



# Thurl Ravenscroft

**Thurl Arthur Ravenscroft** (/ˈθɜːrl ˈreɪvənzkrɒft/; February 6, 1914 – May 22, 2005) was an American actor and bass singer. He was well known as one of the booming voices behind Kellogg's Frosted Flakes animated spokesman Tony the Tiger for more than five decades. He was also the uncredited vocalist for the song "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch" from the classic Christmas television special, Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*.<sup>[1]</sup>

Ravenscroft did voice-over work and singing for Disney in various films and Disneyland attractions (which were later featured at Walt Disney World), the best known including The Haunted Mansion, Country Bear Jamboree, Mark Twain Riverboat, Pirates of the Caribbean, Disneyland Railroad, and Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room.

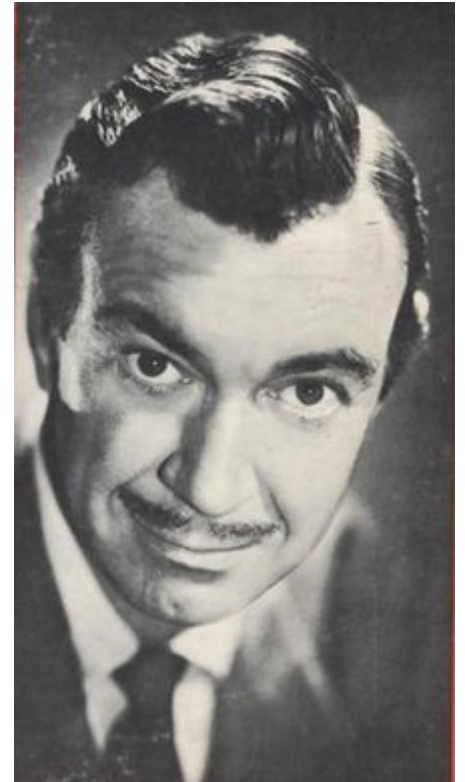
His voice acting career began in 1940 and lasted until his death in 2005 at age 91.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Early life and career

Ravenscroft left his native Norfolk, Nebraska, in 1933 for California, where he studied at Otis Art Institute. He achieved early success as part of a singing group called The Mellomen. The Mellomen can be heard on many popular recordings of the Big Band Era, including backup for Bing Crosby, Frankie Laine, Spike Jones, Jo Stafford, and Rosemary Clooney. Their earliest contribution to a Disney film was for *Pinocchio* (1940), to which they contributed the song "Honest John". This was deleted from the film, but can still be heard in the supplements on the 2009 DVD. Ravenscroft also voiced Monstro the Whale in *Pinocchio*. The Mellomen contributed to other Disney films, such as *Alice in Wonderland* and *Lady and the Tramp*. The group appeared on camera in a few episodes of the Disney anthology television series; in one instance recording a canine chorus for *Lady and the Tramp* and in another as a barbershop quartet that reminds Walt Disney of the name of the young newspaper reporter *Gallegher*.

Ravenscroft is also heard with the quartet on some of the *Merrie Melodies* and *Looney Tunes* with Mel Blanc at Warner Bros. as well as on radio "driving Jack Benny crazy" on The Jack Benny Program as part of The Sportsmen Quartet.

### Thurl Ravenscroft



Ravenscroft in 1967

<b>Born</b>	Thurl Arthur Ravenscroft February 6, 1914 <u>Norfolk, Nebraska</u> , U.S.
<b>Died</b>	May 22, 2005 (aged 91) <u>Fullerton, California</u> , U.S.
<b>Resting place</b>	<u>Crystal Cathedral Memorial Gardens</u> , <u>Garden Grove</u> , <u>California</u>
<b>Alma mater</b>	<u>Otis College of Art and Design</u>
<b>Occupations</b>	Actor · singer
<b>Years active</b>	1939–2003

During World War II, Ravenscroft served as a civilian navigator contracted to the U.S. Air Transport Command, spending five years flying courier missions across the north and south Atlantic. Among the notables carried on board his flights were Winston Churchill and Bob Hope. As he told an interviewer: "I flew Winston Churchill to a conference in Algiers and flew Bob Hope to the troops a couple of times. So it was fun."<sup>[3]</sup>

