

History

The Houston Childrens Chorus was founded in 1989 by Stephen Roddy.

The Chorus involves more than 250 children in grades 2 through 8, by annual audition. More than 3,500 Houston children have been a part of the Houston Childrens Chorus since its inception. In its first year alone, the Chorus performed for more than 15,000 people in events including the 1990 World Economic Summit and the UNICEF Gala with Audrey Hepburn and Michael Tilson Thomas. Today, the annual audience exceeds 750,000, not including televised performances!

The purpose of the Chorus is primarily educational, and its goal is to teach children to achieve high artistic standards through choral singing and performance. The secondary purpose of the Chorus is to provide the community with a major choral group consisting of children from every school district and from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. An equally important aspect of the Chorus is the nurturing of personal growth, teamwork, responsibility, discipline, self-control, and confidence in our children. We create an environment that fosters the growth of qualities that will not only help these students to become successful in choral music, but in life.



The Chorus has performed in New Zealand, Hong Kong, Carnegie Hall, Russia, England, Scotland, Italy, Japan, and Mexico. They have performed for former President and Mrs. Bush on more than 11 occasions, including the 1992 Republican Convention, the 1990 World Economic Summit, the 150th Anniversary Celebration of the Smithsonian Institute and numerous ribbon-cutting ceremonies. In May 2005, the Chorus performed for President and Mrs. George H.W. Bush and President Bill Clinton at the Bush Clinton Houston Tsunami Fund Donor Appreciation Event and in June 2005 performed Karl Jenkins The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace in Carnegie Hall. The Chorus is frequently featured with major performing ensembles in Houston including the Houston Masterworks Chorus, the Houston Symphony, and various ensembles from Rice University.

The Chorus was featured in eight performances of the Broadway touring production of Andrew Lloyd Webbers Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. In 1999, some of the Chorus highlights included performing to a sold-out crowd at the Compa Center with Celine Dion, performing for the opening ceremonies of the World Energy Congress, and performing for Mass at the Vatican in Rome and at the Basilica of St. Mark in Venice. On February 1, 2004, members of the Chorus and its alumni group, the Houston Youth Singers, were featured in the Super Bowl pre-game show with singer Josh Groban.

Staff members of the Chorus are frequently called upon to conduct choral festivals all over the United States. The Fred Bock Music Company of California has printed more than 1 million copies of the Houston Childrens Chorus Choral Series, a collection of anthems for schools and churches. Several CDs featuring the Chorus have been produced by the Fred Bock Company.

The Houston Childrens Chorus is known throughout Houston and the State of Texas for its versatility in being able to perform all types of music, from classical to pop. The Chorus has remained in demand for festivals, weddings, galas, fundraising events, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, church services, corporate events, radio and T.V. commercials, recordings and clinic events. It is our goal to make the Houston Childrens Chorus completely accessible to every child in the city of Houston regardless of race or economic status.

 **Jerry Alred**
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Inland Children's Chorus Website

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Between Stephen Roddy and You

 **Jerry Alred** May 5 at 6:36pm
Dear Mr. Roddy: Through a former member of the Chorus now living in Idaho, I was told that you were a former member of the Inland Children's Chorus. If that is true, you might be interested in a relatively new website: <http://inlandchorus.com/>. I am the webmaster of this site and would be glad to correspond with you (e-mail: alred@uwm.edu or alred@uwm.edu).



Inland Children's Chorus Home Page

inlandchorus.com
This site is dedicated to preserving and making widely available the history and music of the Inland Children's Chorus (1936-1970), which was described as "one of the country's outstanding children's singing ..."

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 **Stephen Roddy** May 5 at 8:10pm [Report](#)
Thanks for letting me know, Jerry! Although I was only in the Chorus for three years, it was an incredible influence on my life and career. I am the founder and director of the Houston Children's Chorus. We perform upwards of 50 concerts per year and have sung for the President of the US on 27 occasions. We were featured in the opening ceremonies of the Super Bowl in 2004, etc., etc. You can visit our website at www.houstonchildren.org. I will enter some comments on the Inland page and would love to keep in touch.
Steve Roddy



Houston Children's Chorus - Home

www.houstonchildren.org
Houston Children's Chorus - 1015 Holman Street - Houston, Texas 77004 - (phone) 713-650-3800 - (fax) 713-650-3390 - info@houstonchildren.org

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This area provides an opportunity to make connections with others and share your thoughts or memories on the [discussion forum below](#). The following are links to related content and individuals on the Web.

