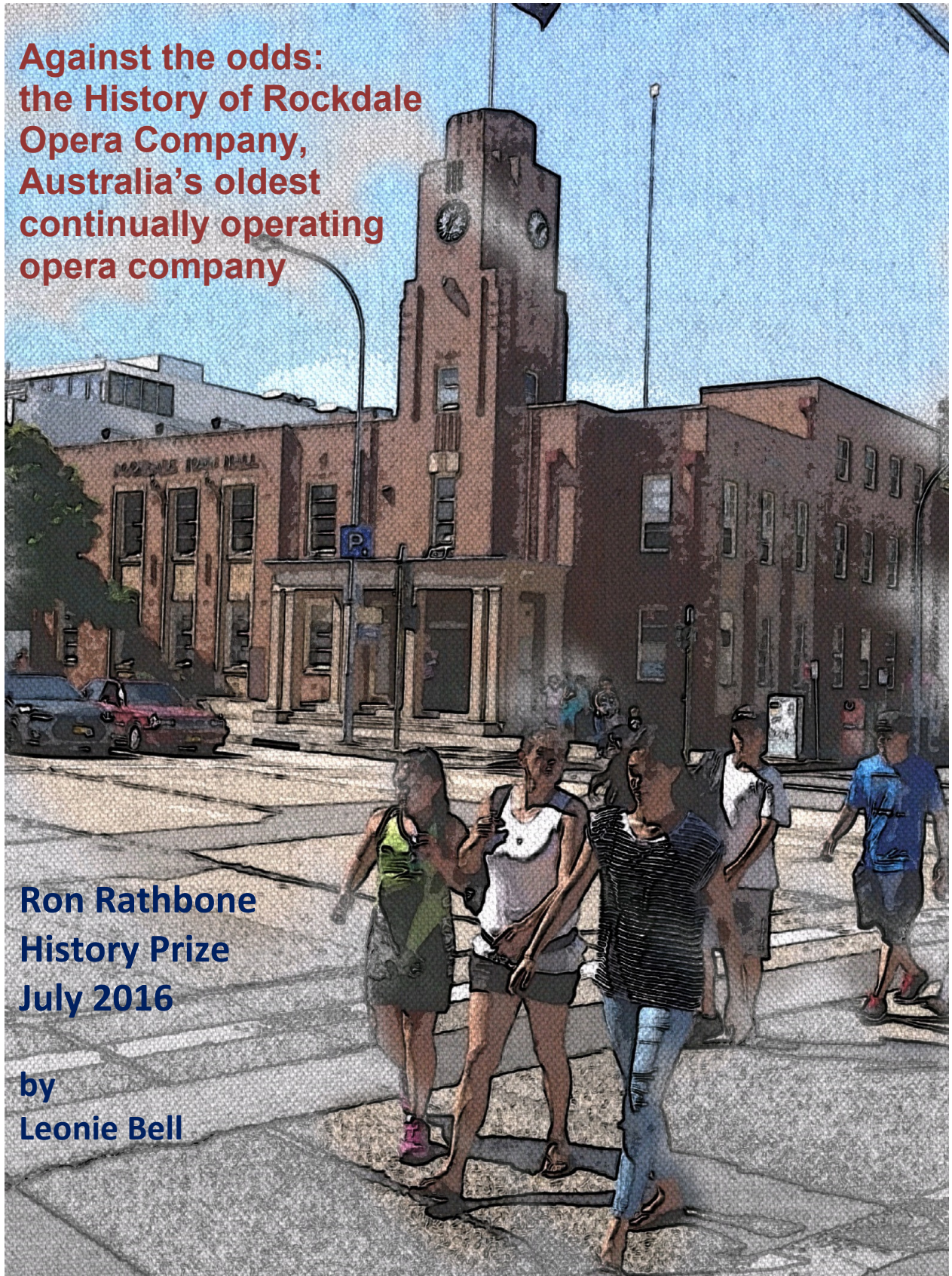


**Against the odds:  
the History of Rockdale  
Opera Company,  
Australia's oldest  
continually operating  
opera company**

**Ron Rathbone  
History Prize  
July 2016**

**by  
Leonie Bell**







**2010 Ruddigore**  
*Photo by Ray Wing-Lun*

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Australia's oldest continually operating opera company  
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I would like to thank photographer Ray Wing-Lun for permission to include some of his excellent stage photos.

My thanks to Colin Mettam, who provided many of the earlier stage photos from the 1970s to 1990s. Some of the photos are unattributed or their dates unknown. I offer my apologies if I have offended anyone in this regard.

The scans of Rockdale Opera programs held in the Local Rockdale History Library archives were taken by myself and are published with permission from Rockdale Opera Company Committee.

The photo of Rockdale Town Hall in 1954 was taken by my father James Bell whose connection to Rockdale Town Hall was both romantic and cultural. He met my mother on American Independence Day in 1952 at a dance at Kogarah. They went on their first date the following evening at the Scottish Dance held at Rockdale Town Hall, naturally with my grandmother as chaperone.



## Outline

This short history of Rockdale Municipal Opera Company traces the company from its beginnings in the 1940s, through several rocky patches in the seventies and eighties where it was thought the company might not survive, to today, when it remains Australia's oldest continuously running opera company.

There is very little literature on the subject of Rockdale Opera. Most references to the company are found in newspaper reports and critical reviews in the Sydney Morning Herald, St George and Sutherland Shire Leader and the now extinct publication Opera-Opera.

John Cargher's 1977 book *Opera and Ballet in Australia* only deigns to mention Rockdale Opera in a single paragraph, stating that it is too small and underfunded a company to warrant critical analysis.

Cedric Ashton's memoir, published in 2000, offers a personal insight into the early days of the company, with some delightful anecdotes. It was written in 1999 in his 88<sup>th</sup> year, as he was diagnosed with a slow and progressive cancer. Rather than suffer extensive, painful medical intervention, he chose to use his remaining months to record his memoirs for posterity.

There seems to be some debate as to the spelling of name of one of the company's co-founders, Allan Ferris. Conductor Cedric Ashton spells his friend's name Alan in his memoir. All Rockdale Opera programs spell it as Allan. Presumably the programs are correct or Allan would have had them amended at some point.

I have utilised Cedric's memoir, newspaper articles, predominantly from the St George and Sutherland Shire Leader, and from the Trove newspaper collection of the National Library of Australia, opera programs held by the Rockdale Local History Library, Rockdale Council minutes and interviews with protagonists in the story.

Some newspaper reviews and articles have been sourced from Rockdale Opera scrapbooks held at the Local History Library. Many of these reviews are un-dated and often do not include the name of the newspaper from which they were clipped.

Philip Gregory's 2009 Ron Rathbone History Prize entry "A View from the Stalls, A Memoir of the Rockdale Municipal Opera Company" was a helpful source of information, enlivened by his personal experiences as an opera-goer and Rockdale subscriber.

Additionally, my own performance experiences with the company have informed some of the text.

The story concludes with a look at the current state of the company.

Finally, there is an appendix listing the performances and cast lists from the last 68 years, where you may discover the names of many well-known opera singers and musicians.

## Introduction

I had always wanted to sing on the stage. I first sang in the chorus of Rockdale Municipal Opera Company in 1975 in a production of the Gondoliers, directed by Brian Phillips. Shift work caused a gap in my association with the company, but I returned in the 1980s to once again sing in the chorus. From 1988 to 1990 I studied opera at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music and subsequently moved to England, where I eventually gained a series of contracts with the chorus of the English National Opera.

Returning to Australia in 2000 I again performed at Rockdale, this time in lead roles, improving my stagecraft whilst auditioning for Opera Australia. Although I sang in the chorus of several Opera Australia productions, I never did break into the permanent singing career, but I retain a fondness for Rockdale Opera Company.

Unlike the UK, where small semi-professional and professional opera companies abound, Rockdale was for many years the only place in Sydney that a young singer could take to the boards to learn the stagecraft of opera. There have always been amateur musical theatre companies in suburban Sydney, and the Gilbert and Sullivan Society promoted the wonderful works of G & S operetta, but Rockdale was pretty much the only place where aspiring opera singers could perform. Even today, with Pacific Opera providing an additional training ground, the field of amateur opera in Sydney is sparsely populated, and Rockdale remains a great place for gaining theatrical experience.

Many well-known classical singers and musicians performed at Rockdale early in their careers. Rockdale Opera has always been a springboard for young singers onto the wider operatic stage. Perhaps the best known of these is company Patron Daniel Sumegi, who after a handful of performances at Rockdale in the 1980s, went on to sing roles with major operatic houses worldwide, including Opera Australia at the Sydney Opera House, New York's Metropolitan Opera, the Paris Opera, Hamburg State Opera, Teatro Colon Buenos Aires and Tokyo's New National Theatre. He was nominated for the 2014 Helpmann Award for his portrayal of Fasolt and Hagen in Wagner's Ring Cycle with Opera Australia.<sup>1</sup>

Jonathon Welch, now well-known for the television series "Choir of Hard Knocks" sang in productions at Rockdale in the 1980's and 90's, whilst popular baritone Jose Carbo went on to sing the role of Figaro in Opera Australia's "Barber of Seville" after dazzling Rockdale audiences in the same role in 2000. He is now a much sought after performer, recently singing the role of Zurga in The Pearl Fishers for Opera Australia.

Other singers at Rockdale who became well known to Opera Australia audiences include: Geoffrey Chard, Alan Light, Robert Gard, Neil Easton, Rosalind Keene, Bill Diamond, John Wood, Doreen Morrow, Barry Ryan, Lesley Stender, Ronal Jackson, Neville Wilkie, Stephen Bennett, Roger Howell, John Main.

Dancers who were able to develop skills with the company included Beth den Bodenweiser, Raissa Kouznetzova and Margaret Chapple. Many musicians gained valuable orchestral experience, such as conductor Simone Young and Rockdale Orchestra First Violinist Harry Curby, who told Maestro Cedric Ashton that playing with Rockdale Opera Company was one of the most valuable experiences of his life. He went on to lead the Sydney String Quartet and Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra.<sup>2</sup>

This short history asks what it was that enabled Rockdale Opera to produce classical opera in the St George region when there were such formidable odds against its survival. It endeavours to bring to life the personalities who contributed to its success, reminisces on memorable performances, and examines its contribution to Sydney's musical life.

Now in its sixty-eighth year, Rockdale continues to bring affordable opera to the suburbs and provide opportunities for young singers who may one day rise to international stardom.



**Iolanthe is one of the most performed operas at Rockdale.**

*Photo by Colin Mettam. Date unknown.*



## 1940s Company Formation

Sydney opera lovers in the post-war period of the late 1940s and early 1950s did not have access to a great many opera performances. Mrs Claris M. Lorenz formed the National Opera in Sydney in 1951, with an inaugural season of Carmen, Seraglio and A Masked Ball. Shortly afterward the company was renamed the New South Wales National Opera, to distinguish it from a similar Melbourne company, and in a further rebranding, the National Opera. The following year she collaborated with Victorian-based Melbourne National Opera to offer a joint season of opera in both cities, featuring many singers who went on to become stars of the Elizabethan Trust Opera and later, the Australian Opera (now Opera Australia).

Allan Ferris, one of the co-founders of Rockdale Opera, sang with both the Sydney and Melbourne companies in 1951.

These companies offered sporadic performances on a semi-professional basis. Financial problems saw the National Opera dissolve in 1954. Neither was there a great deal of opera being performed by the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company in this period. In 1966 it offered just three operas over a four-week period and singers had to find other work in order to pay the bills. It was not until the seventies, with the impetus provided by the 1973 completion of the Sydney Opera House, that Sydney had a full time opera company – the Australian Opera.<sup>3</sup>

There was no opera in suburban Sydney, but people loved to go to the theatre and a keen amateur theatre scene flourished in Rockdale area in the 1940s. The Regals Musical Society was formed by Frederick J Dunne in 1945 with an inaugural production of Our Miss Gibbs. This organisation was a spin off from the older Rockdale Musical Society. Apparently Frederick had been in love with their Ensemble Mistress and he left to form his own company when she spurned his advances.<sup>4</sup> Rockdale Musical Society had been producing two shows per year since 1939.<sup>5</sup> Both these companies continue to perform at Rockdale Town Hall today.

The St George Concert Orchestra was formed in 1942, and according to an unsourced pamphlet held in the archives of the Rockdale Local History Library, they performed charitable fundraising concerts. It is believed that this organisation approached Rockdale Council in May 1943 asking for support and a rehearsal space, although there is no documented evidence of this.

In this cultural landscape there was plenty of scope for the formation of a suburban opera company with modest means, an enthusiastic board, ambitious singers who wanted to perform and an audience who had little opportunity to see live opera.

Reputedly, His Worship the Rockdale Mayor Alderman Norman C Guess visited Bournemouth Pier in England in the early 1940s. The pier is a wonderful Victorian timber construction stretching 300 metres into the waters of the English Channel; a shimmering confection of white pavilions scattered along an elongated, open promenade. These seaside resort piers were traditionally the scene of amusement arcades and variety theatre, where families would come for inexpensive entertainment on beach holidays. Norman Guess could presumably envisage the Brighton-le-Sands pier in his home town offering similar seaside delights.

The Brighton-le-Sands Pier idea never took hold, although Norman would have been astounded at Rockdale Councils' more recent plans to rejuvenate the pier with cafes, boat chandlery, multi-media exhibitions, shops and family entertainment in the ill-fated The Crystal theatre project. According to the project management team:

*“The Crystal will form a dramatic focal point at the end of the Pier. This spectacular seven level building will house a state-of-the-art communications, entertainment and technology exhibition space and an undercover, giant screen amphitheatre”.*<sup>6</sup>

This ambitious plan was thwarted by divided public opinion, and council abandoned the concept in 2010.<sup>7</sup>

On Norman Guess’ return to Sydney, inspired by what he had seen and heard in the UK, he approached fellow aldermen on Rockdale Council with his idea for the formation of an orchestra. The Municipal Orchestra Committee was formed to investigate the idea. It met in June 1945 to consider a report on the experience of Marrickville Council, which had supported a council subsidised orchestra for the last fifteen years. They had built up a considerable amount of expertise and a prized music library, which they were prepared to lend to Rockdale’s orchestra.



**Mayor of Rockdale, Alderman Norman Cecil Guess**

Photo courtesy of Rockdale City Library

**Norman Guess served as an alderman on Rockdale Council from 1934 to 1956. Guess Avenue in Arncliffe is named after him.**<sup>8</sup>

The main concern of the Rockdale Committee was that a purely classical orchestra might be considered too high-brow and that if the idea was to be successful it would be better to mix light classics and popular music with symphonic pieces. Even the name of the committee, Rockdale Municipal Orchestra Committee, was an expression of this notion. If they included the word Symphony in their title the aldermen feared many people would be put off by the apparent “heavy” classical implications and worse still, expect an extremely high standard of playing which their amateur orchestra could not hope to achieve.<sup>9</sup>

In October 1945 the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra Committee recommended that an orchestra be formed, with a generous subsidy of £200 in the first year. Council would supply a rehearsal venue and use of the Town Hall for performances and music stands would be hand made by the council’s carpenters. The committee initially appointed Fred Hanney, a violinist, and the conductor of the Marrickville Orchestra, to lead the new orchestra, which would consist of 45 musicians including five professionals. The following month cellist Rupert Orchard, who was incidentally the council’s Building and Health Inspector, was appointed as Council Liaison Officer.<sup>10 11</sup>

Their first orchestral concert was scheduled for 29 May 1946. It was attended by a special guest, the Minister for Local Government, the Honourable J.J. Cahill, otherwise known as Joe Cahill, soon to be Premier of New South Wales. The other important guest was Dr Edgar L. Bainton, Director of the Conservatorium of Music.

The newly formed Rockdale Municipal Orchestra played Grieg’s Piano Concerto in A Minor at the first annual St George District Festival of Music and Arts, with 17-year-old piano student Raymond Fisher receiving a warm ovation from the audience.<sup>12</sup>

A self-styled “Parramatta native” who attended a performance considered the 53-piece orchestra first class, noting that the Rockdale Town Hall was filled to capacity. He regretted that the larger city of Parramatta had nothing like “*little Rockdale*”. Indeed, in later years the cultural scene at Rockdale was widely envied by residents of other council areas.<sup>13</sup>

Not only was the concert well received by audience and critics, but it made a profit of 19 pounds 7 shillings, so the council considered it a financial success. Moreover, the council was very proud of its new cultural venture and felt that an important milestone had been achieved in council history. Naturally the Orchestra Committee members were proud of their achievement, but more importantly, they had the support of the full council. The council aldermen offered congratulations to the Orchestra Committee, musicians and council officers who had contributed to the success of the event.<sup>14</sup>

However, Dr Bainton was not impressed with the conductor, who was two bars out of time with the pianist and apparently remained completely unaware of it for an entire movement of the concerto. In view of his criticism, the committee asked the Deputy Conductor, local Bexley resident Mr Rogers, to conduct the second concert in July, while they considered their options. Fortunately, they had not contracted Mr Hanney for any specific period of time. Dr Bainton was acquainted with cellist and conductor Cedric Ashton, a member of the Conservatorium Orchestra, who had recently returned from five years' service in the Navy during World War Two. He recommended Cedric for the position of conductor of Rockdale Municipal Orchestra, a position he subsequently held for the next thirty-three years.<sup>15</sup>



***Cedric Ashton, 1948. This picture appeared in numerous opera programs***

Rupert Orchard supported Dr Bainton's recommendation and was deputised to interview Cedric Ashton.<sup>16</sup>

Cedric was engaged as the Guest Conductor of the third and fourth concerts, with the permission of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (A.B.C.) with whom he was already contracted.<sup>17</sup> At this point the Orchestra Committee was in an uncomfortable position. They didn't want Fred Hanney as the conductor, but having originally given him the impression he would be the permanent conductor, didn't quite know how to tell him he wasn't good enough. Rupert Orchard pressed for Cedric's permanent appointment, but the committee defended their reluctance to act by suggesting that the orchestra members should be the ones to decide.

