

People and Places

By Jeanne Belle



St. Louis Children's Choirs

"Once upon a song, a choir grew...its seeds; young people and music...its purpose; the pursuit of musical excellence"

Ten years ago, these seeds were planted in the St. Louis area and today a group of talented young artists make up the organization known as the **St. Louis Children's Choirs**. For the past two and a half years, this national award winning group has been practicing in Town & Country; first in Town & Country Commons and now in West County Technical School. This group of 138 dedicated young people in grades one through 12 are of many different backgrounds from the St. Louis area.

The **St. Louis Children's Choirs**, a non-profit organization, in addition to providing exceptional performance opportunities for its members, also provides - through a faculty with a broad range of professional music experience and training -- an opportunity for outstanding vocal training and musical fellowship.

The organization is broken into four groups to best fit individual needs:

Children's Choir (beginning); **Chorale** (intermediate); **Concert Choir** (advanced); and **Chamber Singers** (SATB ensemble). Children interested in participating in **SLCC** audition for placement in one of the four progressively advanced groups.

Ethelyn Sparfeld, Musical Director of **SLCC** since 1982, is quite enthusiastic about this year's performance opportunities for the choir.

"**Leonard Slatkin**, director of the **St. Louis Symphony**, has invited us to sing the 'AH' Chorus in *The Nutcracker* in December and the concert version of Verdi's *Otello* in February, both at Powell Symphony Hall. In September we participated in a fun event, an all day song-fest, floating down the Mississippi aboard *The President*. We were part of a large group of musicians attempting to set a record, the largest floating choir, for the *Guinness Book of World Records!*"

The group also serves the community by giving holiday and seasonal performances, doing singing telegrams for Mother's Day and Father's Day, and performing at events

sponsored by the **Arts & Education Council**, such as the **Children's Art Festival** at the **Missouri Botanical Gardens** in October. In addition to a few scheduled overnight tours during the regular season, the **Concert Choir** and **Chamber Singers** go on a summer concert tour. Last summer's two-week tour took them through the Northwest ending at the **International Choir Festival** in Powell River, British Columbia. Next summer they are planning a Southwest tour and, for the summer of '90, they are planning an international tour, details yet to be announced!

SLCC, a tuition-funded organization, does receive some funding from the **Arts & Education Council** and is dependent upon grants and additional funding to support their continuing educational outreach. **Christine Pierce**, Business Manager for **SLCC** and a Town & Country resident, related a current project, both unique and apropos for raising money.

"To finish paying for our new piano, we are selling individual 'keys' for \$25. 'Key Member's' names will be inscribed on a designated plaque which will be permanently displayed in the rehearsal hall," she said. "Middle 'C' will be auctioned off at our square dance on Jan. 21, 1989!"

If you are interested in attending a performance of the **SLCC**, purchasing one of their tapes, participating with them, providing support, or want more information, call 537-3150.



The Concert Choir at Mo. Botanical Garden, and Director, Ethelyn Sparfeld. Business Director, Christine Pierce.