (but not pert) role in *Die Schweigsame Frau* and the part of Amore in *Ulysses*, both at Glyndebourne. She is also recording a song show for Southern