

AUSTRALIAN OPERA, 1842 - 1970;
A History of Australian Opera with
Descriptive Catalogues

by

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PART ONE

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SUMMARY

Australian Opera, 1842-1970 is a repertory study with a dual aim: first, to document the extent of the achievement of Australian composers for the theatre; second, to examine and interpret the measure of that achievement. The first Volume is a narrative history and interpretation of the overall artistic characteristics of the sources. It relates these to their larger inherited Western musical culture, then focusses on the connections between music and drama in a distinctive 'Australian' ideology.

The second Volume documents and describes the sources on which the history is based. The work lists chronologically a number of operas, operettas, the various forms of comic musical theatre, such as pantomime, burlesque, and extravaganza, forms of lyric and classical drama, dramatic cantata, and the incidental music written for plays and melodramas since early colonial days. Details are given of performances, history, musical and dramatic features, with contemporary references, to comprise a bibliography of sources, many of which have not been previously examined.

The narrative history shows, first, the patterns in the imported repertory from the earliest records of Australian colonial theatres to the coming of commercial and touring opera companies in the 19th century which gradually consolidated a standard repertory modelled on the Anglo-European theatre. Supporting Documentation gives data on theatres, performers, and the works thus accumulated.

Similar patterns of development are found in North American opera and in other art forms in Australia. Throughout the work, some reference is made to the interplay of tradition and novelty, popular forms of entertainment, 'folk', and 'fine' art, imported and indigenous materials, and also to aspects of public taste and attitudes, the development of musical and theatrical institutions, and relevant social, political, and economic conditions.

Second, it surveys the field of opera and musical theatre written in Australia, tracing within it elements of 18th century comic opera, parody and burlesque, serious Italian opera, ballad opera, pantomime and other forms of light opera, through the rise of romantic opera and imitations of French opérette and the Savoy operas. Towards the end of the 19th century, it finds new directions in choralism, lyric dramas, and large-scale dramatic works in a post-Wagnerian style, and discovers Australian examples in the early 20th century of Italian realist and Celtic mythological national schools.

Third, it examines attempts to find an Australian identity through schemes for a national opera, and asks why these failed, especially in terms of the relationship of the Press to artists and audiences in the 1920s. By recalling the image of Australia presented on the late-18th century overseas stage, it recapitulates the context, chronology, and chief components of the process of acculturation by which overseas traditions became modified, distorted, or realized in Australian opera. It introduces a conceptual and theoretical framework, for a discussion of acculturation, its activating forces, models and modes, and concludes with some suggestions about the criteria for this process of change which has helped shape an Australian musical theatre ideology. Although the work concentrates on 19th and early 20th century foundations, it proposes that some recent operas written in Australia represent a distinctive Australian contribution to 20th century opera.

DECLARATION

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other postgraduate degree in any University, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person except when due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed:

VOLUME I:

HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN OPERA.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1970, I first saw a television performance of an Australian opera, Larry Sitsky's *Fall of the House of Usher* (1965); shortly after, I heard a radio broadcast of the Overture to Isaac Nathan's opera, *Don John of Austria* (1846) in a program of colonial music. These two works, which practically span the contents of this Thesis, set off my inquiries into the history of opera written in Australia and fired my curiosity about our cultural development - the artists who shaped it, the forms it took, and the images it expressed through drama and music.

I am very grateful to all the many people who have contributed to this study. The list of those I interviewed and who corresponded with me over several years, attached to the end of the Bibliography, must serve as my acknowledgement. It includes scholars, composers, musicians, librarians and music archivists, music publishers, teachers, patrons and office-bearers in musical societies, family descendants of composers, opera producers, conductors, and performers. Many lent me their private letters and manuscripts; all shared with me their knowledge or personal experience of Australian opera which has helped me enormously.

