

Children's Favorites/Leslie Coram

YOUNG VOICES IN CONCERT

Contrary to popular belief, you do not have to travel to Vienna to hear one of the finest boy choirs in the world. You can stay right here and take your choice of six December performances by the world-famous **Atlanta Boy Choir**.

Holiday fare offered by the choir includes Mozart's "Missa Brevis," Gustav Holst's "This Day"—a potpourri of better known Christmas carols, and other Christmas songs and carols.

The group is under the direction of Fletcher Wolfe, who admits that when he founded the choir 17 years ago, he hardly knew what a boy choir was. He says he learned from the boys what he should do. The boys must have been excellent teachers because the Atlanta Boy Choir is now ranked up there with the Vienna Boy Choir by some of the world's leading music critics, including some in Vienna.

Actually, Wolfe took a lesson from nature as well. He observed that children have a more refined sense of pitch and rhythm than adults. Babies cry from the diaphragm—as opposed to the less approved vocal chords—and it's only adults who tend to tense up. And looking at the animal kingdom, Wolfe says he learned from the birds. A tiny bird can sing and be heard a city block away, he observed, while an opera diva might put her all into a song and not be heard past the 26th row.

Wolfe's secret is in taking the innate sense of rhythm and pitch that is natural to every boy, then honing it to perfection while attempting to keep everything relaxed and natural. In so doing, he teaches techniques a boy can use the rest of his life. It's quality Wolfe strives for; the quantity he leaves for later. He avoids trying to get too much sound from a small person.

For a boy to become part of the Atlanta Boy Choir, he must first attend an audition, where Wolfe is looking for a creative personality as much as for a good sense of pitch and rhythm. A solo singing voice is not necessary. But "head resonance," or a voice with a "dome", is a must. Wolfe teaches the boys to sing, aiming primarily for a blending of voices.

The older boys primarily sing serious concert music, with heavy emphasis on the religious since most boy choir music is of this nature. The lyrics may be in Latin, German, or French, so Wolfe may find himself giving a language lesson at any given time.

The Choir tours each year, frequently to foreign countries. The boys' smattering of German became almost a necessity two years ago when they visited in the homes of the Vienna Boy Choir.

When the voice change sneaks up on them and they're forced to graduate, they remain loyal alumni. A choir made up of alumni sings with the Concert Choir twice a year. A tradition at the Christmas program, all past members in the audience go up front to the stage for the performance of *Adeste Fidelis*.

Here are the December concerts:
First Baptist Church of Marietta, Dec. 8, 3 p.m. Free.

Cathedral of Christ the King, Their official Christmas Concert, Dec. 9, 8 p.m. For tickets, call 892-1908.

Tullie Smith House, Yule Log ceremony, Dec. 14, 4 p.m. Free. On the grounds of the Atlanta Historical Society, 3099 Andrews Drive, N.W.

Lighting of the Christmas Tree, in the Galleria of the Atlanta Memorial Arts Center 1280 Peachtree Rd. Dec. 15, 5 p.m. Free.

Family Christmas Festival Con-

cert with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Dec. 17, 9 p.m. Civic Center. Tickets from the Arts Center box office, 892-2412.

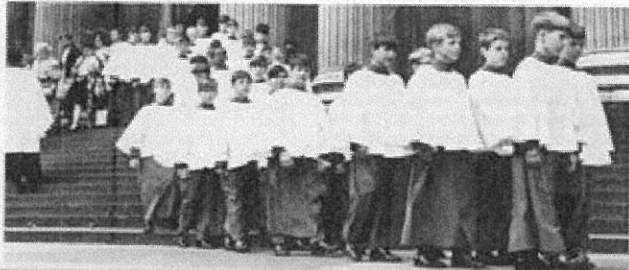
The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra begins its season of **Tiny Tots Concerts** this month, with half the orchestra at each performance under the direction of conducting assistant Alan Balter. Concerts are scheduled for Dec. 10 at Decatur Recreation Center, 231 Sycamore St.; Dec. 11 at Southwest Christian Church, 4330 Washington Rd., East Point; Dec. 12 at St. James United Methodist Church, 4400 Peachtree Dunwoody Rd.; and Dec. 13 at Dunwoody Methodist Church, 1548 Mt. Vernon Rd. 9:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. at each location. Holiday concerts are scheduled for the Galleria of the Atlanta Memorial Arts Center Dec. 26 at 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. and Dec. 27, 28 at 10:15 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Tickets for each concert are \$1.50. Call Peter Stelling at 892-13600.

The Atlanta Public Library's suburban branches are planning a variety of Christmas programs, details of which are available by calling your nearest branch. All programs are free.

Don't miss **The Nutcracker Ballet** (see "On Stage") or the Christmas carols, Santa Clauses and decorations at shopping malls throughout the city (see "Shopping Bag").

Pollack Puppets presents an original Christmas story, **Santa and the Glitter Monster** at The Playhouse, 595 Atlanta St., Roswell Square, Roswell. Performances are Dec. 10-12 at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 4 p.m. (these dates reserved for groups such as birthday parties, scouts, daycare centers, etc.); Dec. 26-28 at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., open to the public. Admission \$1. Groups 75c. Marionettes will be featured. Call Michael Pollack, 627-1420.

Rich's will be featuring Sid and Marty Kroff with their enjoyable **H. R. Pufnstuff** musical-variety show at Rich's downtown store. Performances Dec. 9-14, 11, 2:30, & 4:30; Dec. 16-21, 11, 2:30, & 8. All tickets \$1. For tickets call Penelope Penn, 586-2505. □



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