

Visiting Boychoir excels at Cohn

The St. Mary's Boychoir under the direction of Brahmachari Keith, performed a concert of sacred and secular works from Gregorian Chant to 20th century music at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium Monday evening.

The choir of 14 boys from Maryland, U.S.A. are on an autumn tour of the Maritime provinces.

During Christmas the choir performs in the U.S.A. This year it will be singing in Washington D.C. at the

White House and the performance will be broadcast over national television, stated Keith.

The spring tour encompasses the New England States and every second summer the boys sing in Central Europe.

The choir is planning a trip to Japan in 1984 and will soon begin preparing Japanese works. Presently the choir sings in six languages; Latin, German, English, French, Russian and Swedish.

The boys range in age from seven to fourteen years old.

"Usually a boy is not ready to go on the road until eight or nine," Keith said, "and after 13 years old, the voice changes."

In order for a boy to enter the boychoir school, "he must pass a basic audition. He must be a good

student and most of all," Keith explained, "he must have a quick mind."

There are 28 students in the school where the academic program is modeled after the Ambassador School. It consists of private tutorials and 2-1/2 to three hours of music per day. The boys are also given private voice lessons.

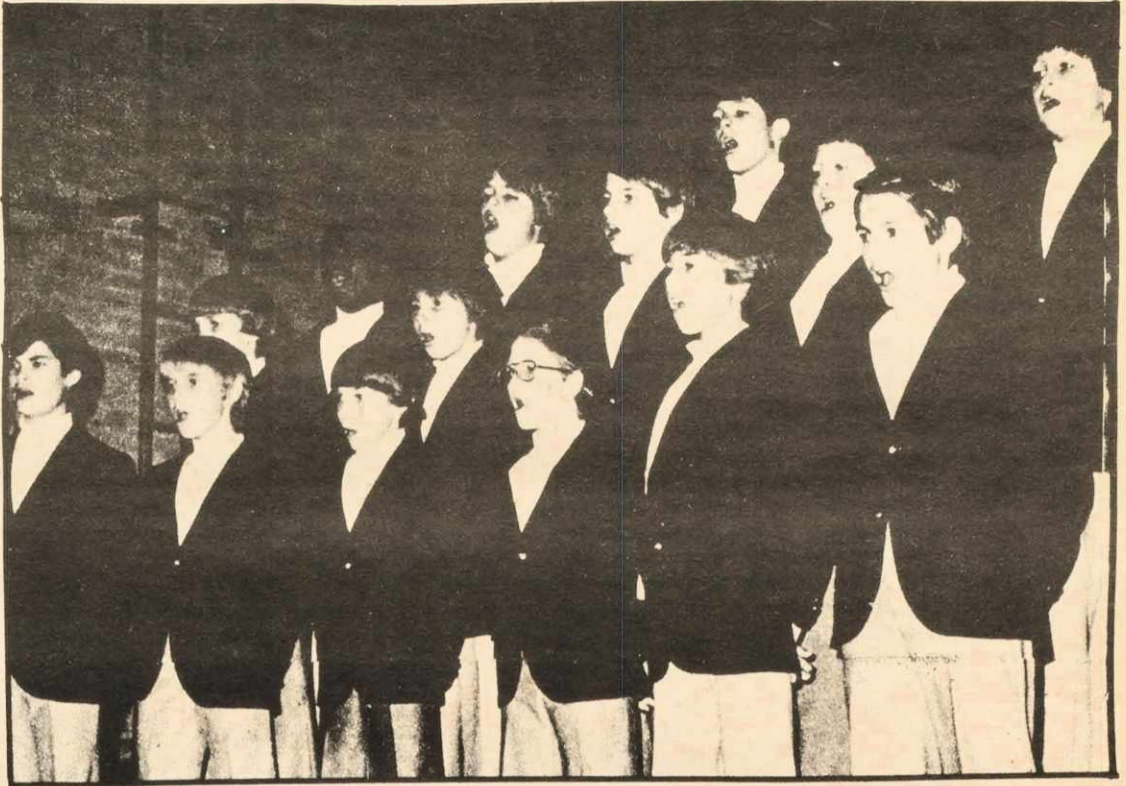
Music history, composition, theory and counterpoint make up the music curriculum and "each boy is strongly encouraged to play a musical instrument", said Keith.

The history, geography and literature taught in the school are supplemented by the education of travelling, Keith explained. Teachers are always on the tour with the boys.

"For instance today when we were in Grand Pré and learned about the Evangeline," he said, "the students

had already been taught Longfellow's poem about Evangeline."

The first part of the program was sung in Latin and English. The second part sung entirely in German performing was the 19th century "Liebeslieder Walzer," op. 52 by Johannes Brahms. The third part of the program, sung in English and French combined works from the 17th century to 20th century.



