MUSIC MAKING FAMILY AFFAIR OF TRAPP CHOIR: Their Folk Songs, Costumes Win High Praise

BY CLAUDIA CASSIDY

Perhaps the most disarming concert attraction now before the public is the Trapp Family choir, that matriarchal troupe of music makers which returned yesterday to Orchestra Hall. First ensconced into the limelight by Lotte Lehmann, who had heard them when she was traveling at Salzburg, they are now so much a part of the American scene they prefer their new home in Vermont's Green Mountains to the ancestral estates to which they were accustomed when the nazis were driven from the Austrian Tyrol.

Yet their costumes, their music, and most of their tradition belong to the older pattern, and when they acquire a song from their adopted country, the chances are it will be a folk song of the mountains, instinctively right for their familiar design.

Mostly a Family Affair

For this music making is most of all a family affair, made by the stately baroness von Trapp and her seven tall daughters under the direction of the family priest, Dr. Franz Werner, who this time was absent, Werner von Trapp, was basic from the army to sing tenor and play the violin da gamba. In the familiar chamber orchestra with recorders and spinet, but Johannes von Trapp, still confines himself to taking a bow with the piano, the Baron von Trapp, who yesterday entertained us with the scope of his choral performance. Usually the baron makes one smiling appearance, in the duet and a few songs. This time, when the baroness introduced him, he got lost in one word and fast. He jerked a quick thumb in her direction and said proudly, "Mama!"

Despite the fact that they have medals galore for musical performance, it is none too wise to hear the Trapps as you go to the usual concert. It's far better to attend in the first place what you usually end by believing, that you are the guest of a family wedding. While it wouldn't preciously welcome any tax-exempt sons-in-law might not bar them from participation, one theory that the primary joy of music lies in its making. So despite the delicate beauty of much of the choir's way with music of Pastoureaux and Orlando di Lasso you may now and then hear a sound where the spirit is willing the voice is weak.

Recalls Melchior's Waiting

It is quite possible that you may find the recorder more funny than to hear played, in which case the Telemann Trio Sonatas for recorders, spinet, and viol da gamba set you thinking of giant Lauritz Melchior, who, marrowed on a frail gold chair for a similar session, wailed, "Oh, my aching Bach!"

But even should it all come shining back to the family's bus driver, who also sells souvenirs (the family fleet goes to Austin to help feed the hungry). Should you actually set to depart, you will say, "I can't go, the best parts still to come." And it is, if you prefer the family in even gayer costume, strolling in folk songs and wonderful yoelds, none with explanations so charmingly made by the Baroness that the songs yet written could live up to what she makes you expect of them.