

# Vienna Choir provided perfect evening

by J.L. Round

So. What does one say about perfection - that it could have been worse?

The Vienna Choir Boys were in town. Twenty-four immaculately dressed sailors, all of whom appeared to be under the age of twelve, gave a sparkling performance Friday night to a very full and appreciative audience.

This famed troupe is a regular crowd-drawer and pleaser throughout the world. And with the superb musical discipline so readily apparent in their solos, duets and full-choir pieces it is no surprise they are.

The choir performed from a good

repertoire of pieces. The first part of the programme contained pieces in an assortment of choral styles, among them Giovanni da Groce's delicately soaring *O Sacrum Convivium*, and Poulenc's *Songs For Children*, sung with a good stroke of humour. The first part of the programme ended with a piece that caught some people by surprise. This piece, *Cantus Puerorum*, a contemporary composition by Erich Eder de Lastra, was received with diverse sentiments from the audience. A syllabic piece with several unusual sounds, it began on a nasal tone, progressed to an open-throated inflection, and sud-

denly broke into a loud dissonance. This discord quickly resolved itself into a simple, flowing harmony. Although reaction varied toward the piece, it had been executed with superlative precision and articulation.

The second part consisted solely of a comic operetta, *The Apothecary*, by Hadyn. This amusing bit revealed that the boys were quite a bunch of hams who enjoyed "mugging it," in addition to their singing.

The final part of the programme was dominated by Austrian music. Three beautiful folksongs portraying the light and laughter of the Austrian countryside followed

pieces by Schubert and Schumann. When it was announced that the unobtrusively printed "polka" beside the name Johann Strauss was to be the *Thunder And Lightning Polka* the audience was discernably thrilled. This superb piece of Viennese music by, perhaps, the best-known of Austrian composers received the longest duration of applause. It was the high point of the programme, but the high point among many great heights.

Last on the programme was *The Emperor's Waltz* by Strauss, once again favoured with the audience's applause, followed by an unidentified encore, beautifully sung, which concluded the programme.

## Neptune sponsors another success

by D. Moulton

Neptune's third play of the season, "Brecht on Brecht", is notably and appreciably different from its forerunners. The production depicts the life and personality of Bertolt Brecht through his work, his opinions, and his characters. "Brecht on Brecht" is not the typical symbolic plot ridden play; it is a biographical, yet meaningful portrayal of a man and an artist.

The two act play is arbitrarily divided into two acts: Act 1- The Man and his Work, and Act 2- The Man On and Through his Work. Act 1 deals with Brecht's life in Germany, his birth, as well as enactments of particular passages from some of his works. The second act deals with Brecht's attitude

towards the role of the playwright, the role of performers in interpreting such writers and the role of art in general. "Brecht on Brecht" ends with two fairly lengthy scenes, one a song, the other entitled "The Jewish Wife".

Brecht was a playwright, songwriter, and poet. He once said of critics, "If the critics would view my theatre as spectators do, without first emphasizing my theories, then what they would see is simply theatre, I hope, of imagination, fun and intelligence." And this is precisely the vein that "Brecht on Brecht" should be taken in. Much of the play was meant to be personal, deep, satiric, and somewhat symbolic. Its merit does not lie

here but in its ability to acquaint, with apparent ease, an audience to a fine man and a remarkable artist.

The only area of the play which delves into serious areas with any amount of gusto and deliberate intent concerns the war and Brecht's appearance before The Committee on Un-American Activities. Touched on only for brief time lapses, but touched on frequently, the effect on Brecht and his work is made obvious.

One of the most outstanding aspects of the production was the quality of the acting. Joan Oren-

stein and David Hemblen are deserving much credit. Their performances were powerful and captivating. By themselves they were able to cover for the blunders of Gordon Clapp (whose performance was weak and struggling) and the flapping, center stage mannevers of Denise Ferguson. Orenstein and Hemblen brought the print off the script pages giving depth to the play and life to Brecht.

"Brecht on Brecht" is more than a play-it is theatre--theatre at its best, and the best entertainment in town right now.

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