



ELEAZAR DE CARVALHO, conductor of the Rio de Janeiro Symphony orchestra, left, congratulates Hugh Ross, guest conductor at yesterday's concert, and Richard Westbrook of Dayton who rehearsed the Inland Children's chorus. Carvalho was guest at the performance.

Inland Chorus, Philharmonic Are Hailed

By MERAB EBERLE
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Local talent has never before appeared in so spectacular a production as it did yesterday afternoon at Memorial hall when the Inland Children's chorus, augmented at some points to 200 voices, and the Dayton Philharmonic orchestra presented Benjamin Britten's "Saint Nicolas."

Now, any one who had thought Saint Nicolas would appear in his modern version, Santa Claus, was a surprised individual. For here was no red-garbed, plump, white-whiskered fellow but rather the austere mystic, fourth century Bishop of Myra, from whose deeds of kindness has sprung up the present Santa observance.

Little that can be vouched for historically remains to us of Nicolas' life, but legend says he walked the water, raised the dead, gave all he had to the poor, and stilled a storm by his prayers.

Past Comes To Life

Britten, contemporary British composer, has great power to impart color. And through the somber opening music of "Saint Nicolas" he seemed to evoke the long gone past and bring it forth in awesome atmosphere.

The orchestra was seated below the stage. To either side of the orchestra, on tiers, were singing children. On the stage itself, in balcony effect, were more singers and in the center was a smaller stage where episodes in the life of Nicolas were enacted.

Hugh Ross, noted choral and orchestral conductor from the East, directed the performance which progressed with amazing smoothness.

While the children called upon Nicolas to emerge from the past, curtains of the center stage drew back to show what looked like a stained glass window centered by Nicolas in all the glittering glory of his bishop robes. And as they pled he stepped forth. And sang beautifully, for the role of Nicolas was assumed by David Lloyd, tenor of the New York Opera company.

Again and again the curtain of the center stage opened upon episodes in the life of Nicolas.

Then, at length, the bishop appeared again as a figure in stained glass window, but the point of devotion had changed to another panel of the window—one depicting the Virgin Mary and the Child.

And while the chorus sung ardent praise, silver Christmas trees at rear of stage and flanking its side sprang to colored light which fell joyously on the long-skirted blue gowns of the girl choristers and the dark garb of the boys.

Singers Are Praised

The Inland Singers who had been rehearsed for long weeks by Richard Westbrook did exceedingly well. So did Dayton's orchestra. Isabel Herbst was at the organ. Milthilda Gilbert and Paul Jones were pianists.

Robert Allen Davis, New York illustrator and artist, designed sets and costumes.

At the opening of the program, Hugh Ross conducted the Philharmonic in the presentation of Beethoven's "Consecration of the House" and Brahms' "Academic Festival Overture." Ross directed with superb energy and great appreciation of dynamics.

The Inland chorus appeared, too, in the presentation of a group of Christmas carols which came to a close with Adolphe Adam's "Holy Night" in which a boy soprano sang to great effect. We are grateful that new supplies in the matter of boy sopranos keep coming.