<b>Spouse</b>	<u>June Seamans</u> (m. 1946; died 1999)
<b>Children</b>	2

Ravenscroft sang bass on Rosemary Clooney's "This Ole House", which went to No. 1 in both the United States and Britain in 1954, as well as Stuart Hamblen's original version of that same song. He sang on the soundtrack for Ken Clark as "Stewpot" in *South Pacific*, one of the top-selling albums of the 1950s. He also backed The DeCastro Sisters on their 1955 top 20 hit, "Boom Boom Boomerang."<sup>[4]</sup> Singing with the Johnny Mann Singers,<sup>[5]</sup> his distinctive bass can also be heard as part of the chorus on 28 of their albums that were released during the 1960s and 1970s. He was also the bass singer on Bobby Vee's 1960 Liberty hit record "Devil or Angel". Andy Williams' recording of "The 12 Days of Christmas" features him as well. In the 1980s and 1990s, Ravenscroft was narrator for the annual Pageant of the Masters art show at the Laguna Beach, California, Festival of the Arts.

He sang the opening songs for the two Disney serials used on *The Mickey Mouse Club*, *Boys of the Western Sea* and *The Hardy Boys: Mystery of the Applegate Treasure*.

He sang the "Twitterpatter Song" and "Thumper's Song" on the Disneyland record *Peter Cottontail and other Funny Bunnies*.

On the Disneyland record *All About Dragons*, he both provided the narration and sang the songs "The Reluctant Dragon" and "The Loch Ness Monster".<sup>[6]</sup>

His voice was heard during the Pirates of the Caribbean ride as well as The Haunted Mansion at Disneyland as Uncle Theodore, the lead vocalist of the singing busts in the cemetery near the end of the ride.<sup>[7]</sup> He also played the Narrator in *The Story and Song From the Haunted Mansion*. Ravenscroft is also heard in the Enchanted Tiki Room as the voice of Fritz the Animatronics parrot, as well as the tree-like Tangaroa tiki god in the pre-show outside the attraction. He was also the voice of the Disneyland Railroad in the 1990s. Further roles include that of The First Mate on The Mark Twain Riverboat, a spokesalien for Tokyo Disneyland's Pan Galactic Pizza Port restaurant, and the American bison head named Buff at The Country Bear Jamboree.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Later career

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One of Ravenscroft's best-known uncredited works is as the vocalist for the song "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch." His name was accidentally omitted from the credits, leading many to believe that the cartoon's narrator, Boris Karloff, sang the song, while others cited Tennessee Ernie Ford as the song's signature voice.<sup>[1]</sup> The song, now credited to Ravenscroft, peaked on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 chart at number 32 for the week ending January 2, 2021. Thanks to You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch, Thurl Ravenscroft has officially hit the Top 40 as a solo artist.<sup>[9]</sup>

Ravenscroft also sang "No Dogs Allowed" in the *Peanuts* animated motion picture *Snoopy, Come Home* and *I Was a Teenaged Brain Surgeon* for Spike Jones.

For more than 50 years, he was the uncredited voice of Tony the Tiger for Kellogg's Frosted Flakes. His booming bass gave the cereal's tiger mascot a voice with the catchphrase "They're g-r-r-r-eat!!!!".<sup>[10]</sup>

Various record companies, such as Abbott, Coral, Brunswick, and "X" (a division of RCA) also released singles by Ravenscroft, often in duets with little-known female vocalists, in an attempt to turn the bass-voiced veteran into a pop singer. These efforts were commercially unsuccessful, if often quite interesting. He was also teamed up with the Andrews Sisters (on the Dot Records album *The Andrews Sisters Present*) on the cover of Johnny Cymbal's "Mr. Bass Man". The Mellomen released some doo-wop records under the name Big John & the Buzzards, a name apparently given to them by the rock-and-roll-hating Mitch Miller.

A devoted Christian, he appeared on many religious television shows such as *The Hour of Power*. In 1970, he recorded an album called *Great Hymns in Story and Song*, which featured him singing 10 hymns, each prefaced with the stories of how each hymn came to be, with the background vocals and instrumentals arranged and conducted by Ralph Carmichael.

He said his lifelong dream was to record the entire Bible on tape, but James Earl Jones "beat him out". On an episode of the TV variety series *Donny & Marie* featuring guest stars from the first *Star Wars* movie, Ravenscroft provided the voice for Darth Vader, voiced in the movie by Jones.