In the time honoured fashion of government appointments where the officials want to be seen to be acting fairly without bias, but have already made a decision, they decided that the way out of their predicament was to advertise the position, asking the three conductors Hanney, Rogers and Ashton, to submit a resume.<sup>18</sup> Seven applications were submitted. In the meantime, Cedric was already rehearsing the first concert scheduled for 1947. Rupert again advocated the appointment of Cedric Ashton. He had canvassed the opinion of the orchestra and reported that they were confident that Cedric was the best choice and they would support him wholeheartedly. The committee finally made an offer to Cedric Ashton in November 1946 offering an annual remuneration of £120.<sup>19</sup> Council ratified the decision three days later.<sup>20</sup>

Rockdale Municipal Orchestra featured in the second annual Festival of Music and Arts, from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> May 1947, which included orchestral, vocal, instrumental, ballet and chamber music concerts.<sup>21</sup> The orchestra were performing four times per year. Although expenses outweighed income, council was happy with the result, as it was well within their budgeted subsidy allocation.



The orchestra's fame was spreading. They had even attracted the attentions of radio station 2GB who wanted to broadcast one of the concerts.<sup>22</sup>

In 1947 Rupert Orchard fortuitously attended a performance of *Il Pagliacci* in the Rockdale Town Hall. The show was produced by tenor Allan Ferris, who also appeared as leading man. Clearly on a strict budget, the accompaniment consisted of an eclectic mix of piano, clarinet and drums, but audiences attending the three-night season loved it.



**Rupert Orchard, co-founder of Rockdale Municipal Opera Company**

Photo courtesy of Rockdale City Library

Rupert was impressed enough by the performance to go backstage to chat with Allan Ferris, suggesting that the services of Rockdale Municipal Orchestra might prove of mutual benefit to both the opera company and the orchestra. It's not every day that an entrepreneur is offered the services of an orchestra, so Allan was keen to pursue the idea. He proposed a meeting with Rupert and Cedric, which Rupert promptly arranged.

Allan was invited to address the Municipal Orchestra Committee in August 1947. He spoke at some length on his ideas, which were most favourably received. It was felt that an opera would, in the words of the meeting minutes, *"be an excellent thing for the cultural education, edification and enjoyment of the people"*.

Consequently, the scope of the orchestral company was expanded in 1948 when opera was added to the mix. The plan for 1948 included an opera, a ballet, an orchestral concert and a sacred choral work, possibly Handel's *Messiah*. Cedric Ashton, Allan Ferris and Rupert Orchard were tasked with forming a committee to prepare a report on the costs and viability of presenting an opera.<sup>23</sup>

They reported back the following month, additionally proposing the formation of a Subscribers Committee and the introduction of season ticket subscriptions, initially to be set at 15 shillings for the four concerts. The preliminary estimate for the hire of sets, costumes, and music plus musicians' fees for a production of *Faust* was £190. The orchestra had invited Eugene Aynsley Goossens, chief conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Director of the NSW Conservatorium of Music to attend a concert in August. They were pleased to receive an encouraging letter of support for the project from this important maestro.<sup>24</sup> Goossens, who was knighted in 1955, in later years inspired the building of the Sydney Opera House as a home for his beloved Sydney Symphony.

In his memoir, conductor Cedric Ashton M.B.E. credited four people with creating Rockdale Opera; himself, accompanist and vocal coach Megan Evans O.A.M., tenor Allan Ferris, and cellist Rupert Orchard, who was appointed as the Rockdale Council Liaison and Rockdale Municipal Orchestra Business Manager.<sup>25 26</sup>

Rockdale Municipal Opera was born on 8 March 1948, when the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra Committee approved Rupert Orchard's motion to rename the organisation. Symphonic concerts were to remain a key focus of the organisation, but the new name was considered to be more effective for advertising the venture.<sup>27</sup>



**The distinctive inaugural Faust program cover was designed by George Sprod**

The inaugural production was to be Faust, starring tenor Allan Ferris in the eponymous role and accompanist Megan Evans' husband William Diamond as Mephistopheles. The event was a significant one in Sydney's musical life, attracting the interest of Sydney Symphony Chief Conductor and Conservatorium of Music Director Eugene Goossens, who was in attendance on opening night. Initially the reception from the critics was less than enthusiastic, particularly in a review in the Sydney Morning Herald which observed,

*"The task of presenting a "Faust" of even moderate musical value proved to be far beyond the present resources of this brave and willing organisation".*<sup>28</sup>

The production included 41 members of the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra, 9 ballet dancers from the Ballet and Theatre Club Group and a robust, but oddly unbalanced, chorus of 34 sopranos, 9 tenors and 11 basses. The large chorus size was primarily due to the assistance of Rockdale Musical Society.<sup>29</sup>

Overall, it was seen by the council and the Orchestra Committee as a success. The lukewarm reception by the critics didn't deter audience attendance. The public applauded with gusto and the show made a modest profit.

The Orchestra Committee voted a motion of thanks to Allan Ferris for his hard work, which was completed entirely in a voluntary capacity. They recommended that the council pay him an honorarium of 15 pounds 15 shillings. With so many tasks needing attention, it had been far too much for Allan, Rupert and Cedric to complete alone. The opera became a family affair. Mrs Ferris and Mrs Orchard were also acknowledged for their contribution to the opera's success.<sup>30</sup>

That year the orchestra also played for the ballet on the 21<sup>st</sup> July. Cedric Ashton was experiencing considerable difficulty in obtaining the ballet orchestral scores from the publisher. There was no possibility of changing the ballet. The tickets had been printed and programs arranged, subscribers contacted and the Polish Australian Ballet already in rehearsal, but there was no sheet music available. Ultimately he was forced to orchestrate a significant proportion of the music himself.<sup>31</sup>

Although the committee felt it was highly desirable to produce a second opera in 1948, the Town Hall wasn't available due to pre-existing bookings, prompting a decision to defer the next opera to the following year. The 1949 subscription season commenced with Carmen, starring Allan Ferris in a dual role as Producer and leading man Don Jose. A young Megan Evans was the rehearsal accompanist.<sup>32</sup>

According to the critics, standards had improved, despite a few technical glitches. Both Norma Lever's Carmen and Neil Easton's Dancairo were praised, although Allan Ferris' Don Jose was merely "serviceable". Unfortunately, simple things can often leave a lasting impression with the audience, overshadowing the memory of the performance as a whole. After singing the famous Flower Song, Allan dropped the flower given to him by Carmen and completely ignored it. Perhaps he was

preoccupied with his complex responsibilities as romantic lead and producer. His direction was not particularly inspired. He was criticised for arranging the chorus in a semi-circle most of the time.<sup>33</sup>



**The 1949 Carmen program cover designed by Cliff Peir. The graphics were reused in later programs, a common practice at Rockdale Opera**

Meanwhile, the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra ventured further into the field of ballet in 1949, playing for the Polish-Australian Ballet Company (also known as the Kousnetzova Ballet) at Rockdale Town Hall. The ambitious program included Les Sylphides, Les Preludes, Spectre de la Rose and Danube au Printemps. While commending Rockdale Council for its support for the arts, the review was scathing, suggesting that the council should insist on higher artistic standards.

*“The music in last night's ballets...was provided by an orchestra whose members, for the most part, seemed not to have passed the most elementary technical hurdles. It was little wonder then that their music was thick, turgid, and shapeless”*<sup>34</sup>

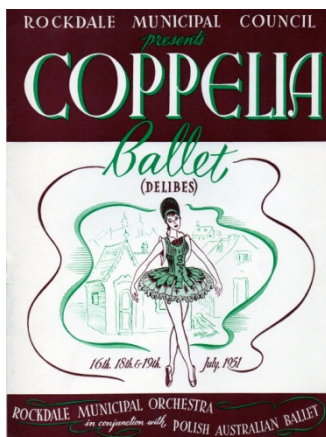
The year was completed with an orchestral concert in September and an orchestral choral concert in November, with all four shows offered for the princely sum of £1/1/- per annum. Despite some critical reviews, the venture had proved a success with both council and audiences.



## 1950s Threats and Opportunities

The decade began with both opportunity and threat. As the decade wore on, the fledgling company gained in reputation and confidence, but the threat of lack of funding always hovered overhead like a hawk ready to pounce. Despite sometimes heavy handed criticism by philistine councillors or biting newspaper critiques, the company held together by the skin of its teeth, through ingenuity, improvisation and the sheer dedication and hard work of its founders and members.

By the mid-1950s the subscription season had settled into a pattern of two operas, a dance program and an orchestral concert. Ballet remained a staple of the program throughout the decade. Some of the featured ballet companies included the Sydney Ballet Group, Bodenweiser Ballet, Polish Australian Ballet, Robert Pomie, and Kathleen Gorham's Ballet Francaise.



### 1951 Coppelia ballet program

As the repertoire increased, so did council concern about the financial viability of running the two companies. The Council's passion for providing residents with the best theatre and music in Sydney, which was evident at the company's creation, was already waning in some quarters. Despite operating on a shoestring budget, it was apparent that they could not make a profit and, at the beginning of the new decade, some members of the council chamber were unwilling to subsidise opera in the suburbs.

Rupert alerted Cedric to the increased strength of the anti-opera company lobby within council, warning him that at the next council meeting they were going to push a vote for the disburdenment of the Opera Company. There was a distinct possibility that Rockdale Council would sever connections and subsidies with the opera company. Cedric, Rupert and Allan realised they needed to do some lobbying if they wanted the company to survive. Support came from an unexpected source through a colourful chain of events.

Coincidentally, the orchestra had planned a concert of Haydn's famous Farewell symphony in December 1950. This work was originally conceived as a way for Haydn to gently suggest to his patron Prince Esterhazy that the palace orchestra needed a holiday. One by one the members of the orchestra leave the stage, blowing out their music stand candle as they depart, finally leaving just two violinists and the conductor in the enveloping gloom. To add to the glamour of the proposed Rockdale event, Cedric planned to dress the orchestra in 18<sup>th</sup> century costume, complete with wigs, a historic backdrop and real candles.

When a council officer learned of the idea he was alarmed at the perceived fire risk, and declared that the insurance company would not cover them for fire. He demanded that no candles be used. Of course it did not take long for someone to realise that electric replica candles would serve the purpose admirably and the concert went ahead as planned. The symbolism of the event in light of the push to close down the opera company was not lost on the audience or the council.<sup>35 36</sup>

The press meanwhile had gotten wind of the venture and sensed a great headline. "Fire Department Slams Rockdale Orchestra" shouted the newspaper.<sup>37</sup> The article syndicated across 6 states and overnight Rockdale Opera became nationally famous. Ironically the local council was completely unaware of its notoriety until one of the councillors returned from an interstate trip to Queensland,

where the name Rockdale Council had excited great interest. When Cairns Shire Council Mayor William Henry Murchison discovered the Rockdale councillor hailed from Rockdale, he was suitably impressed and pressed the startled councillor for all the details of the infamous incident.

Fearful of appearing in a negative light, the council voted to continue the subsidy for the 1950 subscription season. This consisted of four shows; Rigoletto in May, the Polish Australian Ballet with the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra in July, an orchestral concert in September and an orchestral and choral concert in November. Cliff Peir, who had designed the distinctive red cover of the 1949 Carmen program, was prevailed upon to design the new program for Rigoletto. Strikingly, the ladies chorus of 15 cigarette girls was outnumbered by the male chorus of 19 soldiers, a situation which would be reversed in later years.

The 1950 Rigoletto program describes the company and its immediate goals;

*"Rockdale Municipal Orchestra was established in 1946 to encourage good music in the district and to become a cultural and educational influence in the community. Under the Conductorship of Cedric Ashton P.D.C.M, T.D.C.M of the A.B.C., the Orchestra extended its activities, which commenced with orchestral and choral concerts and by 1949 its scope covered performances of grand opera, Gilbert and Sullivan and ballet.*

*The 1950 season will maintain its excellent taste already revealed in past programs and will include soloists of exceptionally high standard, while the Orchestra will be enriched by the inclusion of additional players."*<sup>38</sup>



#### **The 1950 cast of Rigoletto:**

**Ronal Jackson, Allan Ferris, conductor Cedric Ashton, Arete Zantiotis, Jean Christopher**

**Ronal Jackson moved to England in 1951 after winning the Vacuum Oil Company's inaugural Mobil Quest in 1948. This was a substantial prize of £1000. By 1953 he was singing major roles in London with the Carl Rosa Opera Company and Welsh National Opera. He then went on to win the Richard Tauber Memorial Scholarship to study in Vienna for a year. Allan Ferris was chosen by Eugene Goossens, Director of the NSW Conservatorium of Music, to sing Seigmund in Wagner's The Valkyries at the N.S.W Conservatorium of Music in 1953.**<sup>39 40</sup>

Over the years many singers who had honed their skills at Rockdale went on to join Opera Australia or other major interstate or international opera companies. Rockdale Opera would love to be able to say that a young Joan Sutherland had appeared with the company, but a stroke of fate decreed otherwise.

According to Cedric Ashton, Joan was engaged in to sing Elsa's dream from *Löhengrin* and Elizabeth's Greeting from *Tannhäuser* at an orchestral concert, in a rather ambitious program for a small orchestra. She rehearsed twice with the orchestra, and it promised to be a memorable evening until Joan phoned conductor Cedric Ashton one week before the concert. She asked to be released from the contract in order to sing at an important event. Regrettably, the Rockdale concert clashed with the finals of one of Australia's most prestigious singing competitions, the Mobil Quest. The prize was a £1,000 scholarship. Joan Sutherland had just been selected as one of the competition finalists. This placed Cedric in an awkward position, as it left him very little time to find a replacement soprano, but he realised that he could not deny Joan the opportunity to compete for this important prize, and graciously wished her luck in the finals.<sup>41</sup>

As many opera lovers know, Joan won the coveted 1949 Sun Aria and 1950 Mobil Quest competitions and sailed off to London in July 1951 for an appearance on the world's stage. Rockdale's loss was the world's gain, as she eventually achieved international acclaim as the legendary "La Stupenda".<sup>42 43</sup>

In 1951 it was proposed to expand the season to two operas in May and September. Originally *Tosca* was advertised in the subscription invitation as the second opera, but plans were amended to produce *La Boheme* in May and to revive *Faust* at the end of the year, which would be a more cost effective option. The Polish Australian Ballet danced in July, accompanied by the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra, who also played an orchestral concert in November. Despite the added expense of the second opera, subscription fees remained stable.

The future conductor of the Rockdale Municipal Opera Company and Orchestra, flautist John Leeman, joined the orchestra in 1951.



#### **1951 La Boheme**

**The production starred Geoffrey Chard, Allan Ferris, William Diamond, Neil Easton and John Young**

**Photo courtesy of Rockdale City Library**

The 1951 *La Boheme* featured Angelina Arena as Mimi. She was a popular choice and was re-engaged as Margarita for the *Faust* revival, with Allan Ferris and William Diamond reprising their roles of Faust and Mephistopheles respectively.

The show ends in a dramatic moment when Mephistopheles descends to hell. In a large theatre with a sizable budget this is achieved with the aid of a trapdoor. Rockdale's stage does not have a trapdoor. Without fancy stage machinery and big budgets, improvisation and ingenuity are the keys to successful small suburban productions.

Accordingly, Allan Ferris devised a cunning solution to the problem, using a large wooden chest on elegant curved cabriolet legs. The plan was for Mephistopheles to stand in the box and bend his knees, apparently descending into it as "flames" leapt up around him. The result was more comical than dramatic when the base of the box collapsed under his weight, leaving him stuck with his legs protruding from the splintered box. The audience collapsed in laughter, cheering and applauding as the curtain was rapidly closed. Certainly it was a night to remember.<sup>44</sup>



By 1952 prices began the inevitable upwards creep from £1/1/0 to £1/6/0. This was still a bargain for two operas, perennial favourite La Traviata, and Martha by German composer Flotow. Subscribers also enjoyed a modern ballet, and an impressive orchestral program of Tchaikovsky's 6<sup>th</sup> Symphony and Isidore Goodman playing Beethoven's Piano Concerto no. 2.

Rigoletto and Madam Butterfly were programmed the following year, with popular soprano Angelina Arena appearing as Cio Cio San. All singers have experienced moments when memory falters and they make a jump from one section of an aria to another similar section. A professional musician never stops playing, no matter how strained the moment, and Angelina and the orchestra were severely tested one night when the soprano jumped from the Act 1 version of her aria to a similar section in the Act 2 reprise, which has a different ending.

Orchestral music scores have numbered sections, which help delineate which bar of music the conductor is referring to in rehearsal. It is not normally a requirement to refer to them in performance, but in this instance they were a godsend. In his memoir, conductor Cedric Ashton recounted that he realised quickly that Angelina had made a leap, and hissed at the orchestra to play Act II number 94. Startled orchestra leader Della Wood kept playing while violinist Marjorie Henderson, seated beside her, flicked through the pages and other members of the orchestra struggled to keep up. Suddenly Angelina realised her mistake and reverted to the correct music. Della calmly went back to playing Act 1 as a solo violin piece for a few bars while the orchestra desperately turned pages.

The resulting review criticised the unfortunate orchestra.

*"Angelina Arena captured the audience with her singing. It is regrettable that she had to suffer some orchestral hiccups during the performance".*<sup>45</sup>



**Rigoletto program 1953, designed by S.D. Baggs**

As so often happened in this period, the 1954 program changed several times between the period of planning and execution. They finally settled on an orchestral concert, Manon, and a double dose of Gilbert and Sullivan operetta with Pirates of Penzance and The Mikado. Savoy productions have long been a favourite with Rockdale audiences and are the most produced operas in their repertoire.

Robert Hatherley joined the cast of The Mikado as Lord High Executioner Ko Ko. He was destined to become a Rockdale favourite in the G & S character roles. He also directed a number of inventive shows between 1975 and 1994.

For some time, the orchestra numbers had hovered around the mid-thirties, but by the mid fifties the orchestra was reduced to 22 or 23 players. One can only speculate whether this was this a reflection of the need for less players or of the general financial difficulties of the company. The orchestra was re-named in the program as the Rockdale Municipal Light Orchestra for Gilbert and Sullivan favourite The Gondoliers.