Keith, a conductor and pianist, also composed one of the pieces of the program, "Peace in Our Time."

1900 'very red'

by Greg Morgan

If I were a socialist, I might interpret the words of Alfredo Berlinghieri (Robert de Niro), spoken near the end of the film, as the work's message: "The padrone is still alive."

Bernardo Bertolucci shows, in four hours, the birth and strengthening of socialist sentiment on the large Berlinghieri farming estate in Italy. Red euphoria breaks out on Liberation Day, 1945. The peasantry begins to try Alfredo, the landlord, having already lynched the fascist chief whose ascent he had tolerated. With twenty years of armed oppression at an end, the workers proclaim the republic and the demise of semi-feudal society. They anticipate the dawn of a Communist Age. Before accounts can be settled, however, the Partisans sweep in and persuade them to surrender their weapons. The movement, it is indicated, has been emasculated.

The film has followed Alfredo and Ulmo, the Communist leader, from their births on the estate in 1900. The relationship varies in intensity, but a glue of jocular antagonism

holds it together, and around this core the story is built. It was shortened by an hour and a half for release, and the amputation may ex-

plain the cracks that run through parts of the narrative. Nevertheless, it does manage to keep several balls in the air. It sketches large historical changes which defy concise expression.

Bertolucci evokes a convincing image of communal peasant life before mechanization. You see the colours, the land and the intimate bond between the people and the things around them—all of it reminiscent of pastoral painting. Farmers dancing to pipes in the forest and children playing in stubbly fields.

Weighing Alfredo's position as he slouches before the tribunal against the authority his father had held in 1900 gives us an absolute measure of the change. The régime of the father, hardly contested by the nascent socialism, provides the picturesque pastoralism's social context. One episode deals with the destruction by hail of half the crop. The padrone, while claiming benevolence, halves his workers' wages. The question imposes itself, were landlords really that harsh? Presumably, in Italy they have barely passed from living memory. Would Bertolucci dare show this in Italy, if it were not at least symbolically accurate? Still, displays like this are rarely seen in the tepid subdivisions most of us inhabit.

More topical is the treatment of Fascists, who being a scant 35 years in the past, would be remembered by many Italians. The head Black-shirt, our Donald Sutherland, is poorly adjusted but energetic. He forces a boy to watch him sodomize his mistress and, on an afterthought, beats him to death against a wall. It seems incredible that such a man, who, on top of being murderous, is sadistic,

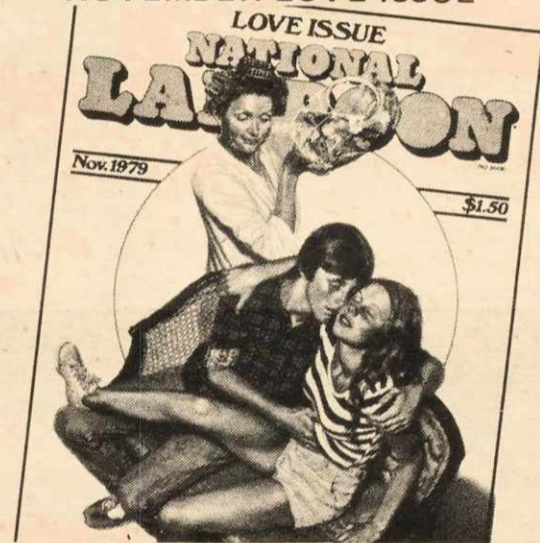
perverted, conscious of his mercenary nature, and without taste, could retain the esteem of the local landowners as well as he does. Not someone you'd likely meet at bowling. You feel a need to regard him metaphorically.

On the other hand, Alfredo and his Art Deco wife, Adda, do it artfully, and with the recommended posture. When the couple's wedding reception is dampened by a grisly discovery, Fascist work, to be sure, innocent Ulmo is flogged while his boyhood friend, Alfredo, stands complacently by. After the fray, Alfredo says, speaking with an air of negligence, "It's getting dark and its beginning to rain, and I think we should all leave." Indeed, the man's correct on all three counts, but this is just one place where the symbolism gets a trifle heavy.

Apparently extraneous detail abounds. Uncle Octavia, for instance, a former wastrel, now a dilettante, a man in touch with Futurism and German Expressionism. For a surreal, though facile effect, the director plays the flamboyant Adda against peasant common sense. One senses a collapse of unity in the middle third of the film. One searches vainly for a single thread that might pull all the disparate tableaux and vignettes into continuity.

1900 is a confusing, uneven movie. We are tempted to class it as a political piece, but that, I believe, would leave much passed over.

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