## Later life and death

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Ravenscroft married June Seamans in 1946 and they had two children. June died in 1999 from unknown causes. Ravenscroft semi-retired and did not work at any other studio, but continued to voice Tony the Tiger through 2004 (with limo transportation provided by Kellogg's) and was also interviewed that year by the Disney "Extinct Attractions Club" website. He died in his home on May 22, 2005, from prostate cancer, and was buried at the Memorial Gardens at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California.<sup>[2]</sup>

In the June 6, 2005, issue of the advertising industry journal *Advertising Age*, Kellogg's ran an advertisement commemorating Ravenscroft, the headline reading: "Behind every great character is an even greater man." After his death, Lee Marshall replaced him as the voice of Tony the Tiger in the Kellogg's commercials, but some commercials still recycle clips of Ravenscroft.

## Filmography

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### Film

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1939	<i><u>Sioux Me</u></i>	Singer	Voice, Uncredited
1940	<i><u>Pinocchio</u></i>	<u>Monstro the Whale</u>	Voice
	<i><u>Isle of Destiny</u></i>	Sportsman Quartet Member	
	<i><u>Little Blabbermouse</u></i>	Bad Tobacco Face	Voice
	<i><u>Prehistoric Porky</u></i>	Bass Lizard	
1941	<i><u>Dumbo</u></i>	Singer of "Look Out For Mr. Stork" and " <u>Pink Elephants on Parade</u> "	
	<i><u>The Nifty Nineties</u></i>	Singer	
1942	<i><u>Wacky Blackout</u></i>	Carrier Pigeon singing	Uncredited
	<i><u>Saludos Amigos</u></i>	Singer of the main title theme	
	<i><u>Lost Canyon</u></i>	Singer	
1948	<i><u>Melody Time</u></i>	Singer	Voice
1951	<i><u>Alice in Wonderland</u></i>	Card Painter	
1952	<i><u>Jack and the Beanstalk</u></i>	Singing voices of two villagers	
1953	<i><u>Peter Pan</u></i>	Singer / Pirates	Voice
	<i><u>Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom</u></i>	Singer	
1954	<i><u>Rose Marie</u></i>	Medicine Man	
1955	<i><u>Daddy Long Legs</u></i>	Daydream Sequence Song	Short, Voice
	<i><u>Lady and the Tramp</u></i>	Al the Alligator / Singing Pound Dogs	Voice
1956	<i><u>Design for Dreaming</u></i>	(singer)	
	<i><u>Hardy Boys</u></i>	Theme Song	
1958	<i><u>Paul Bunyan</u></i>	Paul Bunyan	Short, Voice
1959	<i><u>Sleeping Beauty</u></i>	Singer	
1961	<i><u>One Hundred and One Dalmatians</u></i>	Captain the Horse	Voice
1962	<i><u>Gay Purr-ee</u></i>	Hench Cat	
1963	<i><u>The Sword in the Stone</u></i>	Sir Bart	
1964	<i><u>Mary Poppins</u></i>	Andrew the dog's whimper / Banker / Pig / Animal Sounds	

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1965	<u><i>The Man from Button Willow</i></u>	Singer / Reverend / Saloon Man	
1966	<u><i>How the Grinch Stole Christmas</i></u>	Singer of " <u>You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch</u> "	
1967	<u><i>The Jungle Book</i></u>	Colonel Hathi's crew	
	<u><i>The War Wagon</i></u>	Backup singer on main theme	
1968/1977	<u><i>Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day/The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh</i></u>	Singer/Black Honey-pot	
1969	<u><i>Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid</i></u>	Singing Voice	performed "South American Getaway"
	<u><i>The Trouble with Girls</i></u>	Bass Singer	with the Bible Singers Quartet (The Mellomen)
1970	<u><i>Horton Hears a Who!</i></u>	Wickersham Brother	
	<u><i>The Phantom Tollbooth</i></u>	Lethargians	
	<u><i>The Aristocats</i></u>	Billy Bass - Russian Cat	Voice
1971	<u><i>The Cat in the Hat</i></u>	Thing One	Voice
	<u><i>Bedknobs and Broomsticks</i></u>	Singing voice of Russian vendor / Various cartoon animal voices	
1972	<u><i>Snoopy, Come Home</i></u>	Singer of "No Dogs Allowed"	Voice
	<u><i>The Lorax</i></u>	Singer	Voice
1977	<u><i>The Hobbit</i></u>	Goblins/Chorus	Voice
	<u><i>Halloween Is Grinch Night</i></u>	Singer / Monsters	Voice
	<u><i>Donny &amp; Marie</i></u>	<u>Darth Vader</u> / Narrator	<u>Star Wars</u> Segment
1978	<u><i>The Small One</i></u>	Potter	Voice, Uncredited
1987	<u><i>The Brave Little Toaster</i></u>	Kirby	Voice
1990	<u><i>Disney Sing Along Songs: Disneyland Fun – It's a Small World</i></u>	Singer of " <u>Grim Grinning Ghosts</u> "	
1992	<u><i>Invasion of the Bunny Snatchers</i></u>	The Black Hole	Voice; Uncredited
1993	<u><i>The Nightmare Before Christmas</i></u>	Hanging Tree	Voice; Uncredited
1996	<u><i>Superior Duck</i></u>	The Narrator	Voice
1997	<u><i>The Brave Little Toaster to the Rescue</i></u>	Kirby	Voice
1998	<u><i>The Brave Little Toaster Goes to Mars</i></u>		

## Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
1995	<u><i>The Baby Huey Show</i></u>	General Does-Little	Voice; ep. "Target...Huey!"

## Commercials

Year	Title	Role
late 1970s-early 1980s	<i>Toys R Us</i>	Geoffrey the Giraffe
1953–2003	<i>Kellogg's Frosted Flakes</i>	Tony the Tiger

## Partial solo discography

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- *Mad, Baby, Mad* – 1955 (Fabor)
- *I Ain't Afraid* – 1956 (Bally)
- *You Wanna Talk About Texas* – 1956
- *Wing Ding Ding* – 1956
- *Big Paul Bunyan* – 1962 (Globe)
- *Gold Dubloons and Pieces of Eight* – 1962 (The Hardy Boys: Mystery of the Applegate Treasure)
- *The Headless Horseman* – 1965 (Disney)
- *Great Hymns In Story And Song* – 1970 (Light)
- *Nathaniel the Grublet* (In Direwood) – 1979 (Birdwing)
- *Psalms and Selahs* – 2002

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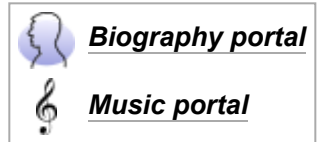
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2. "Thurl Ravenscroft, Voice of Tony the Tiger, Dies at 89" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/25/arts/television/25ravenscroft.html>). *The New York Times*. Associated Press. May 25, 2003. Retrieved March 23, 2012.
3. Heintjes, Tom (November 14, 2012). "He's Grrrrreat! The Thurl Ravenscroft Interview" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20130405052421/http://cartoonician.com/hes-grrrrreat-the-thurl-ravenscroft-interview/>). *Hogan's Alley*. Archived from the original (<http://cartoonician.com/hes-grrrrreat-the-thurl-ravenscroft-interview/>) on April 5, 2013. Retrieved December 27, 2022.
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7. "Listen to the Unmistakable Voice of Thurl Ravenscroft" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20131104122100/http://365daysofmagic.com/history/listen-to-the-unmistakable-voice-of-thurl-ravenscroft>). *365 Days of Magic*. June 6, 2013. Archived from the original (<http://365daysofmagic.com/history/listen-to-the-unmistakable-voice-of-thurl-ravenscroft>) on November 4, 2013. Retrieved December 27, 2022.
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9. "The Hot 100 Chart" (<https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/2021-01-02>). *Billboard*.
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## External links

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- [All Things Thurl](https://web.archive.org/web/20090116052753/http://allthingsthurl.com/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20090116052753/http://allthingsthurl.com/>) (an authorized fan site, to which Ravenscroft contributed; includes discography)
- [Thurl Ravenscroft](https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0712391/) (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0712391/>) at IMDb
- [Thurl Ravenscroft](https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/person/158334%7C146859/wp) (<https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/person/158334%7C146859/wp>) at the TCM Movie Database
- [Thurl Ravenscroft](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11015444) (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11015444>) at Find a Grave
- [He's GRRRRRRR-EAT! The Thurl Ravenscroft Interview](https://www.hoganmag.com/blog/hes-grrrrreat-the-thurl-ravenscroft-interview) (<https://www.hoganmag.com/blog/hes-grrrrreat-the-thurl-ravenscroft-interview>)
- [All About Dragons - Part 1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGJRJmXiF4w) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGJRJmXiF4w>) (the first side of the LP)
- [All About Dragons - Part 2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZWmA9Vc5Ng) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZWmA9Vc5Ng>) (the second side of the LP)



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