Chorus numbers often fluctuated widely from show to show. The 1955 Tosca chorus was rather heavily weighted on the soprano side, comprising of 19 women and just 5 men, but revived considerably for Gilbert and Sullivan with 37 women and 29 men.

Talk of a 1956 Rosenkavalier came to nothing. Instead, the year began with a contemporary triple bill and finished with crowd pleaser The Merry Widow.

The Secret of Susanna, and Amahl and the Night Visitors, were presented in collaboration with the Sydney Opera Group, a chamber opera group which specialised in one act, low-budget works ranging from Pergolesi to Menotti. They performed in country towns, suburban Music Clubs and arts festivals.<sup>46</sup> Amahl and the Night Visitors was written by Gian-Carlo Menotti in 1951 as the world's first opera commissioned specifically for television, and is usually performed as a Christmas Eve offering.

The third piece was a fairly unknown work, the comic one act operetta Burning to Sing, with libretto is by R.H. Burnside and Score by Gustave Kerker. The plot commences with Madame Tremolini sitting alone on stage in a hotel waiting for her intoxicated husband to return. One by one the rest of the cast appear, including a bellboy who announces that the hotel is on fire. As could only happen in an operetta, the characters are distracted and don't immediately leave, allowing for some hilarious capers and some delightful ensembles before the hotel burns down.

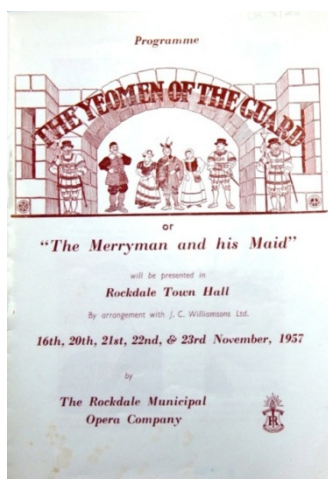
In 1952 Cedric Ashton had been invited to create a music program for the boys of Kings School Parramatta, in whose employ he continued for the next 16 years. Consequently, Rockdale Opera occasionally transferred scaled down versions of their productions to the Kings School, which was always well received. A memorable production of "Burning to Sing" was thus transferred to the Kings School, complete with a billowing smoke scenic effect during the final scene. This was achieved with dry ice at Rockdale, but in this instance John Grice, the school's science master, was invited to involve the students in the production by asking them to create the smoke effect.

When the process was described to Cedric Ashton and Allan Ferris it seemed innovative and a wonderful educational experience for the boys. The science students devised a method to create smoke involving rolled newspapers soaked in sulphur nitrate and ignited with a match. Any attempt to do this today would bring down the full weight and authority of the Workplace Health and Safety authorities, but this was a different era. The effect was so successful that plumes of yellow smoke enveloped the stage, leaving the cast and orchestra gasping and in tears. The curtain descended rapidly, as the orchestra played a loud and final chord in the key of C. The schoolboy audience loved every moment.<sup>47</sup>

Although accompanist and coach Megan Evans' role in the company was often unacknowledged in the program, she was very busy behind the scenes as a jack-of-all-trades, as evidenced in a Sydney Morning Herald publicity article in 1954, where she is described as William Diamond's wife.

*"For the past two months Mrs Diamond has been supervising the rehearsals of a chorus of 40, as well as coaching the principal singers in their roles...Now that rehearsals for Pirates of Penzance are over, Mrs Diamond goes backstage to manage the production. She keeps an eye on the lighting, props, and the sound effects, watches for the cues and rounds up a cast of more than 50".<sup>48</sup>*

The orchestra planned a series of daytime Youth Concerts in the Town Hall in 1957 to complement the usual evening offerings. It also planned to present two orchestral concerts, Carmen, and Yeomen of the Guard. The schedule was revised to replace one of the orchestral performances with what was most likely a ready-made production of Barber of Seville. The cast were members of the N.S.W Opera Guild which had performed Barber over 300 times throughout Australia and New Zealand.



### Yeomen of the Guard program 1957

Cedric Ashton co-produced the 1951 Boheme with Allan Ferris, and produced the 1954 Manon. Once again he tried his hand at producing in 1957, choosing Yeomen, the only G & S opera that opens with a lovesick solo and finishes with a bitter-sweet ending. Megan Evans was roped in to carry out double duty both as Rehearsal Pianist and also Stage Manager.

At the end of the year, plans were being finalised for the 1958 season, to consist of H.M.S. Pinafore, a reprise of Boheme, and an orchestral concert. Also in negotiation was either a ballet or the double bill I Pagliacci and Cavalleria Rusticana. The ballet won the day. Lovers of "Cav and Pag" had to be content to wait until 1984 to see it produced in the suburbs.

La Boheme's program exhorted the public to subscribe to the season. Mention was made of the Sydney Opera House, which had not yet begun construction and was still over 15 years away from opening.

*"Rockdale Municipal Opera Company gives the people of the district a priceless acquisition in Council's field of endeavour. Under the conductorship of Cedric Ashton, the Orchestra and Opera Company has extended its activities to include Ballet and Gilbert and Sullivan Light Opera. With the Sydney Opera House still in the planning stage the St George District is privileged to be the only district outside the Capital where Opera, Orchestra and Ballet are part of its local activities".*<sup>49</sup>

Allan Ferris had devoted a decade to the success of the company. The 1958 Boheme was the last to star its co-founder and guiding light. Allan appeared in the dual roles of Producer and leading man Rudolpho.

While one Rockdale favourite bowed out, another singer destined to become an audience favourite made her Rockdale debut that year. Patrons were treated to contralto Mary Blake's delightful performance as Little Buttercup in H.M.S. Pinafore. She was paired with Robert Hatherley as Sir Joseph Porter. This pair delighted audiences over many years, singing numerous G & S roles at Rockdale, continuing through to the mid-1980s. However, money must have been tight by the end of the year. The program for H.M.S. Pinafore was a meagre single sheet of folded paper.



Audiences were promised a frolicking Die Fledermaus and fun Iolanthe in 1959. On the more serious side, the usual orchestral concert was scheduled, together with a partnership with the Robert Pomie and Kathleen Gorham of the Ballet Francaise.

The importance of the company in the operatic and cultural life of Sydney was brought home with the sobering news that the Elizabethan Theatre Trust would no longer produce opera, leaving opera to the suburban companies. As it turned out, the rumours were false and the Elizabethan Theatre Trust continued to produce opera until morphing into the Australian Opera in 1969.

### Iolanthe program 1959

Design unattributed

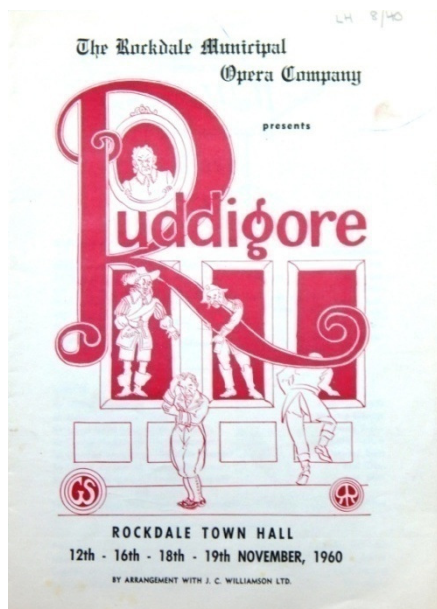
## 1960s Consolidation

The company produced two or three operas annually for most of the sixties. Two influential figures joined the company in this decade; Director Brian Phillips and Mayor Ron Rathbone whose association with the opera company commenced at the end of the decade.

Cedric Ashton asked Michael Khlentzos to sing a lead role and produce the Gypsy Baron in May 1960, although a second name, Charles Matthews, also appears in the program as producer. The venue had been the Rockdale Town Hall since the company inception. Unusually, the Gypsy Baron was performed in the Verbrugghen Hall at the N.S.W. State Conservatorium of Music, now a Sydney University campus known as the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

Colin Mettam, Alec Fisher and Herman Brett, Rockdale chorus stalwarts, joined the company for the Gypsy Baron chorus in 1960, along with train driver and unionist Bernie Willingale. Bernie was to become infamous as the State Secretary of the A.F.U.L.E. (Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Employees) who incited the rail workers to strike state-wide in 1969.<sup>50</sup>

Bernie desperately wanted a principal role in the production. However, he was not popular with the producer, as he frequently arrived late, carrying his toolbox and a grubby sweat rag. Finally, his persistence paid off and he was given a cameo appearance where he tottered on stage on crutches as a war veteran with a plastered leg. One night the plaster cast prop went missing, so undaunted, he staggered on stage without it, collapsing in a heap centre stage. At this point the male chorus had no option but to valiantly rescue the situation by bodily carrying him offstage as he gave a triumphant victory wave.



### **Ruddigore program, 1960**

#### **Design unattributed**

Don Marks joined the company as rehearsal pianist for Ruddigore and played for a total of 53 shows until 1992.

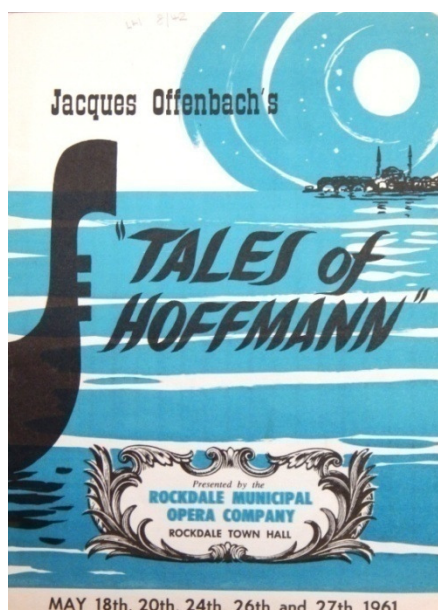
Tales of Hoffman would be an ambitious project for a major opera company, but Rockdale approached the show with alacrity, dividing the taxing soprano roles between two leading ladies. Maureen London sang Antonia and the doll Olympia, while Loise Empey sang Giuletta. Michael Khlentzos appeared as Hoffman. Alan Light was a special guest artist from the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, singing the roles of Dr. Miracle, Coppelius and Dapertutto. Alan later became well-known for numerous roles with the Australian Opera.

The 1961 production of The Mikado starred Mary Blake as Katisha. A young mezzo, Lesley Stender, sang in the ladies' chorus. Lesley sang the role of Katisha in later years with both Rockdale Opera and the Australian Opera. She also directed Rockdale shows during the 1980s.

Initial plans for 1962 were for the Bartered Bride, followed by two concerts, one of which would feature some Gilbert and Sullivan, and a final full production of Patience. Yet again the plans were amended and the Smetana was followed by a triple bill of Cox and Box, Trial by Jury and Phaudrig



Crohoore. This unusual choice was a dramatic Irish cantata set to music by Stanford. There were no principals. The cantata was performed entirely by the chorus. Even more unusually, the show only ran for two nights instead of four. The year finished with a November production of *The Gondoliers*.



#### **Tales of Hoffman program 1961**

**The design is unattributed. At this stage the Subscribers Committee numbered 38 people, demonstrating the passion of opera-goers for their suburban company.**

Sadness invaded the company at this time. Norman Cecil Guess passed away. He was considered the company's founding father. Norman was Rockdale Mayor in 1948, chaired the Municipal Orchestra Committee and held the position of President of the Subscribers Committee for many years. His widow continued to serve on the Subscribers Committee, despite her husband's death. Social Secretary Betty Byrne also took over the position of Council Liaison Officer from company co-founder and cellist Rupert Orchard.<sup>51</sup>

The council's Cultural and Social Services Committee voted to create an award in Norman's honour, noting that he was largely responsible for the formation of both the orchestra and the opera company. It was titled the Norman Guess Memorial Award, comprising of an inscribed gift and cash prize of £25. The first recipient was Cedric Ashton, with the citation;

*"It is felt that he has given remarkable service in many ways and that he has done more than any other individual over the years to raise the standard of the performance, bringing considerable credit to the Municipality for its cultural efforts in this regard"*

Indeed, Rockdale was the envy of other councils including Hurstville, which requested that *Faust* transfer to the Hurstville Civic Centre for one performance. The technical difficulties involved were considered impractical and the Cultural and Social Service Committee declined the invitation.<sup>52</sup>

Extending its usual four-night season, the company staged a fifth performance of *Patience* in St Georges Leagues Club in 1965. This was due to a sponsorship deal. Plans for the year were ambitious with the prospect of three operas and an orchestral concert. Perhaps more significantly; this was the year that Brian Phillips joined the company as a principal in the role of the Lord Chancellor, although he had previously sung in the 1954 *Pirates of Penzance* chorus a decade earlier. Brian returned the following year to direct *Yeomen of the Guard* and went on to direct many operas at Rockdale for almost four decades, culminating in his swansong production, *Attila*, in 2004. His knowledge of Gilbert and Sullivan works was encyclopaedic.

The company joined forces with the State Opera Co. (NSW) and its auxiliary the Rosenkavalier Group to perform *Don Pasquale* in July 1965. Due to other musical engagements, Cedric Ashton was missing for the first time since the orchestra was formed in 1946. Flautist John Leeman, who had played with the orchestra almost since its inception, stepped into the role of Acting Musical Director and Conductor for this show and the following opera.

Rockdale was not only a fertile training ground for young opera singers, but also for directors. The end of 1965 saw a production of *Madam Butterfly* which was credited with a Producer, Stephen Beinl, and Stage Director Moffat Oxenbould. Moffat had graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) three years earlier in 1962. Regrettably, this was his one and only association

with Rockdale, as in 1966 he moved to the UK to work as a Stage Manager for Sadlers Wells Opera in London. As opera fans would no doubt be aware, Moffat assumed the position of Opera Australia's Artistic Administer in 1974 and became its Artistic Director from 1984 until his retirement in 1999. This early experience with Madam Butterfly was put to use in his career with the national opera company. He directed a popular and stunningly beautiful production of Butterfly for Opera Australia in 1997, which remains in the repertoire of the company and was recently revived in 2015.<sup>53</sup>

Robin Lovejoy at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) recommended budding director Rick Billingshurst to Cedric Ashton. He was young and inexperienced in the field of opera production, but showed great promise. His first Rockdale show was Barber of Seville, followed with La Traviata a year later.

It is not unusual to find that the artistic vision of the producer and the singers clash, sometimes irrevocably. Rick conceived the 1968 production of La Traviata as a dream, where Violetta had no contact with the characters around her. Soprano Rosalind Keene, who had played Violetta many times, felt alienated and unable to connect emotionally with the cast. Nine weeks into a twelve-week rehearsal period Rosalind decided she had had enough and phoned Cedric Ashton to say that she could not continue. A conciliation meeting was called between Rick, cast members and Betty Byrne the Company Manager.

To save the production from cancellation it was agreed that Rosalind would use her former experiences to move and act as she saw fit, with Rick retaining oversight over all other aspects of the production. Although Rick capitulated, he felt his artistic vision had been compromised. He withdrew his name from the program and refused to have his name associated with the production.

Opening night was greeted with acclaim by the audience. Somewhat ungraciously, Rick declined to offer any congratulations to the cast, but demanded an insert in the program naming him as producer. He audaciously claimed a fee increase for the extra work involved.<sup>54</sup>

A young Paul Ferris was also in the cast of La Traviata as Gaston Letorieres. Paul was the son of Rockdale Opera's co-founder Allan Ferris and was about to graduate from the Conservatorium Opera School. In later years he would go on to join the Australian Opera chorus before studying in London. Returning in the seventies to sing principal roles with the Australian Opera, he also played guest roles with Rockdale, appearing as Alfred Germont in the 1977 production of Traviata.<sup>55</sup>



HARRY SHEPHERD  
"Alfred Germont"



PAUL FERRIS  
"Gaston de Letorieres"



PETER MACDONALD  
"Don José"



JEFFREY WARNOCK  
"Giorgio Germont"



ANETTE ZANTVETS  
"Flora Borsini"



RICHARD DIVALL  
"Baron Duphol"



RICHARD WOOLLEY  
"Marguerite d'Oliva"

**1968 La Traviata program**  
Paul Ferris, son of co-founder Allan Ferris, stars as Gaston Letorieres. The other notable figure in this program is musicologist and conductor Richard Divall A.O., O.B.E., who played Baron Duphol. He became Music Director of Queensland Opera Co (1971), Music Director of the Victoria State Opera in Melbourne (1972-1996), and Principal Resident Conductor of Opera Australia (1996-2001) and is currently an Associate Professor of Music at Monash University.<sup>56</sup>



Brian Phillips directed his first Rockdale Opera production of *Yeomen of the Guard* in November 1966. He followed it with *Princess Ida* in 1967. Brian's 1968 production of *The Mikado* was praised by Sydney Morning Herald Reviewer Romolo Constantino, who wrote that it was a splendid performance and the best she had seen at Rockdale.<sup>57</sup>

In the new era of decimal currency, which was introduced in February 1966, subscription ticket prices were \$2 per annum in 1967 doubling to \$4 in 1968 to cover rising costs.

His Worship the Mayor Alderman R. T. Gosling had been the ex-officio Patron of the Subscribers Committee for many years. Ron Rathbone was promoted from Deputy Mayor to Mayor of Rockdale in 1969 and therefore became the new Patron of the opera company. It was to be a fruitful collaboration over an extended period.

## 1970s Crisis

**“COUNCIL SACKS OPERA COMPANY”** declared the headlines of St George District News in October 1971. The 1970s were a time of controversy, when the value of supporting an opera company was challenged and rebuffed, funding was repeatedly withdrawn and reinstated, and the company underwent a restructure.

The councillors of Rockdale were divided in opinion, some for and some against spending money on the arts. The council’s annual budget was \$5 million, yet the opera cost just a fraction of that amount at \$13, 000. In September 1971 the General Purposes Committee, consisting of Aldermen Ford, Kibbey, Burke, Egan and Oxford, had reviewed the expenses of Carmen with alarm., noting that even with a \$1000 grant from the Australian Council for the Arts and a further \$1000 Cultural Grant from the NSW State Government, substantial losses had been incurred. By the 7<sup>th</sup> October the resolve of the General Purposes Committee was to recommend that the incoming council discontinue the Orchestra and Opera Company from the commencement of 1972. <sup>58</sup>

The Finance Committee commissioned Rupert Orchard to write a report on the feasibility of selling the Carmen costumes to recoup some of the losses. He advised them that it would not be a financially responsible move, as the costume resale value would be very low. If at some point in the future the opera was revived, they could be a significant resource. If sold, the replacement value would be high.