[YouTube "The Story of Bethlehem" Part 1](#)

[YouTube "The Story of Bethlehem" Part 2](#)

[Chorus America "Impact" Study](#) (excellent)

[Houston Children's Chorus](#) ~ Founded by Stephen Roddy (former member).

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Forum Comments and Discussion:

Only the ten most recent comments are shown below. Click [here](#) to view all of the comments.

- **[Stephen Roddy](#)** - I am so happy that we now have a website for Inland Children's Chorus. My two brief years in the Chorus (around 1963-64) had a major impact on my life. I was one of the few children who were admitted into the Chorus because my father was Minister of Music at a local church (at that time Westwood Baptist...which later moved to become Far Hills Baptist). I will never forget my first rehearsal and the fear and trepidation of having to learn "do-re-mi" backwards. I also remember the wonderful gifts we all received at Christmas. In fact, I still have my "Brownie" camera and grey bag! The most memorable impression was standing on the stage when that glorious Austrian curtain came up. I'll never forget the strict rehearsals and the excitement of performing on a concert hall stage. I still cherish my two Inland Children's Chorus Christmas albums! After two degrees in music and many years working in large Texas churches, I founded the Houston Children's Chorus in 1989. Visit our website at www.houstonchildren.org. We sometimes perform upwards of 75 concerts per year --- many times for the President and world leaders. We were featured in the opening ceremonies of the Superbowl in 2004, as backup vocals to Josh Groban. We have the unique privilege of performing regularly with the Houston Symphony. My girls wear formal long dresses and the boys are in tuxes...just like the "old days". ha! SO...it's all because of those wonderful years in the Inland Children's Chorus!
- **[Shirley Whiting](#)** - I became a member of the Inland Children's Chorus in 1944. My first concert was the Spring Concert of May 25 and 26, 1944. My regret was not being in the chorus at age eight. Being a member was the highlight of my youth and I loved every minute.

The excitement of waiting in line for the music to march to the stage was beyond words, and after the concert, to still be on the stage and count, out loud, how many times the curtains would re-open again and again to applause from the audience was wonderful. We knew all the hours of practice were appreciated. I felt so very blessed to have been a member and to have had Mr. Westbrook as our Director.

I will be eternally grateful to the Inland Mfg. Div. of GMC and for Mr. Wallace Whittaker, Gen. Mgr. for his decision to encourage children to learn about beautiful music and how it enriches our lives. Also many thanks to Gerald Alred for all the time and effort he has put into getting "OUR" website and also to Wright State Univ. for accepting to be the permanent home for our material.

- **[Diann \(Thomas\) Brown](#)** - I followed in the footsteps of my big brother, joining the chorus in 1958. How exciting to be involved in a large musical production at such an early age! I can still recall the butterflies in my stomach while waiting backstage, standing on those risers, waiting for the curtain to rise to reveal a large, appreciative, applauding audience! True, it was probably mainly family members, but it meant the world to me, making those long, weekly rehearsals all seem worthwhile. As soon as the first number would begin, I felt all my apprehension disappear, ready to put on the show of my life!

I started out my musical "career" singing soprano, and as the years went on and my voice started maturing, I would go on to singing second soprano and finally, alto. I remember asking Mr. Geiger if I could still earn a solo if I was an alto and he assured me I could, so I reluctantly changed. It always seemed to me that the sopranos were the ones who got the solos, but I did earn a solo, of sorts, singing the alto echo in the "Echo" song.

Inland gave us some fantastic Christmas parties over the years! There would be cartoons and homemade popcorn balls, and best of all, presents! One year, probably in 1958, we all got jackets. They were very high quality, the same style worn by college and sports teams at the time. They were white with blue lettering and may have even had our name sewn on them. I was so proud to wear mine, feeling like I belonged to something special! (Attached is a [snapshot](#) with me and a chorus friend who is wearing a jacket.) I also recall the time we each got a camera and another time, a "train" case for the girls. Those were