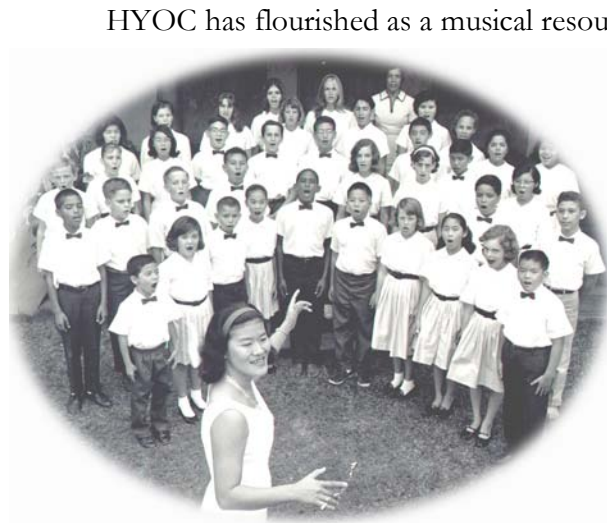


# HAWAI'I YOUTH OPERA CHORUS – 1961-2012

Celebrating over 50 years as Hawai'i's premier youth chorus, the HAWAI'I YOUTH OPERA CHORUS, is the longest running community children's chorus in Hawai'i. HYOC was founded in 1961 by Eileen Lum, its director from 1961-75 and from 1983-86, and UH voice teacher Richard Vine, as the "Opera Festival Children's Choruses" consisting of the *I Ragazzi* ensemble of 38 boys cantor voices and the *La Fanciulli* ensemble of 58 girl's soprano voices. Since it's founding, HYOC has provided singers for all Hawai'i Opera Theatre productions requiring the participation of children.



Eileen Lum and the Opera Festivals Children's Choruses.

HYOC has flourished as a musical resource for Hawai'i's youth under Ms. Nola A. Nahulu, its executive and artistic director since 1986. The chorus has performed throughout the State of Hawai'i, hosted children's choral festivals and participated in musical exchanges at schools in Maui, Hawai'i, Kaua'i and 'O'ahu. They have performed before national and international audiences as guest performers with the Utah Children's Chorus in Utah in 1991, at the Basilica of St. Peter's in Rome in 1992, and as musical ambassadors for the Hawai'i Visitor's Bureau in Japan in 1993. HYOC was featured at ChoralFest '96 in Carnegie Hall, New York and at Disney World, Florida in 1996, and at the International Musical Eisteddfod in Llangollen, Wales in 1999. In June of 2005, the choir participated in the inaugural China Children's Choir Festival in Beijing China. They also concretized in Xi'an, Hangzhou & Shanghai. In May 2007, the choir was invited to represent the state of Hawaii at

the 400<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Ceremonies of the founding of the first English settlement in America at Jamestown Virginia. March of 2010 we were invited and participated in the Singing Life Festival hosted by the acclaimed Chanticleer Ensemble. In the summer of 2011 to celebrate 50 years we toured Austria and the Czech Republic. The chorus recorded its first CD, "Na Leo Hone", in 1992 for which it was awarded the Na Hoku Hanahano Award as Best Religious Album of 1993. It has released 2 other recordings since.

It is the mission of HYOC to nurture, foster, and develop the performing arts through the medium of choral music, and to serve as an educational and artistic resource for the State of Hawai'i. The chorus is hosted and housed at the University of Hawaii Manoa Music Department and by the Ministry of Music of Kawaiaha'o Church. Today, there are over 200 members ranging in age from 5 to 18 from 45 public and 25 private, charter and home schools. Auditions are held during the first month of each new semester and selection is based on vocal potential and desire to sing in a choral group. Children are placed in one of nine ensembles based on age and musical ability. Choral talents are developed through vocal technique, ear training, sight singing, and music theory and history. In addition to opera, the repertoire has been expanded to include Western European, sacred, accompanied as well as *a capella* Hawaiian, and other ethnic music.

Three annual performances feature all singers in HYOC: the Christmas Concert, the Spring Concert, and the Annual Fundraiser Concert. In addition, individual ensembles participate in community performances which



Hawai'i Youth Opera Chorus, 2001, with Director Nola Nahulu and HYOC staff.

may number as many as 8-10 per semester. Ms. Nahulu is assisted by a staff of 13 part time administrative and artistic staff supporting the various programs and curriculum activities including vocal coaching, key board and theory classes, a boy ensemble and Hula has been incorporated to enhance the performance of Hawaiian music. HYOC has only one full time employee as General Manager. HYOC has also had 8 of its alumni work or intern with the organization as instructors helping to cultivate their music teaching skills.

In addition to benefiting its own membership, HYOC has played a major role in developing a Children's Choral Festival Program to share the enjoyment of choral singing with youth throughout the community. These well-attended festivals are conducted by nationally recognized clinicians such as Henry Leck, director of the Indianapolis Children's Choir, and have been sponsored by grant support. The "Na Leo Pili Mai and E Mele Kakou Festivals" for elementary, Jr. High and High School students has attracted over 3,000 participants during the past dozen years. Participants in the "Lokahi High School Choral Festival" have represented schools from the Leeward, Central and Honolulu Districts as well as five private schools. Additionally HYOC has a 12-session outreach initiative project, also called E Mele Kakou, where an entire grade level or two at an O'ahu public and private school are taught music, music theory and hula through the compositions of the 4 royal composers. This project is in its 10<sup>th</sup> year and we work with an average of 4 – 5 schools each year servicing an average of 12 – 16 teachers and 500 students in either 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade. In past summer sessions HYOC has hosted the Pacific Rim Children's Chorus Festival, an annual event that was held at BYU-Hawai'i and the Polynesian Cultural Center. This festival has serviced over 32 choirs in the ensuing



Dr. Henry Leck conducting the Women's Choral Festival choir.



Joanna Takagi as Laieikawai and Lara Atwater as the eecko in OPERAtunities '95.

years exposing over 1900 singers from the USA and Canada to music of the Pacific Region including Polynesia, Asia and the Americas.

In the summer of 1993, HYOC held its first "OPERAtunities" children's summer opera program. The first production was Rose's "Yanomamo", for which students were trained in voice, drama and choral techniques. In subsequent years, productions have been original, HYOC-commissioned works by Neil McKay (Kahalaopuna: The Princess of Manoa, and Laieikawai) and Herb Mahelona (Auli'i: The Last Menehune of Nu'uau Valley

and Na Uhane O Hawai'i) in which students have participated in every aspect of performance and production. Summer of 2007, HYOC premiered a new composition based on the Kauai legend "Ka'ililauokekoa" by Bertram Moon and libretto by Mayumi Shimose and alumnae of HYOC.

In the fall of 2008, HYOC ran a satellite choir to bring music education to the elementary students on the Leeward coast of Oahu, a traditionally underserved population.

Since 2003 HYOC has been successful in securing and managing over \$750,000.00 in grants for its multiple projects and operations assistance. Also through grant funding, HYOC has been able to offer an average of \$25,000.00 each year, over the last ten years, in scholarship funds to students and families needing assistance to participate in the offerings HYOC provides.

The Hawai'i Youth Opera Chorus was incorporated as a non-profit, charitable educational association in 1969. Contributions to HYOC are vital to its success and its quest to continue to provide the best possible musical educational program for the children of Hawai'i through the art of choral music. Donations to the organization are fully tax-deductible. For more information, visit our web site at [www.hyoc.org](http://www.hyoc.org) or call (808)521-2982.