Interestingly, this report also reveals the deep dedication of the Rockdale Opera Committee and production team. Council purchased the costume materials, but the company members provided free labour. Allan and Merle Lees took six weeks to sew the 800 costume pieces for Carmen. They worked seven days a week, twelve hours per day. Four of the chorus completed the hand-sewing on the weekends. Rupert Orchard placed the cost of paying casual seamstresses at \$3 per hour. This works out at over 1500 hours of volunteer labour and an estimated labour cost savings of \$4,752.

The dedication of the volunteers was not considered particularly relevant when the Finance Committee Report was presented to the General Purposes Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> October. The meeting did not go well for Rockdale Opera, with the councillors standing firm against continuation of council support. <sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 14<sup>th</sup> October, Alderman A. Ford alleged that between 1968 and 1971 the company lost \$33,000, complaining that local talent was not being used and less than half the audience were local residents. He objected strenuously to the council funding opera for people who did not even live in the area, an allegation based on hearsay rather than fact. Alderman Egan supported Ford, claiming that only 1,500 people out of 83,000 residents were attending the opera. Alderman E. Kibbey was shocked at the loss incurred by the company; while Alderman B. Austin wanted the money spent on other worthier cultural items. Even opera-lover Alderman Cunningham could not see the value of running an opera company. They voted against retaining the company, together with Aldermen Bryant, Wright, Oxford and Moore.





## St George District News announces the imminent demise of Rockdale Opera Company in October 1971

Ron Rathbone's riposte to this tirade of disdain for cultural matters put the financial situation in perspective;

*"25 years ago it was decided that it would cost £2,000 to run the opera company. Council expenditure is four times what it was 25 years ago, but the costs have not risen this much".*

Aldermen Nairn, Burke and R. Gosling and Thomas stood firm with Ron Rathbone in defence of the opera company. Alderman H. Heslehurst thought that the problem was caused by lack of advertising and Alderman J. Burke was not worried that opera ran at a loss because *"It is a recognised fact that opera all over the world never pays"*. They voted in favour of the company.

The vote was 9 to 6 in favour of a motion to abolish Rockdale Opera Company, but retain the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra.<sup>60</sup> Ironically, the orchestra ceased operation as a distinct entity separate from the opera company just 3 years later, but the opera survived into the new millenium.<sup>61</sup>

The Rockdale Opera subscribers were outraged. Sixty-four music lovers signed a petition entitled "KEEP OPERA ALIVE IN THIS AREA", while another forty-seven residents of the Rockdale Municipality signed a second petition. Twenty letters were minuted in correspondence at the next council Meeting on October 28 expressing strong support for the company.

*"The prestige of Rockdale Council will suffer, because it was not built up on account of its curbs and gutters, but by the fame of its cultural activities."* Mrs D.S. Guess (former Mayoress of Rockdale Council)

*"It is a well-known fact that many members of the musical profession have spread their wings after leaving the Rockdale nest since its inception 25 years ago. Alas it seems a great shame that artists of the future are to be denied performing opportunities just as the audiences in the times ahead are to be deprived of the joys of participating in the process of making music."* Joan Shute.

*"What a culmination to Rockdale's Centenary Celebrations, the axing of their greatest claim to fame-the Opera Company which is known throughout Australia for its productions".* Mrs W. Salan.

Many company members expressed their thoughts on the subject including producer John Milson and several notable singers;

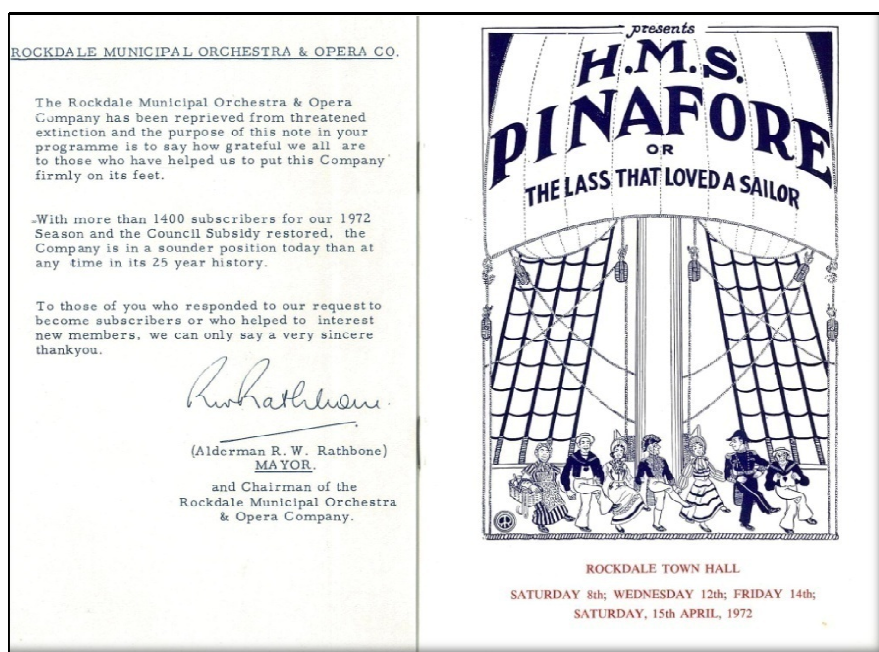
*"Rockdale Opera provided valuable experience for young artists, as well as opportunities for established professionals to appear in performance of top standard...The newly elected Rockdale Council seems incapable of understanding just how much was achieved by the liaison Officer Betty Byrne and the musical Director Cedric Ashton in the sphere of local culture."* John Milson, David Gray, Richard Divall, John Main, Arete Zantiotis, Lesley Stender.

*"Council's decision was given without any prior discussion of a public nature ...I and no doubt many others who have given their time and services to the benefit of Council, must feel that the manner of Council's action was, to say the least, high handed and discourteous to us all...I am upset and concerned by the discourtesy... whereby I had to learn of Council's views and actions after the event."*  
Mrs Betty Byrne, Liaison Officer.

Most damning of all is the letter from Maestro Cedric Ashton, who had not even been informed personally of the decision.

*"I was astounded to hear from Mrs Byrne that Council has by a majority vote proposed to abolish the Opera Company. After so many years of providing the best in opera and orchestral music for the St. George District I find it hard to accept that Council would in one stroke cancel all operatic activity without informing me of its intention...As yet I have received no written confirmation of Council's action... Would you at this stage prevail upon the Council to stay their final decision till I could address them with alternate proposals."* Cedric Ashton <sup>62</sup>

Ron Rathbone was not content to let things lie as they were. He was instrumental in starting the petition which successfully reversed the decision. Moreover, they used the petition as a mailing list to entice more people to subscribe. The 1972 season boasted 1400 subscribers.



**1972 Program insert from Rockdale Mayor Alderman Ron Rathbone announcing the success of the petition to save Rockdale Opera**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> November, Mayor Ron Rathbone and the Finance Committee agreed to meet with Liaison Officer Betty Byrne and Musical Director Cedric Ashton.

A detailed report was submitted, showing that some additional costs had been incurred due to last minute cast changes in Carmen and the forced cancellation of a performance, but the problem was predominantly one of inflation and wage increases. The cost of producing scenery had escalated sharply in the previous two years. The Production Manager of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust suggested the increase was as high as 25%.

The other significant factor was the changing role of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust (AETT) and its Opera Company in the late sixties. Initially they had been highly supportive of Rockdale Opera, lending sets and costumes, releasing prominent singers for performances and providing producers

and designers. The AETT had morphed into the Australian Opera, a full-time fully professional company which was now only two years away from moving into its new home on Bennelong Point. The national company no longer had the desire to boost a small semi-professional, suburban operation.

Cedric and Betty presented a clear plan to take the company forward. They recommended that ticket prices needed to increase, as they had been fairly stable in the last decade and were not keeping pace with inflation. They emphasised the need to seek additional funding from the Australian Council of the Arts, publicise opera productions more effectively, revise the structure and function of the Subscribers Committee and to set up a governing committee comprising representatives of council, musical and technical production, promotional and scenery consultants and a representative of the Elizabethan Trust.

Betty and Cedric left the meeting to allow the Finance Committee to discuss the matter further. The Aldermen resolved to ask Cedric Ashton and Betty Byrne to form a new Opera Management Committee. Before final consideration could be given for saving the company, Council requested a detailed financial breakdown and business plan be submitted, demonstrating the ability of the Opera Company to operate on a more stable financial basis.<sup>63</sup>

The resulting business plan was produced at the December meeting of the council's Finance Committee. A new committee structure was proposed and the following names put forward for consideration:

Company Manager Betty Byrne, who had been the Orchestra Liaison Officer; Musical Consultant Cedric Ashton; Chartered Accountant Allan Geeves, who was a subscriber and a local resident; Theatrical Designer Allan Lees, who was well known professionally, having worked with the Australian Opera, Old Tote Theatre Company and New Zealand Opera; Promotions Officer Hugh McGowen, who was highly experienced in his field as Promotions Officer of the Elizabethan Trust; Production Manager Peter Smith who also held the position of the Production Manager of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust; Subscribers Representatives Winifred Christison and Niven Fleming. Additionally, Rockdale Council would be represented by two officers, including the Mayor who would chair the committee

The business plan demonstrated a new emphasis on fiscal responsibility, implied by the appointment of a Chartered Accountant to the committee and a vowed commitment to efficiency and cost savings. The goals of the new committee were to increase income by doubling the subscribers list, engaging in fundraising and seeking sponsorship from a variety of sources, including The Australian Council for the Arts, the Cultural Grants Committee and Rockdale Council. The Council was coy about how much it might contribute, preferring to see first how much the other government bodies would offer. The planning process in the past had been somewhat ad hoc with constant changes to the program. One of the committee's functions was to produce a solid plan and a realistic budget for the future.

It is not possible to compare the individual cost components with previous years, as there is no available breakdown of income and expenditure for the sixties, which are simply totalled for each production. However, some of the budgeted expenses for 1972 are quite striking. Cedric Ashton, who had devoted a significant amount of energy and passion to the company since the 1940s, was to be paid a mere \$420 per year to conduct an opera, an orchestral concert and a G&S production, while the Producer received \$400 for the opera and \$200 for the Gilbert and Sullivan. Orchestral costs for *Il Trovatore* were projected at \$2,400 and the scenery cost \$2,250.

There was also an emphasis on the importance of effective advertising and promotional activities, with \$800 budgeted for this purpose.

As a cost saving measure, the ballet was to be accompanied by a recording instead of the orchestra, negating the need to pay musicians and a conductor. After consultation with the Musicians Union, the orchestra was to be primarily composed of amateur musicians, with selected professional section leads. The singers and professionals were to be paid a lower fee and the scenery costs halved.

The budgeted deficit of \$9,000 for 1972 was to be addressed by holding social fundraising events, and approaching local professionals, businesses and industries for sponsorship.

Countering some of the criticisms that had been levelled at the company by Alderman Ford, the company pledged to promote local talent and local community engagement.<sup>64</sup>

As for opera lovers, despite significant increases in ticket prices, a subscription was still a bargain at \$6 per annum. Compare this with the Australian Opera, whose 1973 ticket prices were \$7.50 to \$12.50 per show for a Saturday evening performance at the Sydney Opera House.<sup>65</sup> However, the committee would need 1,000 subscribers to meet their objectives. This number was exceeded when both the committee members and the chorus were roped in to promote the opera. Chorus members even appeared in costume in Rockdale Shopping Centre for two Saturday mornings to sell tickets. They signed up 1200 subscribers, predominantly from Rockdale and adjacent council areas, giving lie to the misconception that the company was simply servicing the upper classes of the North Shore, as several aldermen had vociferously claimed.<sup>66</sup>

The company was restructured as a direct result of this crisis. Ron Rathbone, who had been the company's Patron, took on the position of Company Chairman. The new Executive differed slightly from the original proposition. It consisted of Company Manager Betty Byrne, Peter Smith, Alan Greeves, Niven Fleming, Winifred Christison, Arthur Ford and conductor Cedric Ashton. Committee members changed over the years to reflect current producers, staging crew, chorus representatives and musical directors.

From 1972 onwards the program carried advertisements from local businesses as a way of creating more income for the struggling company. Additional income was derived from grants from the Australian Council for the Arts and \$1000 from the NSW State Government Cultural Grants Committee. The council was happy with the results and the following March voted to pay the company a \$5,000 subsidy.<sup>67</sup>

Lack of finance had certainly not diminished the company vision or compromised production quality. The November 1972 *Il Trovatore* was lauded by reviewer Aaron Israel:

*"Il Trovatore reached standards quite unrivalled outside Australia's major organisation in the opera field. The production proved beyond doubt that Rockdale Opera Company is one of exceptionally high standards, and that there is nothing parochial or narrow about its vision."*

David Gyger was perhaps slightly less impressed;

*"At its best this production neared professional standard in every department and at its worst it came uncomfortably close to a kind of amateurism that is most untypical of the Rockdale company."*



The 1972 council grant was designated to be spent on creating an effective administrative structure. Council officers had previously assisted with administrative tasks, but the service was withdrawn. Despite this, the company was now organised on more efficient lines with longer term planning than had previously been the case. In the fifties and sixties season plans were frequently altered. An announcement would be issued in the program advising of the shows for the forthcoming subscription season, but the selection would often change several times in the intervening months. In July 1973, the company requested confirmation of Rockdale Town Hall booking dates for the 1974 season, in order that artists could be locked in and subscription brochures printed. Members of the Rockdale Council All Purpose Committee, which had oversight of the company, clearly considered the new plans overly ambitious, suggesting that the opening of the Sydney Opera House would compete for the same audience. They advised caution and a more modest program.<sup>68</sup>

The company also proposed structural reform and the creation of a limited guarantee company. In view of this, they prepared a new constitution for council's consideration. An unexpected consequence of the proposed separation was council's threat to remove both the subsidy and free use of the Town Hall if the company became an independent organisation with a profit motive. The move was more about organisational structure and autonomy, as the idea that a small opera company could actually make a profit was laughable, but councillors voted not to assist any profit making organisation. The Opera Committee was quite concerned that if the organisation should be disbanded due to financial difficulties, the committee would be responsible for any debts incurred. Protection of the committee was vital, which could be achieved by forming a company limited by guarantee.

Overall the company was in a much more stable financial footing, earning a \$3,265 nett surplus in 1972, partly because artists had agreed to accept lower fees in order to help the company through a difficult time. Without a council subsidy there would have been a loss. Paying for hall rental would put a serious dint in the finances.<sup>69</sup>

Councillors were upset that the company wanted to remove the word Municipal from its title. This was not intended as an insult to local government, but the Corporate Affairs Commission would not register a business name with "*municipal*" in the title.<sup>70</sup> A motion was approved by the General Purposes Committee that the opera company be allowed to remove the word Orchestra from the title and become known as Rockdale Municipal Opera Company, but that it should remain in its present structure under the control of the council, supervised by Aldermen Ford, Burke and Rathbone.<sup>71</sup>

While the politics played out in the civic arena, Brian Phillips continued to produce shows for the company throughout the seventies, particularly Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, which he also directed for the Gilbert and Sullivan Society. Brian commenced making costumes for the 1971 *Patience*, utilising his considerable talents as a costume maker. He began to design and sew for each of his productions from this point forward, amassing an enormous number of costumes for both principals and chorus. The costumes were stored in a room underneath his house and rented to the company for a modest fee far below that of a commercial hirer. Often the costumes would resurface in revivals of the shows or rematerialize with variations in a different production.

Robert Hatherley was a supreme inventor of comic stage business. In the 1972 production of *H.M.S. Pinafore* he played Sir Joseph Porter. During the comic trio "Never mind the why and wherefore", he picked up a cannonball from a pile on stage. Dropping the "iron" ball on his foot he then picked up another cannonball, staggering across the stage with it and heaved it into the audience amidst panicked screams. Laughter ensued as they realised they had fallen for a simple practical joke. It was a rubber ball.<sup>72</sup>



**1972 HMS Pinafore. Men's and women's chorus in Brian Phillips' costumes.**

*Photo by Colin Mettam.*

Since the initial Gilbert and Sullivan double dose of *Pirates of Penzance* and *The Mikado* in the 1954 season, G&S productions had become a regular feature of the subscription program, and many Rockdale performers also worked with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society. Bransby Byrne, Conductor of the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, was invited to conduct a 1973 Rockdale concert of extracts from favourite G&S productions, starring Mary Blake, Roslyn Dansie, Wendy Vercoe, John Wirth and William Murray, with producer Brian Phillips appearing in several excerpts.

The Rockdale Municipal Orchestra had often presented a ballet program in the Rockdale Town Hall. In 1973 Rockdale Opera decided to experiment by collaborating with the NSW State Dance Company, which was now the official ballet company of New South Wales, supported by state and federal funding authorities. Despite their prominence in the dance world, the critics were not wholly impressed by their choice of program. Although there were some good things said about the works, the most controversial ballet, *The Girl in the Tartan Raincoat*, told the story of a lonely girl who was gang raped, which was criticised by Jennifer Thurston in a review in *Dance* for its "*mere sensationalism*".

