



## THE RURAL DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL CHORUS

HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF NORTHERN STATES TEACHERS COLLEGE, APR, 23, 1926

In January, 1925, the Public School Music Department of the Northern State Teachers College, on the request of the Rural Department, introduced systematic work in music in seven of the Rural Demonstration schools. In the fall of 1925, six more schools were added and in January 1926, two more. All of the fifteen Demonstration Schools now have music every day for a period of fifteen minutes, the work being done by student teachers supervised by Miss Cleve J. Carson, head of the Department of Public School Music.

Music had not previously been systematically taught in all of these schools and many obstacles were encountered such as a large percent of monotonous, poor tone quality and the absence of books of any kind to be used in a music class. Nevertheless, music went bravely on until a great percent of the out-of-tune voices were corrected, the tone quality became lighter and the children began to sing the longer songs such as folk songs of many countries instead of the shorter songs that it was necessary to teach at first.

In March, 1926, ninety children responded to the invitation to sing together as a chorus for the Mid-year Educational Conference held at Northern State Teachers College at that time. This was the first attempt of this kind with the Demonstration Schools associated with the Teachers College and also the first chorus of its kind in South Da-

kota. Very few such choruses have been attempted in the United States as they are possible only in Ohio and the eastern states where there is state and county supervision of music.

The warm reception the children received at the first chorus attempted, made them eager for the big concert held in Aberdeen on April 23 in connection with the Rural Demonstration School Rally Day on which day they also had their music memory contest.

If "Music for every child and every child for music" is to become a reality and not a dream, then the over fifty percent of rural children in our country must be taught more than the ability to drone out "America" and one or two other tunes so often the case in the one-teacher schools. Work in music appreciation and well directed singing should not be confined to our city schools; music is a heritage to which every child in America is entitled, the rural child included. The Rural Demonstration school Chorus is an exemplification of the fact that the rural child **CAN** sing and should be an objective plea for affording opportunities to the 77,000 children in our South Dakota rural schools to sing and to appreciate music.

A systematic course in music appreciation also has been given the children in the Demonstration Schools. During the year about a score of the world's masterpieces in music have been studied.

A selection is played on the phonograph, and the student teacher gives an exposition of the motif or theme, the circumstances under which the piece was composed and some of the interesting facts about the author. The selection is played frequently during the term and the children acquire marked ability in distinguishing the masterpieces played.

On Rally Day nearly a score of the great musical masterpieces of the world were played on instruments, not on the phonograph as the children had previously heard them. The children were asked to write the name of each selection, the name of the composer and the name of the country to which he belonged. This work was done so well that the judges found it very difficult to decide on the winning school.

On Rally Day the children also participated in contests in geography, picture study and number work. Test flash cards were run on a Auto-Flash-Card machine, the time exposure of each card not exceeding four seconds. It was found necessary to give a second and even a third test in order to decide some of these contests, the children all scoring perfect in the first test. Liberal prizes were awarded in each contest and a grand prize of \$25.00 to the school winning the most honor points was provided by Charles Howard of Aberdeen.

### SELECTIONS PLAYED IN THE N. S. T. C. RURAL DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL MUSIC APPRECIATION CONTEST

- Traumerei—Schumann—German.
- Dance Macabre—Saint Saens—French.
- Dagger Dance, from "Natoma"—Herbert—American.
- William Tell Overture—Rossini—Italian.
- Morning, from "Peer Gynt Suite"—Grieg—Norwegian.
- Anitra's Dance, from "Peer Gynt Suite"—Grieg—Norwegian.
- Minuet in G—Beethoven—German.
- Marche Slave—Tschaiowski—Russian.
- Prelude Act II, from "Lohengrin"—Wagner—German.
- Elegie—Massenet—French.
- Ave Maria—Bach-Gounod—German-French.
- Deep River—Folk tune. Spiritual—American Negro.
- The Swan (Le Cygne)—Saint Saens—French.
- If With All Your Hearts, from "Elijah"—Mendelssohn.
- Home to Our Mountains, from "Il Trovatore"—Verdi—Italian.