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In the end, my work would have been less enjoyable and no doubt less comprehensive were it not for the wonderful assistance and cooperation of Australian composers of opera in the 1970s. They willingly lent me irreplaceable materials from their personal collections, including original manuscripts, unpublished documents, and even works still in progress. Many shared with me in their homes their private observations, memories, hospitality, and insight. Several have become my dear friends. I hope I might one day write their present history to extend the foundation from the past constructed here. Stimulated by my contact with them, I hope our concern for a lively future for opera in Australia will infect others who are in a position to foster that, whether in production, performance, promotion, or in a theatre audience, without whose support an Australian opera cannot thrive.

ABBREVIATIONS

- A Alto
- a author
- ABC Australian Broadcasting Commission
- ABC:N Federal Music Library, Australian Broadcasting Commission,
Sydney
- ABC:NA Musica Australis Archives, ABC Federal Music Library, Sydney
- ABC:S, ABC:V, ABC:Q (SA, Victorian, Queensland branches of ABC,
Music Libraries)
- ABD *Australian Biographical Dictionary*. ed. F. John. Melbourne. 1934.
- ACA Australian Council for the Arts. Sydney
- ACP:L Library of Australian Consolidated Press, Melbourne
- ad adapted, adaptation
- ADB *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. gen.ed. D. Pike (dec);
G. Serle and N.B. Nairn. Melbourne -
I (1788-1850, A-H) 1966;
II (1788-1850, I-Z) 1967;
III (1851-1890, A-C) 1969;
IV (1851-1890, D-J) 1972;
V (1851-1890, K-Q) 1974.
- Adel Adelaide
- adv advertised
- AE *Australian Encyclopedia*, gen.ed. A.H. Chisholm, B.W. Pratt,
Sydney, 1965, 10 vols.
- ALTT Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
- ANL National Library of Australia, Canberra
- AO The Australian Opera
- AOO *Annals of Opera*, A. Loewenberg; rev. ed. Walker, London 1953
- App Appendix
- APRA Australasian Performing Rights Association

arr	arranged, arrangement
asc	ascribed (to)
ASCM:L	Library of the Canberra School of Music
ASME	Australian Society for Music Education
B	Bass
Bar	Baritone
BCM	British Catalogue of Music
bn	bassoon
br	brass
Brisb	Brisbane
c	composer
CAAC	Commonwealth Assistance to Australian Composers
Canb	Canberra
c ang	cor anglais
cb	double bass
c bn	contra bassoon
CBLO	<i>Complete Book of Light Opera</i> , M. Lubbock, London, 1962
cel	celeste
Ch	Chorus
Char	Character(s) or Dramatis Personae
clar	clarinet
COB	<i>Complete Opera Book</i> . G.Kobbe; rev.ed. Harewood. London, 1966
CODO	<i>Concise Oxford Dictionary of Opera</i> , eds. H. Rosenthal, J. Warrack. London, 1955
Col Sec	Office (or Papers) of the Colonial Secretary, Sydney
comm	commissioned
comp	composed

compl	completed
con	conductor
corres	correspondence
cp	concert performance
cym	cymbal
DAB	<i>Dictionary of Australasian Biography. 1855-1892</i> ed. P. Mennell. London, 1892
DCM	<i>Dictionary of Twentieth Century Music</i> , ed. J. Vinton. London, 1974.
ded	dedicated, dedication
dr	drum (including: b.dr. bass drum; s.dr. side drum; k.dr. kettle drum, etc.)
Dur	Duration
ed	editor, edition(s)
Edin	Edinburgh
EMMI/II	<i>Australian Literature 1795-1938; A Descriptive and Bibliographical Survey</i> , 2 vols. E. Morris Miller, Melbourne, 1940; repr. Sydney, 1973
el	electric
ens	ensemble
euph	euphonium
excp	excerpt(s)
f.	full
facs	facsimile
fl	flute
fn	footnote

