

July 13, 1970
GM Mathues Letter

INLAND MANUFACTURING DIVISION

GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION

DAYTON, OHIO 45401

OFFICE OF GENERAL MANAGER



July 13, 1970

Parents of Inland Children's Chorus Members:

It is with regret we must inform you of Management's decision to discontinue sponsorship of our Inland Children's Chorus. This decision evolved only after thorough consideration of all aspects of the program and its effect on the children who are members of the Chorus, their parents, our employes and the community.

We are sure you are aware that in recent years, interest and attendance at the concerts has been waning drastically, even in spite of our decision to invite the public to attend our wonderful programs.

We believe our performances have been of the same high quality and just as entertaining as those presented during the long history of full and enthusiastic attendance and, therefore, attribute the loss of interest to the present-day competition for the leisure hours of everyone through the wide diversity of entertainment and recreational programs available.

We take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the sincere devotion you and your children have contributed to the Chorus and hope you will join us in reflecting upon the many unforgettable hours of joyful music provided for us by the children in the past.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "T. O. Mathues".

T. O. Mathues
General Manager

TOM:msr

Courtesy of
Barbara (Brun) Bruns

Inland Discontinues Children's Chorus

July 15, 1970
The Dayton Daily News

By **BETTY DIETZ**
Daily News Fine Arts Editor

After 35 years, the Inland Children's chorus program is being dropped by the sponsoring Inland Manufacturing division of General Motors. Since the death of the founding director Richard Westbrook, Joseph Geiger has trained the children.

The chorus is being disbanded for a number of reasons, according to T. O. Matthews, general manager. Some lessening of interest and attendance on the part of the youngsters was a factor but weighing even more heavily was the response of parents (mostly Inland employees) and the community in general.

"IN TERMS of value received, cost per employe affected in our sphere of activities (West Side and Vandalia), it has been more costly than any other program," Matthews said.

"I'm sorry to say it's a sign of the times," he added.

"There are so many activities now, so many demanding of the parents' time as chauffeurs and in other ways."

Another factor in the decision was the slackening interest on the part of the public. When attendance by Inland employes at chorus concerts dropped off, the doors were opened to the public. Even so, Matthews noted, recent programs drew only 800 to 1,000. In the past, it was not unusual for the chorus to sing to capacity audiences at Memorial hall.

ACCORDING to the Inland executive, "People say the programming hasn't kept pace and that may be. The public today is exposed to so much professional performance that it's difficult to compete."

Each year the chorus has been giving back-to-back programs at the Dayton Art institute and for many years participated in Christmas concerts with the Dayton Philharmonic orchestra.

Death of Inland Chorus

Recently over 126 families in the Dayton area received letters which began: "We regret to inform you that the Inland Children's Chorus will no longer be in existence . . . due to the poor response of the community to the concerts that were open to the public . . ."

Although I realize that the financial responsibilities of keeping the group together, it seems such a tragedy to see something so fine and cultural cease to be.

I wonder how many people whose lives were touched through the 34 years of the Inland Children's Chorus—either as members or just listeners—have dropped a line of thanks to . . . who were responsible for the lilting music of the 100 voices in the Alice-blue gowns and little black suits?

Dayton thanks them for what they have done in the past to enhance our community. There will be a great void come this Christmas season, at least, at our house.

I am a former member of the chorus and the mother of two members.

SALLY CAMERON WALL,

Dayton.