At the end of 1973 long time Company Manager Betty Byrne decided to withdraw from the position due to the ill health of her husband. She was applauded in the program for her hard work and dedication, crediting her with being *“almost entirely responsible for keeping the company alive”*. Betty had seen the company through some tough times over the previous eight years.<sup>73</sup>

The company deferred her replacement to save \$700. Volunteer labour was utilised whenever possible, but the financial struggle continued. The 1973 deficit was \$1000, despite raising subscription prices from \$6 to \$7. The loss was caused by a State Government subsidy reduction from the projected \$1000 to a mere \$400. The Australian Council for the Arts Grant was also under threat. Plans to produce light opera in order to attract a wider audience base did not meet their approval and potentially meant the loss of a further \$2,500 subsidy. The opera committee petitioned council to assist with signwriting and provision of a truck to deliver scenery from their Bexley Depot storage facilities to the Town Hall, which council agreed to.<sup>74</sup> The council subsidy was held at \$5,000, increasing to \$7,500 by 1974.<sup>75</sup>

David Gyger’s review of the November 1973 *Cosi fan Tutte* highlighted the financial struggles of the company;

*“It was swelteringly hot in the Rockdale Town Hall ... but there were other aspects of this evening which were a good deal more depressing. Taken together I suppose they added up to money anaemia, for if ever there was a blatant case of this disease, it was this production. Failure of the Rockdale company to get as large a Federal subsidy as it had expected forced it to cut the season of *Cosi fan Tutte* from five to four performances and the orchestra which had fewer rehearsals than needed for the same reason showed this all too clearly in performance...Still this is a *Cosi* well worth seeing”*.<sup>76</sup>

To offset their difficulties, attempts were made to secure prestigious patronage. Not content with inviting local politicians to attend a performance, as is usually the case with amateur companies, Rockdale set its sights high. Gough and Margaret Whitlam attended *Cosi fan Tutte* as Guests of Honour. Dress for the event was a little more formal than the average opera audience today – lounge suit for men and long frocks for the ladies.<sup>77</sup> No doubt the idea of inexpensive suburban opera appealed to their egalitarian Labour Party ideals. This enabled the company to quote the Prime Minister in the subscription renewal brochure;

*“For some 27 years your company has maintained a standard of performance that must be the envy of other opera groups across Australia”*. Gough Whitlam.

The brochure further extolled the potential audience,

*“Nowhere in Sydney will you get such a program in 1974 and all for the ridiculous cost of \$7”*.<sup>78</sup>

To put this into perspective, the average full-time male wage at that time was \$111.70 per week in New South Wales, making the tickets a real bargain.<sup>79</sup>





**SEE WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER SAID  
ABOUT OUR 1973 PROGRAMME**

Prime Minister  
Canberra  
30th November, 1973

The Company Manager  
ROCKDALE OPERA CO.

It was a delight for my wife and me to be Guests of Honour at the Company's performance of "Cosi fan Tutte" last Saturday night.

For some 27 years your Company has maintained a standard of performance that must be the envy of other opera groups throughout Australia. I realise that behind the singers, musicians and stage managers must be a small group of people dedicated to maintaining an organisation which provides the people of Rockdale with easy access to productions of high standard.

May I extend to all those associated with the production the warm congratulations of Margaret and myself and our best wishes for your continuing success.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,



E. G. WHITLAM

NOWHERE ELSE IN SYDNEY WILL YOU GET SUCH A PROGRAMME IN 1974—AND ALL FOR THE RIDICULOUS COST OF \$7.00.



**JOIN THE  
ROCKDALE OPERA  
IN 1974**

**JOIN THE  
ROCKDALE OPERA  
IN 1974**

ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL OPERA COMPANY			
Tentative Programme for the year:			
Gilbert & Sullivan's	Friday,	19th	April
<b>PIRATES OF PENZANCE</b>	Saturday,	20th	April
	Friday,	26th	April
	Saturday,	27th	April
<b>ORCHESTRAL CONCERT</b>	Friday,	24th	May
with Vocal and	Saturday,	25th	May
Instrumental Soloists			
<b>EXCERPTS FROM OPERA</b>	Friday,	27th	Sept.
	Saturday,	28th	Sept.
Offenbach's	Friday,	15th	Nov.
<b>ORPHEUS IN THE</b>	Saturday,	16th	Nov.
<b>UNDERWORLD</b>			
	Friday,	22nd	Nov.
	Saturday,	23rd	Nov.
<b>SINGLE PERFORMANCE PRICES:</b>			
	Adult	Youth	
<b>PIRATES OF PENZANCE</b>	\$2.50	\$1.50	
<b>ORCHESTRAL CONCERT</b>	\$2.50	\$1.50	
<b>EXCERPTS FROM OPERA</b>	\$2.50	\$1.50	
<b>ORPHEUS IN THE</b>			
<b>UNDERWORLD</b>	\$3.50	\$2.00	
<b>ADULT SUBSCRIPTION PRICES:</b>			
Four Productions	\$7.00	Saving \$4.00	
<b>YOUTH SUBSCRIPTION PRICES:</b>			
(18 years and under)			
Four Productions	\$3.50	Saving \$3.00	

**1974 Subscription Brochure with endorsement by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. The cost of a subscription was a "ridiculous" \$7 for two operas, a program of opera excerpts and an orchestral concert. It was a successful season. The Pirates of Penzance was attended by 500 schoolchildren and an average of 635 people per performance.**

Robert Hatherley had been playing G&S funneymen at Rockdale since 1955. He now decided to try his hand at directing. La Perichole, a rarely performed Offenbach romp, was a memorable 1975 production starring Doreen Morrow. Doreen was the wife of Robert Gard, popular with both Rockdale Opera and Australian Opera audiences. She was making a welcome comeback to the stage after a prolonged battle with cancer.<sup>80</sup>



La Perichole also featured television personality and celebrity chef Bernard King as the Viceroy of Peru. Bernard's acerbic wit enlivened rehearsals, but he was upstaged by talent of the four legged kind. In one scene the Viceroy brought a dog on stage tethered to a lead. One night, for some unknown reason, the dog had been let off the lead backstage. Attracted by the friendly people and bright lights, it wandered on stage for an impromptu appearance. Then it caught sight of the waving baton of the conductor. Thinking that Cedric Ashton was about to throw a stick and play catch, the dog leapt up and down on stage in great excitement, to the vast amusement of the audience. Finally, the dog placed his mark on the production by cocking a leg against a piece of scenery before making an exit. In the immortal words of W.C. Fields, the moral of the story is "*Never work with animals or children*".<sup>81</sup>



**La Perichole, July 1975**

*Photo by Colin Mettam.*

**A recumbent Ralph Bott is surrounded by the ladies of the chorus in Offenbach's rarely performed comedy. Ralph first appeared at Rockdale in a minor role in the 1975 Gondoliers. He has since directed many Rockdale Opera productions and is the current Chairman and Artistic Director.**

A review by Aaron Israel commented; "*Bernard King as the Viceroy of Peru had a field day playing his comic role with all stops out... Ralph Bott as First Chancellor stirred up hilarity with well-judged efforts*". The sets were hailed as "*ingenious and a delight to the eye*".<sup>82</sup>

Alan A. Geeves was Treasurer of the Rockdale Opera Company from late 1971-1975. As a Chartered Accountant his advice and direction had been a vital part of the company's reformation after the financial crisis of 1971, setting the organisation on the path to sound financial health and a more business like structure. The company mourned his passing in late 1975. He had been well respected and a popular figure.<sup>83</sup>

After Alan's death, financial matters continued to plague the company. A letter was received in late 1975 to advise that the Commonwealth Government Subsidy was to be withdrawn. Whilst consultation with government officers was unsuccessful, assistance came from an entirely new direction in the form of commercial sponsorship by the NSW Permanent Building Society, which commenced advertising in the program in exchange for a \$10,000 subsidy. The Rockdale Council continued to offer modest funding, but despite this crucial help, it was necessary to increase subscription process the following year in order to keep the company afloat.

The company decided on a bold experiment in 1977, an opera in the round. This was the brainchild of talented performer and director Robert Hatherley. Well known to Rockdale audiences for his funnyman roles in Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, Robert wanted to place Offenbach's obscure operetta Robinson Crusoe on an island in the middle of the Town Hall, a decision which incidentally reduced seating capacity from 625 to 500. The orchestra were relegated to the stage. Obviously

there were some acoustic problems. As the singers' voices were directed to one area of the hall, the remainder of the audience suffered somewhat, but the action rotated so that everyone had a good viewpoint of the comic escapades. The eponymous role was played by popular Australian Opera tenor Robert Gard who agreed to perform for one third of his usual performance fee. At one point Crusoe was placed in a large cauldron to be simmered in a "castaway stew". The chorus, with blacked faces, dressed in black leotards and grass skirts, and armed with spears, chased an escaping Crusoe from the centrally positioned island stage, through the hall between audience rows.

By the end of 1977 the financial situation had stabilised. Box office receipts were \$8,290. The season ended with an accumulated surplus of \$10,000, quite a turnaround from the \$17,000 annual loss in the late sixties. The bank account had been slowly building up over the years with a modest profit each season, but a surplus would not have been possible without a Cultural Grant of \$1,250, Rockdale Council subsidy of \$7,500 and a NSW Permanent Building Society Grant of \$8,750. The subscriber numbers, which had been a mere 500 in 1971, now totalled 1,234. Most of them were locals from St George and Sutherland Shire, defying the alarmists of previous decades who claimed that the council was subsidising opera for the benefit of the wealthy from the North Shore and Eastern Suburbs.<sup>84</sup>

The mid-seventies had settled into a familiar pattern of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta in May, an operetta in July and an opera in November. The orchestral concerts and ballets had been dropped from the mix, due to decreasing patronage for these concerts. Although there were some variations, the production team generally consisted of Brian Phillips at the helm as producer, the capable ex-chorister Harry Maidment and Philip Collins handling stage management, Peter Smith on lighting and accompanists Don Marks or Joyce Billings, overseen naturally by conductor Cedric Ashton.

The orchestra frequently suffered from a lack of subtlety, mostly due to the lack of rehearsal time available on such a tight budget. Whereas the chorus and principals were rehearsing two or three nights per week for approximately 12-16 weeks, the orchestra only gathered a couple of times in the fortnight before the performances. This was apparent to both audience and critics and showed in many reviews, such as the *Manon* review by opera critic Fred Blanks.

*"The orchestra played with more keenness than finesse, capable of a volume almost robust enough to counter the overflying jets and its cohesion with the singers hardly ever got out of kilter. Real tenderness was outside its experience".*<sup>85</sup>

The company members were delighted to hear that Conductor Cedric Ashton was awarded an M.B.E in the New Year's Eve Honours List of 1978 for his dedicated services to music. He had been playing, teaching and conducting opera and orchestral music for almost half a century.<sup>86</sup>

November 1979 was not only the end of the decade, but the end of an era at Rockdale Opera Company. Cedric Ashton had been the Musical Director and Conductor since formation of the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra in 1946, conducting virtually every performance of the opera company since its inception. *Tosca* in November 1979 was to be his last opera prior to retirement, and a replacement was sought.

# THE ORCHESTRA

## VIOLINS

D. Anschau (Leader)  
A. Beuthien  
B. Fernie  
L. Smith  
J. Levy  
B. Challis  
C. Firmstone

## VIOLA

R. Bournes

## CELLO

D. Lemon  
C. Worthington

## BASS:

K. Poggioli

## FLUTE:

J. Leeman  
M. Leeman

## OBOE

R. Kimmorley

## CLARINETS:

R. Knox  
A. Harwood

## BASSOON

V. Grant

## FRENCH HORN:

A. Mann  
J. Smith

## TRUMPET

T. Kenny

## TROMBONE

A. Siles

## ORGAN

D. Marks

## TIMPANI

J. Statter

## PERCUSSION:

M. Marty  
K. Taylor

## HARP

U. Erdos



CEDRIC ASHTON, M.B.E.  
Musical Director

**Tosca program, November 1979**  
**Cedric Ashton M.B.E.**  
**The Maestro's last performance at Rockdale**

## 1980s A New Musical Director

The 1980s lacked the financial crises of the previous decade and was a period of relative stability under the baton of a new Musical Director and the solid directorial leadership of Brian Phillips.

When Cedric Ashton resigned in 1979 after 32 years guiding and directing the company as its Musical Director, the obvious choice to replace him was musician John Leeman. He was uniquely qualified for the position, having debuted at Rockdale as 1<sup>st</sup> Flautist in 1951.

John was a contemporary of Richard Bonyngue at Sydney High School, where they played together in a chamber music ensemble. He had played with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, which accompanied the fledgling Australian Opera (now Opera Australia). He took on the position of Rockdale's Music Director in 1980.

A graduate of the Conservatorium of Music, he had studied conducting under Eugene Goosens. John's conducting experience encompassed over sixty operas, operettas and musical comedies. He had already demonstrated his conducting prowess at Rockdale on many occasions, notably in 1965 when he temporarily took over the baton for a year in while Cedric took a sabbatical to pursue other musical experiences.

### LADIES OF THE CHORUS

Pippa Bell, Robyne Bevan, Edna Caldwell, Jo Chalmers, Kristy Dickson, Shireen Jaworski, June Johnstone, Joy Kember, Michelle Leeman, Regina McLean, Carmel Parker, Rosanne Redmond, Margaret Rowe, Rosina Schindler, Fay Taylor, Sally Thurlow and Lorraine Wood.

### GENTLEMEN OF THE CHORUS

Hans Beck, Herman Brett, Bernard David, Alec Fisher, Bill Fraser, Theo Janssen, Robert King, Colin Meltam, Colin Semmler, Bernard Smith-Cameron, Bob Watson, David Wright.

Musical Director	JOHN LEEMAN
Producer	BRIAN PHILLIPS
Lighting	PETER SMITH
Stage Manager	HARRY MAIDMENT
Assistant Stage Manager	GUS OBERG
Scenery	PROMPT
Costumes	BRIAN PHILLIPS
Wigs	DAYNE
Rehearsal Pianist	DON MARKS



BRIAN PHILLIPS  
Producer

### THE ORCHESTRA

<b>VIOLINS</b> Dorothy Anschau (leader) Barbara Challis Lorraine Smith Rosemary Powning Andrew Russak Stephen So Ron Wilkinson	<b>OBOE</b> Rita Watkins
<b>CLARINETS</b> Robert Knox Judy Wilson	<b>BASSOON</b> Elmo Noller
<b>VIOLAS</b> Frances Bonetti Sylvia Blatt	<b>TRUMPET</b> Tom Kenny
<b>CELLO</b> Wendy Reed	<b>TROMBONE</b> Ted Hutchinson
<b>BASS</b> Christine Brown	<b>HORN</b> Linda Stoneham
<b>FLUTE</b> Geoff Kennedy	<b>TIMPANI</b> Ellis Horman



JOHN LEEMAN  
Musical Director

### Ruddigore program April 1980

John Leeman's first production as Music Director was Ruddigore in 1980. He held the position until illness forced his resignation in 1992, at which point Bransby Byrne took over the helm.

Meanwhile plans were commenced for the forthcoming season, commencing with Ruddigore in April 1980, while the committee considered its next move. They had hoped to produce White Horse Inn, but this did not proceed until 1986 due to difficulties in gaining the performing rights.

The year ended with Faust, starring John Main, Alan Light and Yvonne Laki. Reviews were highly positive. In an unsourced critique from the Rockdale Opera scrapbook, Norman North commented, "*Faust is a devil of a good show*".



Opera-Opera said it was *"Overall the best production the company has mounted in the 10 years I have been reviewing its work... The main cause of the improvement seemed to be the prescence at the helm of the new Musical Director of the Rockdale company, John Leeman, just completing with this production his first year in charge of Sydney's oldest opera company... Gone in a flash are the sometimes excruciating discords that used to emanate from the Rockdale pit, as well as the seeming ennui of the choristers that can so disastrously affect any production. Finally, though it gives me the greatest pleasure to report that this Faust was the absolute apex within my experience of Brian Phillips' career as a producer of opera".*<sup>87</sup>



**1980 Naughty Marietta, men's chorus. This show was chosen when the rights for White Horse Inn became unavailable. Photo by Colin Mettam**

Two Australian Opera singers produced shows for the company in 1981. Lesley Stender's Rockdale directorial debut was Merrie England, which was very favourably reviewed by Norman North as *"delightful"*. Lesley, a principal artist with Opera Australia, later made a number of albums,

including the 1987 recording of Voss by Richard Meale.<sup>88</sup> Baritone Ronal Jackson, who had retired as Head of the School of Opera at the NSW Conservatorium of Music, produced Madam Butterfly, which David Vance reviewed as *"competetent, if not adventurous"*.<sup>89</sup>

Despite Rockdale Council renewing its annual \$10,000 grant to the company in 1981, the subscription brochure for 1982 shows that due to rising production costs, it was necessary to increase the price to \$14 for three operas; namely H.M.S. Pinafore, Hansel and Gretel and Il Trovatore.<sup>90</sup>

No-one at the time could envisage that the young dancer and choreographer of the Brian Phillips production of Hansel and Gretel would become world famous. It was none other than Simone Young. She became Artistic Director and Music Director of the Australian Opera from 2001-2003, Artistic Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra from August 2005 to the end of the 2014-2015 season and continues to conduct orchestras in Australia, Europe and the USA.<sup>91 92</sup>

The 1984 production of the Gondoliers starred Patrick Togher. He was described in a review by David Gyger as having a *"fresh faced demeanour and largely pleasing singing combined to present a near ideal tenor operetta hero"*. Patrick went on to sing with the Australian Opera during the nineties. He performed in over 1000 performances of Phantom of the Opera in Sydney, Brisbane and London. Patrick became a key player in the classical music scene in Australia, founding Patrick Togher Artists Management with another Rockdale favourite Romola Tyrrell in 1998.<sup>93</sup>

The Gondoliers also travelled to Bundanoon for a charity performance in to aid local bushfire victims. Colin and Gladys Mettam had struck up a friendship with the proprietors of the Bundanoon Motel, who expressed an interest in sponsoring the Southern Highlands performance. The weather was chilly but the reception warm. Unlike sometimes jaded city audiences, the country audience was

highly enthusiastic and laughed heartily at all the jokes. The theatre was memorable, as there was only one entrance to the tiny community hall stage, and the doorway was so small that the Duchess of Plaza-Toro's extravagant costume would not fit through the entrance. The solution was that Duchess Mart Blake ran around the outside of the building, to enter through the main front door and regally sweep down the aisle.



