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InlandChorus.com and Wright State University

InlandChorus.com is an archival website intended to preserve and make widely available the history and music of the Inland Children's Chorus (1936-1970), an original and historically unique contribution by American industry to young people, the community, and the performing arts. InlandChorus.com® is a registered trademark of the InlandChorus.com Trust. See the following links:

<http://inlandchorus.com/PDFs/Trademark.pdf>

<http://inlandchorus.com/PDFs/2018-Trust-Info.pdf>

The website has worked with Special Collections and Archives, located in the Wright State University Libraries in Dayton, Ohio, to collect and to preserve original archival materials for the Inland Children's Chorus Collection (MS-432). The Collection also includes the most up-to-date, off-line copy of this website.

Digital materials at InlandChorus.com

- ◆ Feature articles, photo essays, news clippings and concert reviews (over 150 in PDF format)
- ◆ Playable music/audio files from records in-concert and studio recordings (over 200 audio files)
- ◆ Concert programs from 1936 to 1970 (100 many with autographs and reviews included)
- ◆ Professional concert chorus and commercial photos (over 50 from 1936-1970)
- ◆ Original news and personal photos and images of mementos (over 100 including slideshows)
- ◆ Forum-page comments and memories from former members and visitors (over 80 postings)

Brief History of the Inland Children's Chorus

The Chorus was developed and sponsored from 1936 to 1970 by the Inland Manufacturing Division of the General Motors Corporation to give 8-16 year old children of employees "a musical education and training which they otherwise might not be able to obtain, and to make a contribution to the cultural life of Inland employees and the community."

Inland General Manager, Wallace S. Whittaker, hired Richard B. Westbrook as the full-time director and Raymond Sovey, two-time Tony Award nominee and long-time Broadway theatrical designer, to stage the concerts. The Chorus often performed with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra. Following Richard Westbrook's death in 1955, Joseph P. Geiger was appointed director until the official dissolution of the Inland Children's Chorus in 1970.

Supported by community institutions such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Dayton Art Institute, the Inland Children's Chorus has been described as "one of Dayton's greatest by-products of industry" (See <http://inlandchorus.com/PDFs/DPO70AnnBk.pdf>).

The Chorus became well known nationally through its popular and critically acclaimed concerts, network radio broadcasts, and television performances. Milton J. Cross, known as "the voice of the Metropolitan Opera," called the Chorus "one of the most unique and inspiring programs of its kind in the country."

Educating Young People through the Performing Arts

The Inland Children's Chorus represents how industry can make—in a single project—a substantial and multi-generational contribution to young people, the performing arts, and the community. Formed in the heart of the Great Depression and continuing through mid-century America, Chorus demonstrates the courage and vision of the far-sighted individuals who worked to reach that goal.

CBS Sunday Morning featured a Chorus America study finding that children who sing in choruses achieve academic success and develop valuable life skills. The history of the Inland Chorus offers a model for providing such opportunities to young people. See <http://inlandchorus.com/PDFs/2009-ca-study.pdf>.

As a 16-year old graduate stated in 1966, "From my participation, I learned a love of good music, I acquired self-discipline, and I learned to sacrifice my wishes to do the best for the Chorus." This statement reflects the education that thousands of young people received through the Inland Children's Chorus.

Inland Chorus Preservation Project

Gerald Alred, a former Chorus member (1951-1959) and professor of English and professional writing at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, began digitizing Inland Children's Chorus records from his family's collection for himself and his cousin Fred Moore, also a Chorus member (1941 to 1947). Through a rare-music blog site (<http://musicyouwont.blogspot.com/>), he connected with other former Chorus members.

2009: Alred organized a lunch in Kettering, Ohio with former Chorus members including Fred Moore, his cousin and long-time member of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra; Paul Thomas, a 35-year member of the Kim Kelly Orchestra; Jim Thomas, a retired sales executive, and Diann (Thomas) Brown. They exchanged materials and considered how to preserve the music and history of the Chorus.

2009: Based on his thirty years of teaching technical communication, publishing historical bibliographies and authoring widely-acclaimed textbooks in business and technical writing, Alred developed InlandChorus.com to make widely available the history and music of the Inland Children's Chorus.

2009: Alred conducted substantial research and received support for the project from Jane Brock Woodall and Craig Orr at the Smithsonian Institution as well as Christo Datini, Lead Archivist at the General Motors Heritage Center. Mr. Datini praised the project for "documenting this portion of GM's history."

2010: This research led to enthusiastic interest from Special Collections and Archives, located in the Wright State University Libraries in Dayton, Ohio. On May 21, 2010, Special Collections agreed to work with InlandChorus.com to develop and preserve the Inland Children's Chorus Collection.

2013: A feature article describing this project appeared in the August 2013 *Dayton Daily News* (D1, D4). See <http://inlandchorus.com/PDFs/2013-A11-DDN-Feature.pdf>.

Website visitors are encouraged to share comments on the Forum page at InlandChorus.com or donate original materials to Special Collections and Archives at <http://libraries.wright.edu/special/>.

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