Fol	Folio(s)
frag	fragment
glock	glockenspiel
Grove	<i>Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> , ed. E. Blom, 5th ed. London, 1954, 9 vols.
gui	guitar
HAOP	<i>Handbook of American Operatic Premieres, 1731-1962</i> , ed. J. Mattfeld, New York, 1963
harm	harmonica
harps	harpsichord
HDM	<i>Harvard Dictionary of Music</i> ed. W. Apel, 2nd ed. London, 1970
hn	horn
Hob(T)	Hobart(Town)
hp	harp
hr	hour
ICMM	<i>International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians</i> , eds. O. Thompson, N. Slominsky <i>et al.</i> 9th ed. London 1964
ISCM	International Society for Contemporary Music
illust	illustrated
Inst	Instrumentation
JCW:L	Library of J.C. Williamson Theatres Ltd. Sydney

Laun	Launceston
lib	libretto
lic	licence(d)
Lond	London
Melb	Melbourne
Mezzo S	Mezzo Soprano
min	minute(s)
MS & MSS	Manuscript(s)
N/A	not available
NCon	Library of Conservatorium of Music, Sydney
(nd)	(not dated)
N/L	not located
NLN	Library of New South Wales (NSW)
NLN:M	Mitchell Library, Library of NSW
NLN:D	Dixson Library, Library of NSW
NLN:A	Archives Authority, Library of NSW
NMU	Macquarie University Library
no(s)	number(s)
np	no pagination
NSPL	City of Sydney Public Library
NSW	New South Wales
NU	Fisher Library, University of Sydney
NU:A	Archives, University of Sydney
NU:M	Dep. of Music Library, University of Sydney
NUN	Library of University of NSW, Kensington
NUNE	Dixon Library, University of New England, Armidale
NZ	New Zealand

- O original (as in O/MS)
- ob oboe
- OCEL *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. P. Harvey,
3rd ed. Oxford, 1958
- OCM *Oxford Companion to Music*, ed. P. Scholes, 9th ed. Oxford, 1960
- OCTh *Oxford Companion to the Theatre*, ed. P. Hartnoll. Oxford, 1951
- op opus
- OPI & II *Opera Production, a Handbook*, Q. Eaton, 2 vols., Minnesota,
1961, 1974
- p & pp page (s)
- pc percussion
- Perf Performed or performance
- pf Piano
- picc piccolo
- p.poss private possession
- pr printed
- pt(s) part(s)
- pub published
- Qld Queensland
- QSL:0 Oxley Library, Queensland State Library, Brisbane
- QU Fryer Library, University of Queensland
- rec recorder
- recit recitative

Refs	References
rep	repeated
rev	revised, revived
S	Soprano
s	series
SA	South Australia
SAA	South Australiana Collection, State Library, SA
SATB	Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass
sax	saxophone
sc	score
scen	scenario
SSL	State Library of South Australia
SSL:A	Archives of the South Australian State Library
str	string(s)
SU	Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide
sub	submitted
SUCon	Elder Music Library, Department of Music, University of Adelaide
Suppl	Supplementary, Supplement
Syd	Sydney
T	Tenor
tamb	tambourine
Tas	Tasmania
tb	tuba
timp	timpani
t.p.	title page
Tr	Treble
tran	translated, translation

trbn	trombone
tri	triangle
trpt	trumpet
t.s.	typescript
TSL	Tasmanian State Library
TSL:C	Crowther Library, State Library of Tasmania
TV	television
uncat	uncatalogued
unid	unidentified
Univ	University
v	vocal
vc	violin cello
vib	vibraphone
vla	viola
vln	violin
VLU	La Trobe University Library
VMoU	Monash University Library
VMS:L	Library of the Musical Society of Victoria, Melbourne
Vol(s)	Volume(s)
VSL	State Library of Victoria
VSL:A	La Trobe Library, State Archives of Victoria
VU	Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne
VU:A	Archives of Melbourne University
VUCon	Conservatorium of Music Library, Melbourne University
VU:GM	Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne

WA Western Australia

ww woodwind

xyl xylophone