**Colin Mettam (on the ladder) hangs a simple backcloth in the Bundanoon community hall in preparation for *The Gondoliers*. It wasn't possible to bring the full Rockdale set.**

*Photo courtesy of Colin Mettam, Photographer unknown.*

The singer who played The Grand Inquisitor at Rockdale was unavailable, so Brian Phillips performed the role. He knew every song and line of every Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

The Bundanoon Motel donated rooms to the cast free of charge and provided a feast for the fund-raiser after-show party, to which local residents were invited. The motel boasted a Pianola, an old-fashioned piano instrument that played itself using perforated rolls to trigger depression of the keys. With a large pile of piano rolls to choose from, a spirited sing-along ensued at the after show party,

with opera singers and locals alike bursting into song with gusto. The event was so successful that the company returned to perform *Patience* and *The Mikado* in succeeding years.<sup>94</sup>



***The Gondoliers, April 1984***

*Photo by Colin Mettam*

The costumes were designed and sewn by director Brian Phillips. He seemed to have a set of costumes for almost every show performed in the seventies and eighties.



***The Gondoliers, April 1975***

*Photo by Colin Mettam*

Compare the costumes above with the 1975 production of the *Gondoliers* pictured at left. Brian directed and costumed both productions.



Robert Hatherley's production of the Count of Luxembourg in 1985 starred Robert Gard and Maureen Howard, both well known to patrons of the Australian Opera. Robert also appeared at Rockdale in Don Pasquale, Die Fledermaus and the Offenbach rarity Robinson Crusoe. He was awarded an O.B.E. in 1981 in recognition of service to opera.<sup>95</sup>



*Princess Ida, April 1986*

*Photos by Colin Mettam*

Above: Doreen Morrow as Princess Ida and Roger Howell as King Hildebrand with the chorus. Princess Ida is not often performed, due to its antiquated concepts. Despite this, the music score has many delightful moments. Barry Ryan and Patrick Togher also starred in this production. Barry went on to have a successful international opera career, singing major roles both in Europe and with Opera Australia. Patrick initially sang principal roles with Opera Australia, but now runs a successful singing agency.

Below: The men's chorus look resplendent in costumes by Brian Phillips.





***Yeomen of the Guard, 1987***

*Photo by Colin Mettam*

Whilst the principals changed with every show, the chorus were the backbone of the company. There was always a shortage of good male voices, and as the years went on the male chorus aged perceptively; not that it seemed to matter so much for the Beefeaters at the Tower of London, who are retired soldiers. Despite many hours of rehearsal and a great pride in their work, the chorus were sometimes reviewed unfavourably. In a 1989 Sydney Morning Herald critique of *Carmen*, Peter McCallum commented *"It was only in the chorus and in the orchestra that the non-professional aspects of the production became evident."*<sup>96</sup>



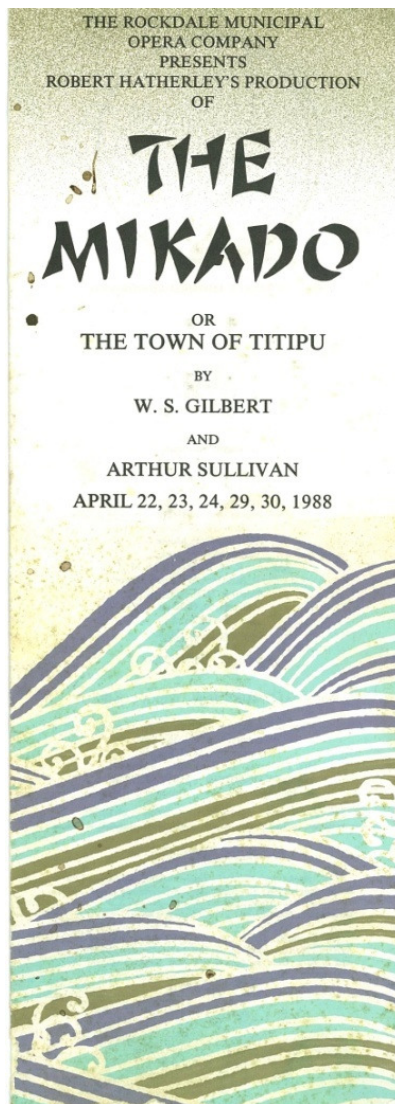
***Samson and Delilah, November 1987.***

*Photo by Colin Mettam*

Samson and Delilah had not received a professional production in Australia for over 40 years when Rockdale decided to mount a production starring John Main and Lesley Stender. They took the principal roles in both of Brian Phillip's productions of this opera in 1976 and 1987. The 1976 production was hailed by reviewer Fred Blanks for its *"Voluptuous singing and spectacular staging proper to a biblical epic"*, while he rated the 1987 version *"one of the best*

*things they have ever done"*. The orgy scene was not particularly titillating, but there was a memorable moment one night in the 1987 production when a member of the chorus almost demolished the temple before Samson had a chance to bring it crashing down. A hollow cardboard pillar toppled into the pit on the head of the oboist.<sup>97 98 99</sup>





### The Mikado program 1988

The 1988 production of the Mikado not only starred Robert Hatherley as Ko-Ko, but was also produced by him. The program design is unusual for Rockdale, but also notable is the number of major Japanese businesses who sponsored the production with props, ranging from a Kawasaki motorbike to a Ryobi chainsaw. This was not the first time that local suppliers were asked to sponsor performances by providing goods to use as stage props. Older St George residents would recall Bebefalds Furniture shop, which provided the furniture for the 1967 production of La Serva Padrona.

Brian Phillips 1988 production of Lucia di Lammermoor controversially took a most unexpected licence with the music and plot, when he transposed the final graveyard scene, where Edgardo mourns the death of his beloved Lucia, to the beginning of the opera. The concept was similar to a movie which opens with a stunning outcome then commences a flashback to explain how it all came about. Traditionally the opera concludes with the death of Edgardo as he commits a graveside suicide in despair at the death of his beloved. Brian finished the opera with the famous Mad Scene, a dazzling thirty minutes of soprano coloratura singing, after which Lucia sinks to the floor and dies. Sydney Morning Herald critic Fred Blanks decried the idea as a gimmick which made little dramatic sense and complained that although the singing of the chorus was “sturdy”, their acting “makes store dummies look fidgety by comparison”.<sup>100</sup>

There are other ways to disorientate an audience, but not necessarily pre-meditated like the Lucia moment. Occasionally mistakes are made when proofreading the program. For example, there are several productions in which I appeared in the chorus (and for which I have the photographic evidence), but my name has been omitted from the program. However, audiences must have been startled with a sense of déjà vu when they opened their 1988 Student Prince program. The cast list is correct, but the opera title is “Samson and Delilah”. Oops!



**1988 The Student Prince.** *Photo by Colin Mettam.*

Increasing costs saw the subscription prices rise from \$12 at the beginning of the decade to \$20 at the end of the eighties. The 1989 season consisted of the double bill of Trial by Jury and The Sorcerer, complemented by The Merry Widow and finally the evergreen favourite Carmen. Bizet's opera had not been produced at Rockdale since 1971, although it is one of the most performed operas at Rockdale.



**Lucia di Lammermoor chorus**

Lucia was produced in 1975, 1988 and 2011. The costumes by Brian Phillips were recycled for each production. This is most likely the 1988 production. *Photo by Colin Mettam.*

## 1990s A Time of Change

The nineties were a period of change, when choice of mid-season repertoire strayed from operetta to musicals and key personnel departed the scene, including John Leeman, Ron Rathbone and designer Allan Lees.

The decade opened with the opera company invading the territory of the local musical companies when it produced its first Showboat in 1990. The chorus was swelled to twenty-seven by the Sydney Vocal Ensemble plus a further twenty members of the Te Whanau Maori Choir. During the next decade they further encroached on musical comedy territory with Kismet and The Chocolate Soldier. But more dramatic change was afoot.

A letter from Company Chairman Ron Rathbone inserted into the Iolanthe program in April 1992 cited the show as “the end of an era”. Musical Director John Leeman had handed in his resignation. John had been with the company almost from the very beginning, initially as First Flautist in the orchestra. He briefly stepped into Cedric Ashton’s shoes in 1965 as Acting Musical Director for Don Pasquale and Madam Butterfly when Cedric had other work commitments, and again in 1979 to conduct La Belle Hélène. In the seventies he was busy not only playing at Rockdale, but was the Musical Director of Hurstville Light Opera Company. The Rockdale Opera Committee officially appointed him Rockdale Opera’s Musical Director at the end of 1979, and he took the helm of his first production Ruddigore in the new year. Now, after forty years it was time for John to retire, having battled several lengthy periods of illness including an ear infection that left him partly deaf in one ear.

Ron’s tribute states that John Leeman was *“a practical no-nonsense hard headed businessman; he demanded the highest standards from both singers and musicians and raised the reputation of the company to new heights of excellence”*<sup>101</sup>

In July 1992 Bransby Byrne took over the role of Musical Director premiering Viktoria and Her Hussar. As a Repetiteur with the Australian Opera, Musical Director of the G&S Society, and founder, Principal Conductor and Musical Director of the Western Sinfonia Orchestra and Western Choral Society, Bransby was no stranger to the Sydney music scene or Rockdale audiences. Bransby had appeared as a guest conductor many years before, when Brian Phillips directed An Evening with Gilbert & Sullivan in 1973.

DENYSE LITTLE  
Director  
Choreographer



MARGARET HAYTER  
Assistant Director  
Production Co-ordinator



Acknowledgments  
Lorraine Crane, Mrs. Little, Maxine Shaw, Kay Russell  
Beautiful Bow Co. (cherry blossoms) and Brian Phillips

*Due to illness Melissa Lamerock, who was to play the part of Riquette has had to step down from this role. The Company wishes Melissa a speedy recovery.*

### OUR NEW MUSICAL DIRECTOR

#### BRANSBY BYRNE

BRANSBY studied Piano, Singing and Conducting at the N.S.W. Conservatorium of Music.

He joined the Australian Opera as a repetiteur in 1973.

As Musical Director of the G & S Society he conducted the first season of G & S operetta in the Sydney Opera House — “Mikado” 1975.



BRANSBY BYRNE  
Conductor & Musical Director

BRANSBY founded the Western Sinfonia — a symphony orchestra of 60 instrumentalists and he is also, Principal Conductor and Musical Director of the Western Sinfonia and the Western Choral Society — a choir of some 60-70 singers.

Over the years Bransby has worked with a number of Australia’s finest singers including June Bronhill, Louis Elms, Ronald Dowd, Raymond McDonald and Donald Smith.

He has an established teaching studio in Parramatta, specialising in pianoforte, singing, conducting and harmony.

**1992 Viktoria and Her Hussar program. This was Bransby Byrne’s inaugural production as Music Director of Rockdale Opera.**

The cornerstone of the organisation, Company Chairman Ron Rathbone, resigned from his position in a year later in 1993, after more than twenty years' involvement with the company. Many opera goers would no doubt miss his regular presence at performances. Alison Jones commented in Opera Australasia in November 1989 that;

*"It is quite usual to find the chairman of the company (who has often over the years also been the mayor), Alderman Ron Rathbone, officiating at the box office or pressing the electric bell to summon the audience back after the interval".*

Kevin Casey was appointed Chairman and Company Manager, a position he held until his resignation in 2004. Kevin was the Council's Property and Community Services Director. He instituted chorus auditions for the first time, in an effort to improve the often criticised standards of the chorus, who after all were the only amateur unpaid members of the company. The director, principals, musicians and crew each received a modest fee to cover expenses, but the chorus worked hard for the sheer love of the company. <sup>102 103</sup>

There was also a change in the offstage arena when costume hire company Harlequin closed its doors in 1992, prompting a sale of 8,000 theatrical costumes. Owner Allan Lees was well known to Rockdale Opera, as was his mother-in-law, former Opera Company Manager Betty Byrne. Allan had received an offer too good to refuse; the position of General Manager of State Opera Theatre of Wellington, New Zealand. Allan had designed numerous sets and costumes for Rockdale, or provided the costumes through his company Harlequin, between 1966 and 1991. His costumes had graced the stage of not only Rockdale Town Hall, but of almost every professional and amateur theatre company in Sydney, regional Australia and New Zealand. <sup>104</sup>

Reviews in the nineties were mixed, as usual.

*"Rockdale Opera completed its 50<sup>th</sup> year with a Carmen late in November, which achieved real dramatic power in the final moments of Act IV", Carmen, David Gyger, Opera-Opera, January 1994*

*"More strengths than weaknesses", Patience, David Gyger, Opera Australia, June 1994*

*"Rockdale Hoffman achieves new heights... musically the production...was triumphant". Tales of Hoffman, David Gyger, Opera Australasia, January 1995*

*"Lacking criminal G&S flair". Ruddigore, Opera Australasia, May 1995*

*"Lacklustre Kismet but fine team effort". Kismet, David Gyger, Opera Australasia, 1995*

*"Enthusiasm undermined by flaws". Il Trovatore, David Gyger, Opera Australasia, January 1995*

*"High standard in Rockdale's Romeo". Romeo et Juliette, David Gyger, Opera Australasia, January 1997*

*"Surprising suburban Sonnambula...A production...which significantly exceeds this suburban venue's usual standard". La Sonnambula, David Gyger, Opera Australasia January 1997*

*"Piratical exuberance no more than intermittent". Pirates of Penzance, David Gyger, Opera Australasia, May 1997*

*"Triumphant Ida in mixed production," David Gyger, Opera-Opera September 1999*





**1993 The Gondoliers.**

**Above: men's chorus. Below: Women's chorus.**

*Photos by Colin Mettam*



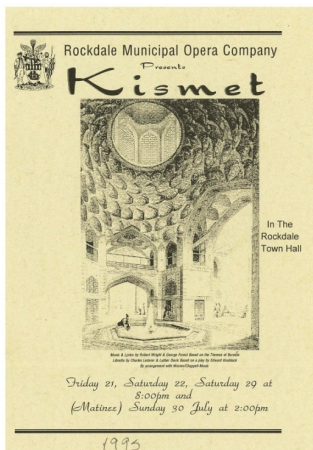
Rockdale's popularity amongst both established and up and coming opera singers remained high, as evidenced by the audition process which saw 96 singers auditioning for the principal roles in the 1994 *Die Fledermaus*, directed by Robert Hatherley. He invited some special Australian Opera guest stars for the party scene, including Robert Gard, American tenor Ron Stevens, who had sung with Joan Sutherland, and popular G&S funnyman Dennis Olsen.



**Colin Mettam makes the tea at rehearsal.**

*Photo courtesy of Colin Mettam. Photographer and date unknown.*

Being in the chorus was always a social affair. Each week the battered old brown cardboard "tea suitcase" would be brought out, containing mugs, biscuits and a giant teapot.



Ralph Bott directed his first Rockdale show, *Kismet*, in 1995. Ralph was a principal singer in numerous shows during the seventies and eighties. The review was mixed. *"Under Ralph Bott's direction there were lots of good things about this Kismet, but finally not enough of them to send me, at least, home as satisfied as I have been after many a night out at Rockdale... Its greatest pleasures were ensemble with the chorus and the large complement of named principals- a whopping 48 were listed on the program- singing with conviction under the reliable baton of Bransby Byrne,"* wrote David Gyger in *Opera Australasia*, 1995

It seemed that financial problems were a never-ending struggle for the management committee. In the late nineties, council subsidy rose with inflation from \$12,500 in 1998 to \$15,730 in 1999, but the state of the economy was to directly impact opera and theatre in the suburbs.

Whilst council still supported Rockdale Musical Society and the Regals Musical Society with rent subsidies, those organisations had also suffered in recent years, losing council grants in 1985 and 1991 respectively. In addition to the \$15,000 subsidy and free hall rental, Rockdale Council was underwriting Rockdale Opera performances to the tune of \$23,000, which was mostly recouped from the box office. Director Robert Hatherley pointed out that this was an insignificant sum in the scheme of things, as the Australian Opera would spend more than that for a single Joan Sutherland costume, whilst Rockdale could not even afford a set designer.<sup>105</sup>

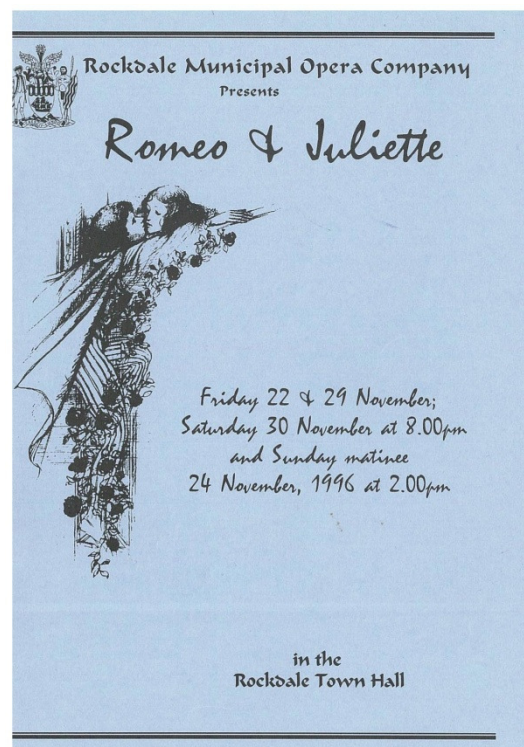
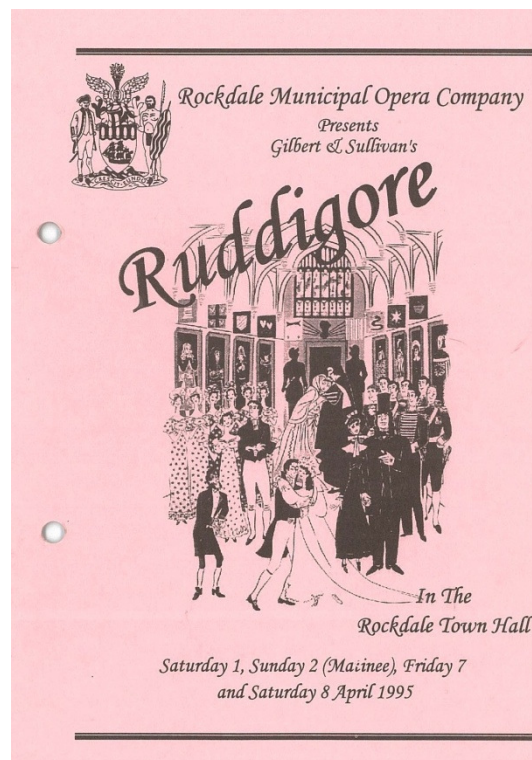
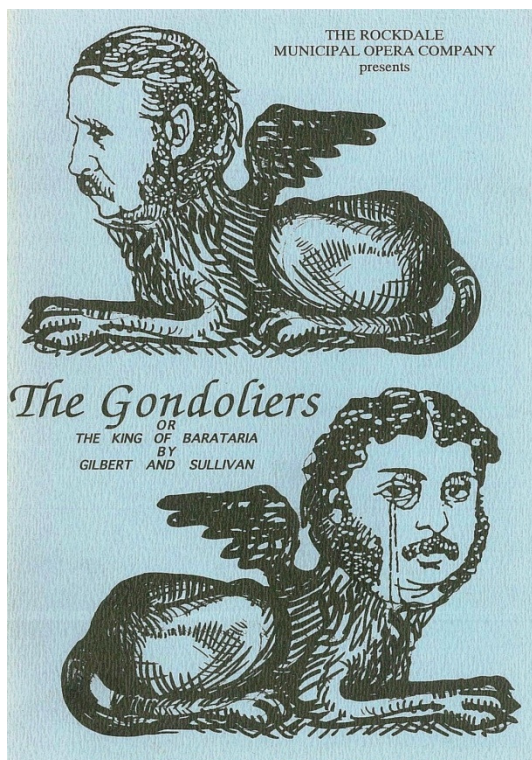
The NSW State Government revoked a \$3,000 grant to Rockdale Opera in 1998. To compound the problem, Rockdale Council was required by the State Government to find Productivity Savings in the 2000-2001 financial year. They reluctantly reduced their annual subsidy to just \$6,000 for the next two years, whilst continuing their support in other ways. The Town Hall was still provided rent free for rehearsals and performances, forgoing income from other hirers, and Council provided promotional signage and trucks for scenery cartage.

