

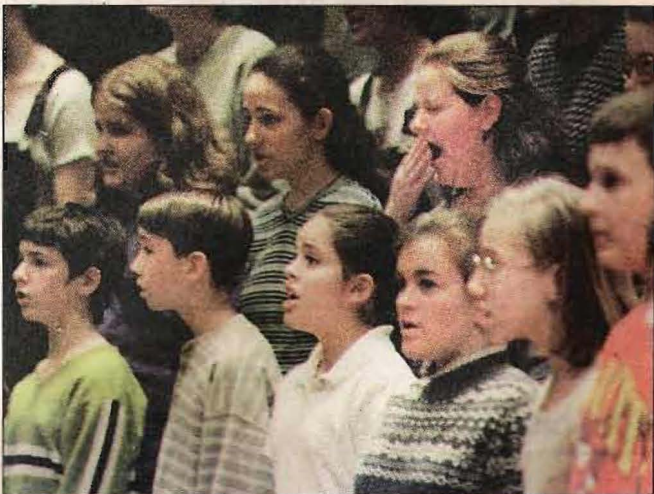
Right:

Violinist So Jin Kim, 12, reacts to praise of assistant conductor David Amado during orchestra rehearsal.



Far Right: A portion of the Youth Choirs at Powell Hall.

Identified are Ashley Heath (white shirt, center) and Diane Coone, stifling a yawn.



KAREN ELSHOUT / POST-DISPATCH

# A natural match



David Loebel directs the combined Youth Orchestra and Children's Choirs.

## Symphony Children's Choirs and Youth Orchestra perform together for the first time

BY PAUL HAMPEL  
Of the Post-Dispatch



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**E**ver wonder about the future of classical music in St. Louis? Vital signs can be monitored Friday night when the St. Louis Symphony Children's Choirs and the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra perform together for the first time.

"The audience is in for a real treat," boasts Pat Niehaus, program administrator for the Children's Choirs. "These are two young groups that have very high skill levels."

The Powell Hall concert will include the world premiere of "And the Angel Said," by Canadian composer John Burge. The piece was commissioned for this event by Ethelyn Sparfeld, artistic director of the Children's Choirs.

"It seemed like a natural that these two student groups should perform together at this time," said Peggy Neilson, manager of the Youth Orchestra. "We're both planning important trips this summer and need to raise money."

The Youth Orchestra, which performs under the direction of St. Louis Symphony associate conductor David Loebel, was one of five



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Patrice Jackson plays the cello for the Youth Orchestra.

orchestras selected to participate in a summer festival in Interlochen, Mich.

The Concert Choir, a 65-member subset of the Children's Choirs, has been invited to a summer workshop in Arvika, Sweden.

"The kids are great at selling tickets and helping with fund-raising them-

selves. And we've had a lot of luck with community gifts," Niehaus said. "But this show is crucial to helping us make the trip."

Both organizations are open to any student in the metropolitan area who can pass a rigorous audition. The Youth Orchestra counts members from as far away as Rolla and Cape Girardeau. Yearly tuition is \$85 for the orchestra, \$350 to \$500 for the choirs. Both groups offer financial aid to qualifying students, though tuition covers only a portion of expenses.

Total membership in the Children's Choirs is around 400. The students range in age from 8 to 18. The annual operating budget for the group is \$460,000, according to Niehaus.

Neilson estimates yearly expenses for the 105 members of the Youth Orchestra, ages 12 to 22, at around \$65,000.

The Youth Orchestra was founded in 1969, operating under the auspices of the St. Louis Symphony. The Children's Choirs, which turns 20 this year, merged with the Symphony in 1996.

Both ensembles have provided immeasurable musical experience and education for thousands of students, while attempting to instill crucial lessons in responsibility, self-discipline and coopera-

See Children, Page G3

**Classical youth**  
When: St. Louis Symphony Children's Choirs and St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra  
When: 8 p.m. Friday  
Where: Powell Hall, 718 North Grand Boulevard  
How much: \$10-\$25  
Info: 993-9626

## Children

### Symphony kids' orchestra and choirs join forces

Continued from Page G1

tion. All three values will come to the fore at Friday night's performance.

"Both groups are well-prepared on their own, so this was not so much a challenge musically," Neilson said.

Niehaus agreed. "The tricky part of this show was fitting 150 members of the choir on the same stage with 105 members of the orchestra," she said.

The concert will begin with two joined pieces, the first being the Burge world premier. The second will be "He, Watching Over Israel,"

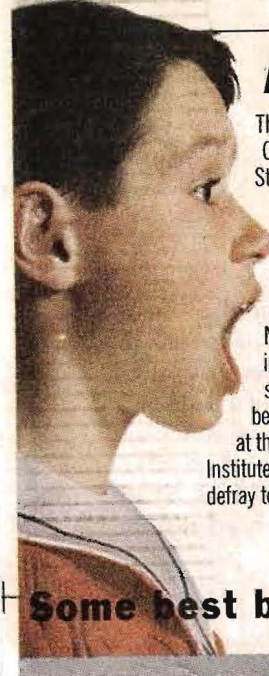
from "Elijah," a work for choirs and orchestra by Mendelssohn.

The orchestra will exit the stage and the choirs, directed by Sparfeld, will perform seven songs, including "See the Gypsies," by Zoltan Kodaly, and "Measure Me, Sky," by James Mulholland.

When the singers have finished, the orchestra, under the direction of assistant conductor David Amado, will have the stage to itself for performances of Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet Overture Fantasy" and the "Overture to Benvenuto Cellini," by Berlioz.



## Get Out Friday



### Angelic voices

The St. Louis Symphony Children's Choirs and the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra join forces for a benefit concert at 8 p.m. in Powell Hall, 718 North Grand Boulevard. The orchestra plans to participate in the National Youth Orchestra Festival in Interlochen, Mich., this summer and choir members will be the Guest Artists in Residence at the Choral Music Experience Institute in Sweden. Proceeds will defray tour costs. \$5-\$25. (534-1700)

Some best bets for things t