

News of the arts

"The Brownies" come to National Gallery of Canada

As a holiday celebration and year-end tribute to the Year of the Child, *The Brownies*, an exhibition by Palmer Cox is on display at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa until January 13, 1980.

The exhibition consists of 20 pen and ink drawings and some books illustrated by Cox, who is considered by some to be the Walt Disney of his day.

Brownies became something of an industry: over a dozen Brownie books appeared between 1893 and 1918, as well as Brownie pins, dolls, badges, games, puzzles, plays, and commercial endorsements.



National Gallery of Canada

A partial view of Palmer Cox's *The Brownies helping Jack Frost*.

Cox's Brownies are the lovable, hard-working, hard-playing, unpredictable spirits of Celtic myth — with a marked difference or two. Unlike their impish forbears, Cox's Brownies have a passion for the showy, even the bizarre, in their hand-me-down clothes.

Palmer Cox was born in Southbridge, near Granby, Quebec, in 1840. He spent most of his working life in the United States, first in San Francisco and, later, as an author, illustrator and political cartoonist, in New York. His bandy-legged Brownies appeared in 1865, and in the years that followed they were to make Cox, and themselves, world-famous.

Cox later returned to Canada, to Granby, where he died in 1924 at the age of 84.

TV production training for deaf

A sign-language project at an Edmonton cable company, which started bringing the deaf community into the mainstream of television production, has branched out into a full-fledged training program.

Two nights a week, 17 of the city's deaf community of 30,000 participated in workshops and studio practice sessions, qualifying as production personnel. They now produce shows under their own logo for the community channel operated by QCTV Cable Limited.

The production course, launched by QCTV's special project co-ordinator Marg Pullishy, evolved from a program where deaf people were taught through sign language to act as program hosts.

The obvious problem of interpersonal communication aside, the first hurdle to be faced by the deaf would-be TV producers was a technical one. Television is based on an audio intercom system for operating equipment.

"We developed a visual system which enables production to be carried out by a deaf director, video switcher, deaf cameraman and deaf host," said Mrs. Pullishy.

Amateur conductor fulfils dream

The audience at a Toronto Symphony Orchestra concert sat stony and serious through the first half of a recent evening's program until Jennie Bouck led the orchestra in a fiery rendition of Edward Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance*.

Mrs. Bouck, an octogenarian does not tour the world as a conductor. She is a life member of the symphony who has brought her baton to all performances "in case something happened to the conductor".

But she never had the opportunity to use it until that particular evening when she employed it to claim her prize in the Toronto Symphony's Dream Auction.

Always interested in serious music, Mrs. Bouck has studied voice and keyboard instruments with the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and leads the Jennie Bouck Singers, who tour churches and senior citizens' homes.

She has played the organ in 85 churches in Canada and is a life member of the Canadian Musicians Union.

The great-great grandmother won the

right to conduct the symphony in the Dream Auction when her grand-daughter raised \$2,000 from family and friends.

Asked why she chose the lively march for her *début*, Mrs. Bouck said she wanted to keep the audience awake and on its toes. All eyes were fixed on her as she led the symphony through the number. Nobody coughed.

Sing high sing low

Kids will be kids, but they may sing with deeper voices in Argentina than in Denmark and walk a little slower in Bogotá than in Vancouver. Those are among the findings of a four-year study of more than 3,000 children in five countries.

Dr. Margery Vaughan, a music education professor at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, has always been interested in individual differences between children and in the cultivation of creativity in the schools. It was this 14-year interest that led to her research on children's natural pitch and walking tempo aimed at developing a way to assist teachers in planning and implementing classroom musical activities.

Research in five countries

The research, which was carried out in Canada, England, Denmark, Argentina and Colombia, shows that while there are certain individual differences in the pitch of children's singing voices there are also measurable cross-cultural differences.

"In England, natural singing pitch is higher at age seven than elsewhere, but this does not hold for all age levels," says Vaughan. "In Denmark, children appear to pitch their voices higher at all ages than in the other countries studied.

"Canadians show less range of differences from one age group to another, and a less dramatic tapering off downward of pitch level as they mature.

"In Argentina the pitch of the voice drops dramatically between the age of ten and 11, whereas in other countries the drop is tapered over a period of years."

Dr. Vaughan notes that pitch seems to increase to age seven in all cultures, then begins to drop off.

The natural walking tempo, or pulse, of children also varies, and generally speaking, the children walk at a faster tempo in the northern cultures than in the southern ones, she says.

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