As production costs increased, so too did subscription prices. The season of three productions gradually rose in the nineties from \$20 in 1990 to \$35 by the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season in 1998, which they named the Golden Anniversary Year.

The company celebrated with a Golden Jubilee Concert of operatic excerpts, accompanied by Megan Evans. The Golden Year chorus included a number of stalwarts who had sung at Rockdale for many years, if not decades. Olga Hodel is noted in the 1998 *Carmen* program as being an original chorister in the inaugural 1948 season, featured in the 1948 program under her maiden name of Miss O. Hall. The Golden Year chorus also included long time members Fay Sugar, Heather Lees, John Bevan, Roger Dornan, Ken Carlin, the Chorus Liaison officer Colin Mettam, who had also served on the Rockdale Opera Committee for many years, and former Chorus Liaison Officer Jo Chalmers.

Musically, the late nineties were in state of flux after the resignation of Bransby Byrne at the end of 1996. He had conducted 14 productions in the previous five years. A series of Musical Directors led the orchestra, including Paul Holmes, David Trainer, George Ellis, Tobias Foscett, Brett Weymark, Louise Clark and Alan Foster. Alan was an opera conductor, a professional violinist, and Resident Conductor of Willoughby Symphony Orchestra. Coach and répétiteur Ingrid Sakurovs finally stepped into the permanent position in 1992, a role she continues to undertake today.





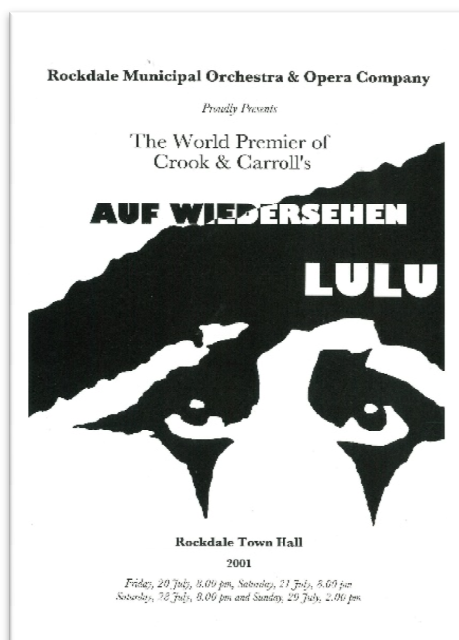
After many years of opera programs with plain covers adorned only by the crest of Rockdale Council, the mid-nineties saw some innovative designs. These 1995 and 1996 programs were designed by Jenny Dimovski.

## 2000 The New Millennium

The beginning of the millennium saw the passing of Cedric Howard Ashton M.B.E. from cancer in 2001. Born in 1911, his life had encompassed almost a century of music making in Australia. He conducted the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra from 1946 and was the Opera Company's Music Director for virtually every performance from 1948 to 1979.

Artistically, the program continued to flourish with two operas and a Gilbert and Sullivan offered each year. Tenor Brett Weymark conducted the first production of the millennium, Barber of Seville, and briefly joined the Rockdale Municipal Opera Committee, which now comprised Kevin Casey (Chairman and Company Manager), Ron Kuczynski (committee Secretary, chorister and Program Publicity), Robin Williams (committee Treasurer), Ken Grant, Colin Mettam (Assistant Stage Manager and former chorister), and Brian Phillips (Director).

New works are always a risky proposition even for an established company such as Opera Australia, so it was all the more courageous for Rockdale to stage a world premiere of Crook and Carroll's musical theatre piece *Auf Wiedersehen Lulu* in 2001. The plot is loosely based on the Lulu plays by German playwright Frank Wederkind, infamously turned into an opera by Alban Berg. There were plenty of opportunities to portray colourful characters and exotic settings as the protagonist femme fatale moved amongst 1920s society in Berlin and London. Humphrey McQueen reviewed the work favourably in *Bulletin with Newsweek*, describing the lyrics as full of wit and deeper meaning. The music score was described as a melodic cross between the Viennese romance style and Berlin cabaret. He considered the work suitable for production by a professional opera company, although Opera Australia never took up this suggestion.<sup>106</sup>



### Auf Wiedersehen Lulu program 2001

Financially, the cash flow problems continued. Income was low due to declining and inconsistent audiences as the local demographic changed. Inflation increased costs, particularly in advertising which was moving beyond the budget restraints of the company. Council City Service Committee Minutes noted that a thumbnail advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the primary and essential cultural advertising space for both amateur and professional theatre companies, was \$50 per day, something they could ill afford under the circumstances. A subscription season ticket

was now \$40, but would later rise to \$60 in 2002, a substantial increase of 33%.<sup>107</sup>

The company approached council to ask for a further \$20,000 in subsidy. If it was not received, then the number of performances would be reduced and long term financial viability threatened. To their relief the cash subsidy was reinstated to its previous level of



\$15,900, but it was far short of the \$26,000 they had requested. They were instructed to apply to the Minister of the Arts for further funding and look into new methods of marketing events and selling tickets. In the meantime, free hire of the Rockdale Town Hall and Coronation Hall for rehearsals and performances would continue in order to support the arts.<sup>108</sup>

More change was in the air. The Musical Director's position had oscillated between seven different conductors after Bransby Byrne resigned in 1996. Ingrid Sakurovs joined the management committee and the company as Conductor and Musical Director in mid-2002. Ingrid was, and is, a well-known repetiteur who had worked with virtually every amateur and professional opera company in Sydney, including Opera Australia. She accompanied Sydney's best young singers for the MacDonald's Aria competition in the Sydney Eisteddfod, and was a repetiteur at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Today she is a lecturer in Vocal Studies at the Conservatorium, which is now part of the University of Sydney. No doubt her connection with the national company was an element in obtaining advice for the *La Favorita* production from none other than the internationally famous conductor Richard Bonyngne.

**Ladies of the Chorus**  
 Barbara Bannerman, Jillian Benson,  
 Robyne Bevan, Suzanne Capon,  
 Rae Leven, Yvette Litchfield,  
 Barbara Sanders




**Gentlemen of the Chorus**  
 John Bevan, Rob Booker, Michael  
 Canaris, Ken Carlin, Bernard David,  
 Simon Gilbert, Ron Kuczynski, Barry  
 Oubridge, Ian Roach, John Tse



**Ralph Bott - Director**



Over the past thirty years, Ralph has performed in many productions for the Rockdale Opera Company: amongst them *The Sorcerer*, *Patience*, *Princess Ida*, *The Gondoliers*, *Rigoletto*, *La Rondine*, *Naughty Marietta*, *The Gipsy Baron* and perhaps most pertinently *La Périchole* in 1974.

Apart from his work with Rockdale Opera Company, Ralph has worked with the Gilbert and Sullivan Society throughout the 1970s and the 1980s, where he had the opportunity to appear in almost all of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

In the 1990s he worked with the Riverside Lyric Ensemble in their first two productions, and with Canterbury Theatre Guild, and particular highlights include playing the role of Judge Turpin in their production of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, and appeared in several small character roles in Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* which was directed by the late Rob Hatherley.

Ralph has directed a number of shows for Rockdale Opera Company in recent years including *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Kismet*, *The Gypsy Baron*, *The*

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### La Perichole Program, ladies and gentlemen of the chorus, 2003

Kevin Casey resigned as Chairman and Company Manager abruptly in July 2004. Council swiftly appointed local Kyeemagh resident Euan Miller to the role. Euan was a New Zealand born jazz pianist, double bass player and amateur chorister, who had lived in Australia for 35 years.<sup>109</sup>

In November 2004 the committee consisted of Chairman and Company Manager Euan Miller, Ron Kuczynski (Secretary, who also looked after program publicity and sang in the chorus), David Mitchell (Rockdale Council Community Services Manager), Colin Mettam (Assistant Stage Manager), Ingrid Sakurovs (Musical Director), Rosalie

Loring (Program Designer), Michael Warby (principal singer), and Brian Phillips (Producer and Director). Brian Phillips had directed dozens of shows at Rockdale and was now in his fourth decade with the company. In 2005 they were joined by Ralph Bott who had also performed in and directed many Rockdale shows. Rosalie then took over as Secretary from Ron, who remained on the committee as an Ordinary Member; chorister and Chorus Co-ordinator John Bevan became Treasurer, and David Mitchell left the committee.<sup>110</sup>

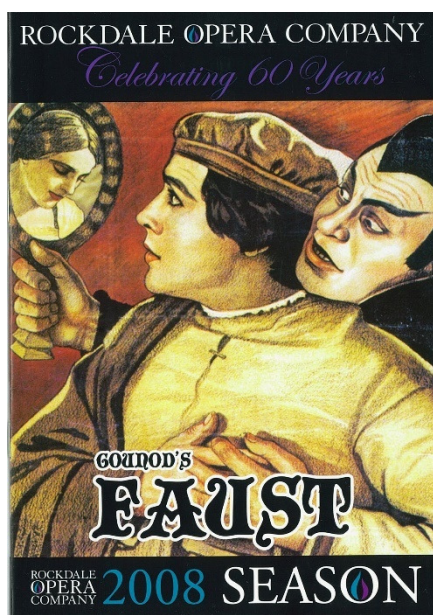
Although much of Rockdale's repertoire is fairly standard, occasionally the company takes a risk and produces something unexpected and obscure. Brian Phillips was about to retire from Rockdale and he wanted a unique swansong as his parting offering. He directed Verdi's

little-known opera *Attila* in November 2004, a show whose only previous Australian performance had occurred in 1860, when it was presented by two San Francisco based Italian singers, Eugenio and Giovanna Bianchi. The cast included Murray Dahm in the title role, Peter-John Layton as Uldino, Deborah Johnson as Odabella, Ivo Busato as Ezio, Richard Feint Lane as Foresto, and Vicken Mamourian as Leone. Audiences were keen to see this unusual offering, and the production made a profit.<sup>111</sup>

In June 2006 Company Manager Kevin Casey successfully nominated Brian Phillips for the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to the performing arts, musical theatre and in particular to Rockdale Opera. It was a fitting reward for the hours of dedicated work and tireless energy he had demonstrated for over forty years.<sup>112</sup>

Without Brian at the helm, the next G&S production, *Pirates of Penzance*, in April 2006 needed a new director. They chose Jon Smith, a Head Teacher of the Performing Arts at a local Sydney High School and former professional musician. He had worked in roles as varied as Singer, Lighting Designer, Stage Manager and Musical Director. A hugely versatile performer, he was the Keyboardist for the hugely popular Simon Gallagher/Jon English version of *Pirates* that had shaken G&S out of the musty past and turned it into a fun contemporary piece for audiences throughout Australia.<sup>113</sup>

The chorus was shrinking in size. The next two shows only attracted six women and nine men, but with the *Don Giovanni* program in November 2006 one senses that more significant changes were afoot. Soprano and Committee Secretary Regina Daniel had already designed several programs, however the *Don Giovanni* program suddenly blossomed from a modest old fashioned A5 document to a large format A3, with glossy cover in glorious colour, rehearsal photos and extensive production notes by Director Murray Dahm. A native New Zealander, Murray had worked with the company as a singer for many years, and was on the committee, but he is also a music educator and lectures on music history throughout Australia and New Zealand. In subsequent shows the program reverted to a more modest size, but the beautiful colour covers remained, coupled with a new brand image, logo and slogan “Hear, See, Feel”.



#### **2008 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary Faust program**

**To commemorate their 60th season, the company revived the first opera performed in 1946, namely *Faust*, directed by Ralph Bott and conducted by Carolyn Watson.**

With funding as tight as ever, there was also a push to obtain sponsorship from local businesses, who are acknowledged in the program as “Friends” of Rockdale Opera.

The next production of *Die Fledermaus* was also given a new lease of life, updating it to modern Sydney, with Eisenstein transformed into a Macquarie Bank executive, Orlofsky a dot-com tycoon, Frank the Governor of Long Bay Gaol and Rosalinda a former student radical.

At the end of 2008 Rockdale Opera completed their rebranding and image overhaul as they finally joined the digital world with the launch of a long overdue website [www.rockdaleopera.com.au](http://www.rockdaleopera.com.au) designed by versatile Web Mistress Regina Daniel. Her design work can also be seen in the programs.



**2009 Merrie England. Directed by Ralph Bott, conducted by Ingrid Sakurovs, featuring morris dancers Black Joke Side. The tickets are a bargain at \$30 each.**  
**Stage photo by RayWing-Lun**

Professional singer, actor, writer and director Paul Williamson joined the Rockdale Opera Committee in early 2009. He had worked on popular TV shows, theatre and movies throughout Australia. Later that year Paul's directorial debut at Rockdale with *La Traviata* attracted praise from Sydney Morning Herald critic John Shand, who stated that Rockdale had produced a show with *"a quality of musical presentation that should have Opera Australia looking over its shoulder, especially given that the tickets in Rockdale Town Hall cost a fifth of what they do under Joern Utzon's billowing sails"*. He described Conductor Cristian Cimei as *"impressive"*, the chorus as *"sounding superb"*, the band *"deft and vibrantly supportive"* and Brian Tucker's set *"a masterful blend of pleasing aesthetics."*<sup>114</sup>



**2009 HMS Pinafore**  
**The Musical Director was Mark Pinner. Jon Smith directed and played The Right Honourable Sir Joseph Porter. Josephine was played Una Reynolds, Ralph Rackstraw by Lincoln Scott. Set design by Brian Tucker.**  
**Photo by Ray Wing-Lun**

It was gratifying to hear Rockdale's suburban opera company compared so favourably with the national company, but the decade ended on a high note which was soon to come crashing down.



## 2010 to the Present- Turmoil

This is the decade of turmoil, change and crisis, both external and internal. The company had weathered many crises in the past, but now Rockdale Opera faced major challenges on two fronts, both internally on the committee and externally, from a most unexpected turn of events in their home venue of Rockdale Town Hall.

The new decade started promisingly with its usual three show offering of Ruddigore, Carmen and The Barber of Seville.

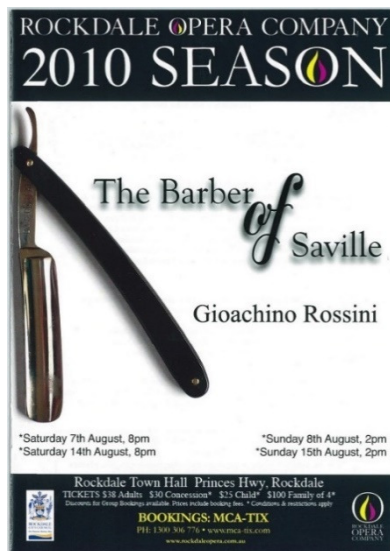


**Ruddigore, 2010**  
Damien Noyce appeared  
Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd  
(disguised as Robin  
Oakapple), who marries  
village maiden Rose  
Maybud, played by  
Victoria Collopy.  
Directed by Ralph Bott,  
conducted by Rod  
Mounjed  
Photo by Ray Wing-Lun



**Carmen, 2010**  
The Director was Ralph  
Bott, Conductor  
Sadaharu Maramatau.  
Engaging with the local  
community, the opera  
company recruited  
Tempe Public School to  
provide the children's  
chorus.  
Photo by Ray Wing-Lun





**2010 Program**  
**Barber of Seville**  
 audiences may have been taken aback by the apparent poor proofreading of the program, which was actually a witty play on words.

Company Chairman Alistair Euan Miller had joined the committee in 2004. He resigned due to illness shortly after the April 2010 production of Ruddigore, and passed away on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2010. In theory the Company Chairman should have been a representative of the council, which had been the practice since the 1971 restructure. Rockdale Council declined to nominate a successor. St George and Sutherland Shire Leader reported that Rockdale Opera was looking for a new company chairman, preferably from the local area, who was interested in music and its promotion in the region. It was not an easy task to find someone with the skills, time and dedication to take on the role, which remained vacant for a considerable amount of time. After some months, Director Ralph Bott stepped into the role, in a new committee position of Artistic Director, which was a de facto Chairman. Eventually he was officially appointed Company Chairman.



