

Children should be seen, heard
By Sherry Slater, Times Staff Writer.

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Kids can find themselves in treble when they sing for Idalea Rubin.

In fact, that's just how the co-founder of the Children's Chorus of Carroll County wants it.

Treble represents the upper half of the music range, the vocal region where most children sing.

Rubin and chorus co-founder Diane Jones wanted to nurture these young singers.

"We wanted to have an opportunity for children who were gifted musically to have a chance to perform the finest music for treble voices," Rubin said. "Also, we wanted them to be able to be stimulated by doing very difficult music, the finest that is written for children's voices."

The 120-member Children's Chorus, which is divided into three groups, will perform some of those songs Sunday afternoon in a free, public concert on the Western Maryland College campus.

Rubin, a retired vocal music teacher, said that some of Carroll County's public schools don't have their own choruses. Those that do, she said, often don't allow students much time to study singing.

Stephanie Carlock, an eighth-grader at Mount Airy Middle School, is in her sixth year with the chorus.

"My singing has improved a lot since I started," she said. "And my sight-reading abilities and ability to find my part have greatly improved. None of the other choruses I'm in can help me with that."

Rubin said she hopes to instill in the choral children:

Proper vocal habits

Musical literacy

A sense of pride

The joy of music

Andrew Johnson, a home-schooled eighth-grader from Westminster, said he joined the group four years ago to learn more about music.

"I was into acting a lot, but it was really holding me back, not being about to read music," he said.

Andrew has appeared in Theatre on the Hill's productions of "The Secret Garden," "A Christmas Carol" and "Gypsy."

Fran Wickham, of Detour, said she thinks the benefits of participating in a chorus extend beyond the music and performance fields.

Her daughters, second-grader Elena and fourth-grader Ariel, are both in the children's chorus.

"The children who are involved are all very intelligent children," she said. "It seems to me that learning music just opens up their minds and expands their brains."

Cynthia Potee, of Sykesville, said her fifth-grader, Nathan, has responded to music since he was a baby. She said his church choir, bell choir and saxophone rehearsals have affected his personality.

“He sings solos in church sometimes. He's very confident,” she said. “I think the more exposure he has had [to music], the more confident he has become.”

Rubin said singing is a good hobby because you can't outgrow it.

“Unlike sports, which you can only do into your 30s, music is a lifelong avocation,” she said.

But, like sports, participants learn discipline, dedication and team work, she said.

“These kids are really focused,” Rubin said. “These kids learn really valuable skills.”

One thing Andrew has learned is the satisfaction of a job well done.

“It's a lot of hard work,” he said. “But the best part is when everything comes together at the end and it sounds really, really good and professional.”

Auditions for next year's Children's Chorus are scheduled for May 16, 17 and 18 at William Winchester Elementary School, 70 Monroe St., Westminster. Children who will be in grades 2 through 5 in the fall are asked to be prepared to audition between 6 and 7 p.m. any of the three days. Children who will be in grades 6 through 8 are asked to be ready between 7 and 8 p.m.

Appointments are not necessary. For more information, call