

Over the Teacups

With Lelia D. Routzohn

For an old-fashioned thrill that sends nice healthy "goopusriggles" up and down your spine, hearken to the Inland Children's chorus—and watch Richard Westbrook direct it.

Great audiences have listened to the finished programs of these youngsters; few have seen a performance in the making. This is another show entirely—verily an attraction which seven times seven justifies its being.

They rehearse at the Industries building. Various sections practice during the week, and the combined group meets Saturday afternoons. The song birds, 7 to 16 years old, often arrive early to slide down the bannisters, play tag and poke each other in the nose. Some gather about the piano for a late rendition of "The Mocking Bird," while others form chatty circles to compare notes of the week.

Cinderella had nothing on these boys and girls. At 1 o'clock sharp the noisy little toads are in their seats, eyes forward and bodies still, transferred to the world of music by the magic wand of tall, well-groomed director Westbrook. At the command of his stick the room full of stripes and calico, cowlicks and curls swells into "Invocation to Saint Cecilia."

"Sing, sing till the halls of heav'n rejoice." In the alto section Mat Phelan and Leonard Winchell give their all. Roseann Houser makes the most of the first soprano part. Oakley Dagley takes his music seriously, as does little Tim Connair.

Tap, tap, tap. Mr. Westbrook stops the singing to reprimand a rogue in the front row.

"Candy? You have three demerits already. Two more, and you take a walk."

The chorus begins again, this time with a cantata, "A Festal Day." Next comes "Gesù Bambino," with June Albers doing the alto solo. Sixteen-year-old June has decided that music will be her career. At the moment Deanna Durbin is her ideal.

There are 158 potential Lawrence Tibbets and Jessica Dragonettes in this chorus, 62 boys and 96 girls. Auditions were held for the concert which will be given with the Philharmonic orchestra at the Masonic temple December 19. Fifty boys and fifty girls will present this program; and there isn't anything you could

name that would have kept them from rehearsal the last few weeks.

How Richard Westbrook comes out of those two-hour practices in one piece is hard to comprehend. After all, each of those 158 rascals reveals his personality in various ways. However, they like their director and he loves to work with children—personalities and all. So that must be the secret. When asked who their favorite musicians were, most of them replied, "Mr. Westbrook" or "Mr. Katz." When you see them at their annual performance it would be well to remember that in those Priscilla frocks and Eton jackets are lovable, hard-working children whose talents have been developed by one of Dayton's most promising musicians.

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