

October 27, 1944*
The Dayton Herald



UNIQUE GESTURE of the Inland Children's Chorus at the organization meeting of the Junior Friends of the Symphony yesterday at the Biltmore ballroom was the presentation of an album of Christmas songs recorded by the chorus to Milton J. Cross, popular radio announcer who addressed the group. Cross, left, is shown accepting the album from Linda Crumb, while J. D. O'Brien, general manager of Inland Division of General Motors looks on.

Source: Newspapers.com

*See professional photos taken at this event on the "photos" page.

Children's Chorus and Milton J. Cross Participate in Symphony Youth Program

Chorus Presents Christmas Carol Album To Cross; General Manager O'Brien Introduces Chorus At Meeting

The members of Inland's Children Chorus, their director, Richard Westbrook, and General Manager J. D. O'Brien were guest participants at the first meeting marking the organization of the Junior Friends of the Dayton Symphony. The latter group forms a nucleus around which will be built a large membership of Dayton children whose patronage of Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra forms their entry requirements.

The spotlight of the Thursday afternoon meeting, October 26, in the Biltmore Hotel ballroom was turned on one of radio's best-known and most beloved announcers, Milton J. Cross. Mr. Cross came to Dayton especially to deliver a short address to the assembled group, and was intro-

duced by Dr. E. R. Arn, president of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Prior to Mr. Cross's talk to the children and other guests, the Chorus presented the famous announcer with an album of three 12" phonograph recordings of their Christmas Carols. Skipper McClellan made the presentation for the Chorus and thanked Mr. Cross for his "interest in children's music."

Mr. Cross expressed great surprise at the unexpected token and thanking the Chorus said, "with this lovely present I can often recall your fine Chorus and these happy moments with you . . . I shall play them for my good friend, Peter Wilhowski, head of the Music Department of the Schools of Greater New York and leader and director of the All-City Children's

Chorus. I want him to hear your fine singing, marvelous shading, and beautiful ensemble work." Mr. Cross also complimented Director Westbrook for his outstanding leadership and, in addition, thanked Mr. O'Brien for his previous history of the Chorus' organization. Mr. O'Brien recalled one of the Children's radio programs for which Mr. Cross has been the announcer for 15 years, namely, "Coast-to-Coast on a Bus." Recalling several of his experiences with former members of that program, Mr. Cross sighted Rose Stevens, opera and motion picture star, as an outstanding example of what can be done with proper leadership and coaching with children's voices. Walter Tetley, another of the "alumnae" of Mr. Cross's "Coast-to-Coast on a Bus" pro-

gram, is now heard every Sunday evening as "Leroy" on the Great Gildersleeve program. Paul Katz, director of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra, also spoke to the children about team-work and its final results, when applied to the pursuit of good music. As the Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Arn spoke briefly of his desire to see the Junior Friends of the Dayton Symphony develop into one of the most outstanding children's symphonic organizations in this part of the country.

The entire program was broadcast over Radio Station WING and was recorded in order that the children's Chorus may enjoy hearing how the entire 40-minute program sounded to thousands of listeners on Thursday afternoon, October 26, 1944.



Main speakers at the October 26 meeting here, left to right: Dr. E. R. Arn, president of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra and Master of Ceremonies for the meeting; Milton J. Cross, noted radio announcer and music commentator of the National Broadcasting Company; Paul Katz, conductor of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra; and J. D. O'Brien, General Manager, Inland Manufacturing.



Director Westbrook has the attention of 100 pairs of eyes, as he directs the Chorus in one of its most popular renditions, "The Echo Song."



Skipper McClellan presents the record album of Christmas carols to Mr. Cross while Director Westbrook appears pleased with the proceedings. Every member of the Chorus appearing before Mr. Cross had signed his or her name on the inside cover of the album as shown above. Also appearing on that page was the printed dedication "in sincere appreciation of your generous devotion to the music of the children of America. Signed—Inland Children's Chorus, October 26, 1944."



The girls and particularly the boys of the Chorus gave Mr. Cross an exceedingly warm autographing workout for 15 minutes following the program. He was most obliging, although previous arrangements did not permit his granting every request for his signature.

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The acme of refinement and good taste in radio comes from Hell's Kitchen.

Milton J. Cross

He makes even a sponsor's name a thing of beauty

Next to President Roosevelt's, the voice of announcer Milton J. Cross is probably more familiar to the American public than any other on the air. More than 20 years over NBC and the Blue Network have placed his "cathedral" intonations among the first sounds of radio.

Portly, six-foot Milton Cross, now 47, is versatile. Best known for his shepherding of Metropolitan Opera broadcasts and radio auditions, Cross has also collected millions of young admirers through his Sunday morning *On a Bus*, oldest children's program on the air. Quite another kind of announcing is his quasi-pontifical kidding of himself and others on the Blue's *Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street*, which has won him such discerning fans as Toscanini as well as the faithful following of the jazz enthusiasts.

Born in the tough Hell's Kitchen section of New York, Cross studied at the Damrosch School of Music, hoping to become a musical supervisor in public schools. To finance his courses he sang at churches on Sundays, took a \$40-a-week job singing and announcing on New York's then fledgling station WJZ. As radio grew, Cross grew along with it. Beauty of diction and tone plus his honest knowledge of music are basically responsible for his success. But his native dignity has helped, too. Listeners can relax when he's at the mike. Mr. Cross is not the sort of gentleman who slurs his consonants over a dish of Debussy.

Married to former organist Lillian Fowler, whom he met 19 years ago when they worked together at New York's First Presbyterian Church, Cross now has a capacious Riverside Drive apartment and 100 acres in Vermont. A significant figure in music, he hobnobs intimately with Flagstad, Pinza, other opera stars. Sometimes Cross likes to reminisce about the grocery-boy days of Hell's Kitchen. Even then his interests were set. He recalls that he used to fight for the privilege of delivering butter to contralto Louise Homer just to gaze admiringly on her.

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PHOTOCRIME SOLUTION (See page 10)

Ruth Dover thought that, having been away for a week (a fact she could easily prove), she would have a perfect alibi if she could convince the police her aunt had been dead three days when she returned. But she overdid her "suicide" setting. Examining the petals on the table, Cobb suddenly realized that the scene had been faked because, regardless of age, gardenias do not shed their petals. Cobb knew they had been torn from the flowers and placed on the table! That was why he held Ruth Dover for investigation.

Subsequent medical examination proved the time of Kate Dover's death and brought a confession from Ruth. She is now in prison serving a life sentence.

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