**2011 Iolanthe** starred Megan Chalmers in the title role. The Director was Lester Morris and the Musical Director was Steven Stanke  
 Photo by Ray Wing-Lun

Lucia di Lammermoor finished its run in late 2011. Then disaster struck. The Rockdale Town Hall was scheduled for a major restoration project. Asbestos was discovered, which halted building works in the midst of final rehearsals of a Rockdale Musical Society production. The musical society was dismayed to find their scenery was asbestos contaminated, along with the costumes, stage curtains, chairs, speakers and rigging ropes, all of which were subsequently destroyed. They were not the only group to be affected. The incident had major repercussions for amateur theatre in Rockdale.

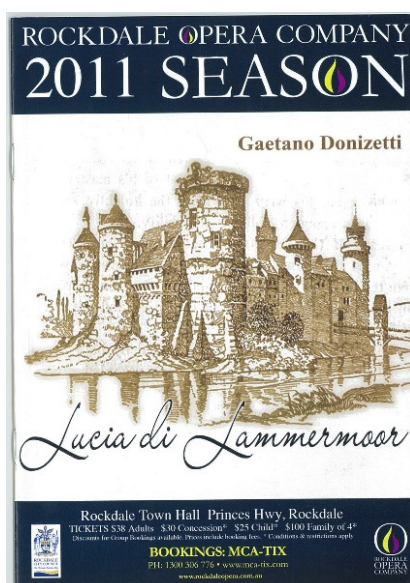
According to a newspaper report by Marianna Papadakis, Rockdale Musical Society lost \$40,000 of equipment due to asbestos contamination. It was forced to relocate its next production to Bexley RSL. The Regals moved their performance of Avenue Q to Brighton's

Fisherman's Club (Fischo's), and performances of Songs for a New World to the Zenith Theatre at Chatswood. Rockdale Opera cancelled its forthcoming productions of The Man of La Mancha and The Gondoliers, with the August 2012 performance of Marriage of Figaro left in some doubt.<sup>115</sup>

To compound the problem, two companies, Rockdale Opera and Rockdale Musical Society, were about to lose another important asset; storage facilities at 4 Wardell Street, Arncliffe. An unprecedented crisis was looming and without a Chairman, the opera company had no-one at the helm to steer them away from disaster.

The timing could not have been worse. When Brian Phillips had retired some years previously, singer and committee member Michael Warby purchased Brian's entire collection of hundreds of theatre costumes. They were stored in Michael's garage on the Central Coast, which was highly inconvenient for all concerned. Michael was moving in 2010 and he offered the costumes to the opera company, which had agreed to purchase them.

Volunteers were organised to drive north to collect carloads of the costumes, which were delivered to the Rockdale Town Hall for sorting, bagging and labelling. The costumes were then temporarily stored in an attic above the principal's dressing room during the Lucia di Lammermoor rehearsals. Lucia proved a success. Subsequently, Man of La Mancha was one week into rehearsal when the asbestos was discovered in the roof of the Town Hall. Rockdale Council could not guarantee the costumes were asbestos free.



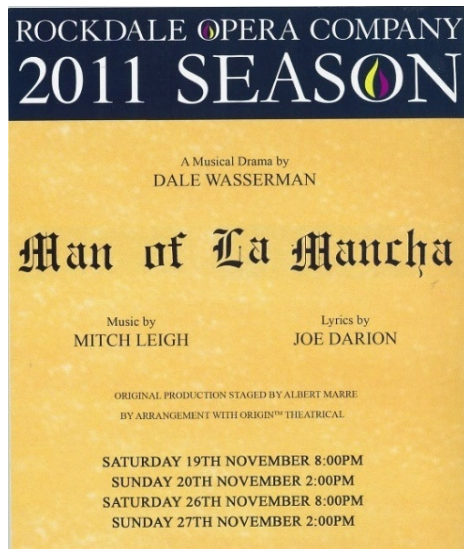
**The Lucia di Lammermoor costumes were the only Brian Phillips' creations to be saved after the asbestos incident. They had fortuitously been removed to someone's house after being dry cleaned post show.**

The company was given the ultimatum to either dry-clean them or destroy them. The cost would be immense, but the decision was made to dry-clean most of the costumes.

Bad luck intervened. Somewhere along the line there was a communications breakdown. The Town Hall caretaker discovered workmen removing the costumes one Sunday afternoon. He rang the opera company, but it was too late. All the costumes disappeared and were destroyed, with the exception of the Lucia di Lammermoor costumes. In future all costumes would need to be hired; yet another expense which the company could ill afford.<sup>116</sup>

The Council Minutes recorded in May 2012, *"The asbestos contamination resulted in the loss of its costume collection, the value of which was estimated by the company to be some \$300,000, which was unofficially stored in the Town Hall and was uninsured."*<sup>117</sup>

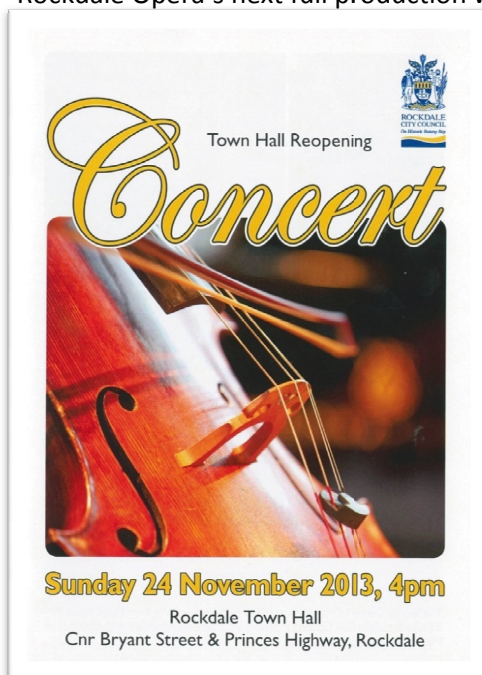
As a consequence of the Rockdale Town Hall renovations, financial disaster loomed over all of Rockdale's theatre companies. The Regals had not lost any equipment but faced additional costs for change of venue. They received a payment of \$11,913 from the council to assist them to transfer their performance to an alternate venue.



**An advertisement for Man of La Mancha, the production that never eventuated.**

Rockdale Musical Society was nearly bankrupted by the crisis and applied for an additional grant to cover their losses. Their request that council replace the missing items at a cost of \$44,504 was only partially granted with a one-off \$20,000 subsidy, the council noting that their equipment was uninsured. The company moved to Marana Auditorium in Hurstville vowing never to play the Town Hall again.

Despite this, when the renovations were completed, Rockdale Musical Society joined the Rockdale Opera and the Regals Musical Society in a musical celebration to christen the renewed venue on 25 November 2013. However, several operas had been cancelled and Rockdale Opera's next full production was not forthcoming until the Pirates of Penzance in June 2014.



**The Town Hall Reopening concert was a combined effort of Rockdale Musical Society, The Regals and Rockdale Opera Company, starring performers from each company. They were accompanied by the Sydney Concert Orchestra conducted by Dr Steve Watson**

The opera company now needed to hire storage facilities for its scenery and remaining costumes. It resorted to paying for Kennards commercial storage facility at Kingsgrove.

With the need to reduce expenditure, specifically production costs, the company decided to modify its output by producing only two operas a year.

Audience numbers were down. The Rockdale Town Hall, which in its heyday had been virtually a sell-out for four performances, was reduced to a mere 75% capacity. The demographics of the City of Rockdale are very different from its early years and audience numbers have declined over the years. New ideas were tried to invigorate the company and gain new audiences.





**2014 Merry Widow (above and below)**  
This production, conducted by Sadaharu Muramatsu and directed by Bob Peet, starred Michael Johnson as Danilo and Sylvie Humphries as Anna Glawari. The dancers were choreographed by Leslie Scott.  
Photo by Ray Wing-Lun



In 2015 the company tried an interesting new format in an effort to attract a new target market. A cabaret concert was created called “An Evening at Orlofsky’s”, Orlofsky being the owner of the café in the second act of *Die Fledermaus*. The old problem of poor sightlines was given a new treatment with patrons seated at 16 elegant, burgundy clad cabaret tables, which had conveniently been recently purchased by the council and were eminently suited to the purpose.

To spice up the show, the opening number was provided by an innovative Flashmob performing the rousing Drinking Song from *The Student Prince*, while the audience sipped champagne. It was a far more satisfying experience than simply watching the performers imbibe a glass of lemonade on stage and the audience applauded enthusiastically.<sup>118</sup>



The event was enhanced by the attendance of the recently appointed company Patron Daniel Sumegi. Daniel sang bass-baritone roles with the company in the 1980s, when it was immediately apparent that here was a young star on the rise. He was announced as the new Patron on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The press release recorded on the Rockdale Opera website quotes him as saying:

*“As Australia’s oldest opera company, it has provided a much needed platform for young aspiring professionals to ‘tread the boards’ alongside the people that make up the bulk of the company, the true opera lovers.... Rockdale Opera Company is very much a community organisation and has been generously supported by the Rockdale City Council for many generations. It is my sincere wish to help widen our profile and facilitate more engagement with other relevant performing arts bodies in Sydney and beyond. The word ‘Rockdale’ resonates so powerfully throughout the operatic family.”*<sup>119</sup>

Young graduates from the Conservatorium of Music were eager to perform their favourite arias and ensembles. The fun cabaret was an excellent fundraising event, even though it was not sold out, as there were minimal costs involved with staging. A grand piano was hired for the occasion, but there were no extensive rehearsal periods, sets or costumes, as the singers wore their own ballgowns and tuxedos.



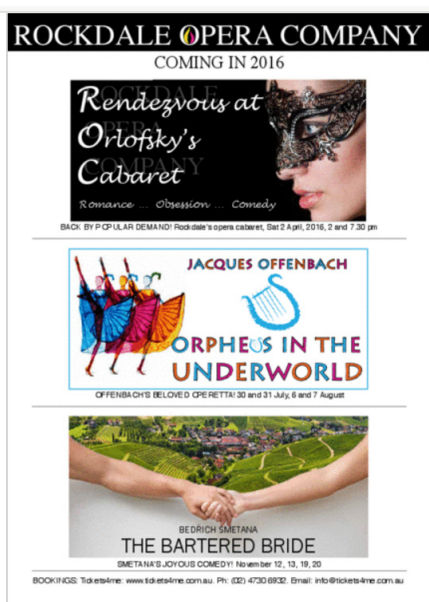
The orchestra is a vital part of any performance, yet they are always in the shadows, as pictured here with conductor Ingrid Sakurovs in 2010, playing the overture to Barber of Seville. The band has shrunk considerably since 1948 when there were around 40 players. Cost considerations have reduced the musician’s numbers to half that of its heyday.  
Photo by Ray Wing-Lun

The concept was popular both with subscribers and a new non-opera-going audience, who Rockdale hoped to convince to become subscribers. Consequently, it was repeated the following year, directed by Megan Chalmers, with Chairman Ralph Bott as Master of Ceremonies. There was no flash mob this time, but the Rockdale Opera Chorus performed the ensembles with gusto.

Early in 2015 the sad news was received that company co-founder Megan Evans O.A.M. had passed away on 8<sup>th</sup> June at the age of 95. Her funeral attracted singers and musicians from near and far to celebrate the life of a woman who had coached or accompanied almost every opera singer in Sydney for almost seven decades.<sup>120</sup>



**2015 The Marriage of Figaro** was directed by Paulo Montoya and conducted by Steven Stanke.  
Photo by Ray Wing-Lun



**The 2016 Season brochure** featured an opera, an operetta and a cabaret concert.

In 2016 the company was still struggling to maintain a robust chorus, a common theme over many years. Rehearsals for the revival of “Rendezvous at Orlofsky’s Cabaret” were going well, but just a few weeks before commencement of rehearsals for Orpheus in the Underworld, there were no tenors available to sing in the chorus. It was a far cry from the heady days of 1948 when there were 20 in the men’s chorus. The challenging situation was resolved, as it had been on many other occasions in the company history. By the time Rendezvous at Orlofsky’s Café was produced, a chorus had been assembled, including a small male component, boosted by the voice of Company Chairman Ralph Bott, doing double duty as the Master of Ceremonies.



**2016 Rendezvous at Orlofsky’s Cabaret**  
Photo by Ray Wing-Lun

## Venue

Rockdale Town Hall is a distinctive two storey red brick building, with a sandstone portico, balcony, and corner clock tower surmounted by a flag pole. It was designed by D.B. Gardiner and constructed in 1940 to replace the aging council chambers which had stood on the site since 1888.

The NSW State Government Office of Environment and Heritage describes it as *“a fine representative example of a late inter-war stripped classical building with functionalist influences”*.<sup>121</sup>

Initially there was some doubt as to the possibility of gaining the Town Hall for rehearsals in 1948, and Collins Hall in Bexley was proposed by Liaison Officer Rupert Orchard for rehearsals, at a cost of £1 per night for 12 rehearsals. However, Rockdale Town Hall has always been the main venue for music and stage rehearsals, generously provided rent-free by Rockdale Council. This graceful old lady has been the site of many civic occasions, meetings, musicals and theatre productions. In the 1950s it was the setting for regular Saturday night Scottish dances.



**4 February 1954**

***Rockdale Town Hall is decorated for the royal visit of Queen Elizabeth II  
The Queen had arrived in Australia the previous day***

***Photo by James Bell***

Whilst the polished timber floor was a delight to the Scottish dancers, it has been the bane of many a theatre goer. Opera lovers have long lamented the obstructed views due to a lack of



tiered seating. Opera critic David Gyger, in a 1977 review of *La Traviata*, describes the venue scathingly but with a tinge of fondness;

*"It lies in the direct flight path to Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport, has a flat floor which raises hell with sightlines, and miniscule backstage facilities, yet there is something intangibly right about Rockdale Town Hall as a venue for opera that always makes the pilgrimage there worthwhile".*<sup>122</sup>

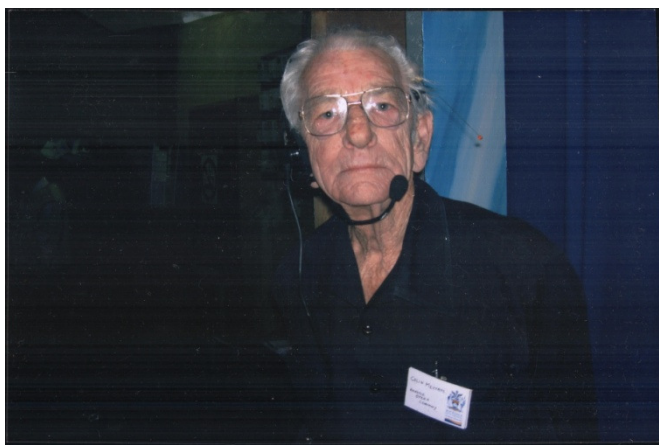
During matinee performances it was impossible to achieve total blackout due to large curtained windows along one side of the hall, and light leaking through the fly tower above the stage.



**Lobby of Rockdale Town Hall**  
In September 1957, the Governor of NSW Sir Eric Woodward and his wife Lady Amy Woodward attended a the Rockdale Opera Company performance of *The Barber of Seville*.<sup>123</sup>  
*Photo courtesy of Rockdale City Library*

Backstage facilities were sparse. Behind the stage were two dressing rooms. One in the basement was used by the male chorus, the upstairs one shared by male and female principals, with scant room for modesty. The female chorus had to be content with a curtained off area beside the main hall, which meant

that talking was forbidden during performances and visits to the toilets had to be made on tiptoe through the public foyer.



**The Assistant Stage Manager and Props Assistant, Colin Mettam, stands in the wings.**

*Photo courtesy of Colin Mettam.  
Photographer and date unknown.*

Backstage facilities were very basic. There was no "tannoy" system for the crew to communicate with each other or call the performers to the stage. The Lighting Operator stood on one side of the stage and the Stage

Manager on the other, relying on visual cues. Cast members in the dressing rooms had to listen hard for their cues or risk missing an entrance. On many occasions singers would faintly catch a bar or two of their entrance music and bound up the stairs to the stage in a panic, arriving breathlessly to make a hasty entrance.



The fly system, used to haul curtains and scenery into the fly tower above the stage, was a manually operated rope system. On occasion a rope would slip in the pulley and the scenery became stuck. This necessitated a heart-pounding climb by a crew member, up the rickety ladder high above the stage into the dizzying void. Then the crew member clambered over the scenery bars suspended above the stage, to place the ropes back into position so that the curtain could be flown.<sup>124</sup>

Rockdale Council investigated the generation of income streams in connection with the Town Hall in 2001. They recognised the importance of the venue to local theatrical societies, but lamented its unsuitability for commercial hirers, whose usage could potentially offset the costs of venue maintenance. Although used extensively by amateur theatre companies, virtually no-one was hiring the venue. The high cost factor was considered the most likely reason. Generally local people hired less expensive halls at commercial clubs such as the RSL or Leagues Club for weddings and parties, and Council realised it needed to define the role of the Town Hall in civic life.

General maintenance and additional costs incurred by use of the venue by amateur theatre companies was estimated at \$150,000 per annum. It was decided that the 1992 Policy Governing Financial Assistance for Town Hall Rentals would continue, with free use of the hall for the Regals, Rockdale Musical Society and Rockdale Opera. The value of this support is highlighted by examining the cost of hall hire. The Town Hall cost \$750 for the first hour and \$150 for each successive hour in 2001, compared with \$100-\$250 at a club. The Opera Company also used Coronation Hall at Arncliffe for some rehearsals. This venue cost \$400 on a Saturday night.

Eventually, the City Services Committee of the Council decided that both venues were originally designed for live performances, and current usage was in accordance with this purpose. Commercial Licensed Clubs offered facilities that the council was unable to provide and therefore it was appropriate that private hirers used clubs. Rockdale Council viewed this support as Council's substantial *"donation towards cultural services"*.<sup>125</sup>



**Rockdale Town Hall interior prior to refurbishment.**  
*Photo by Colin Mettam.*  
Date unknown.

In 2010 Rockdale City Council decided the time was ripe to refurbish the aging Town Hall, which had been the favoured venue of not only Rockdale Opera, but also the

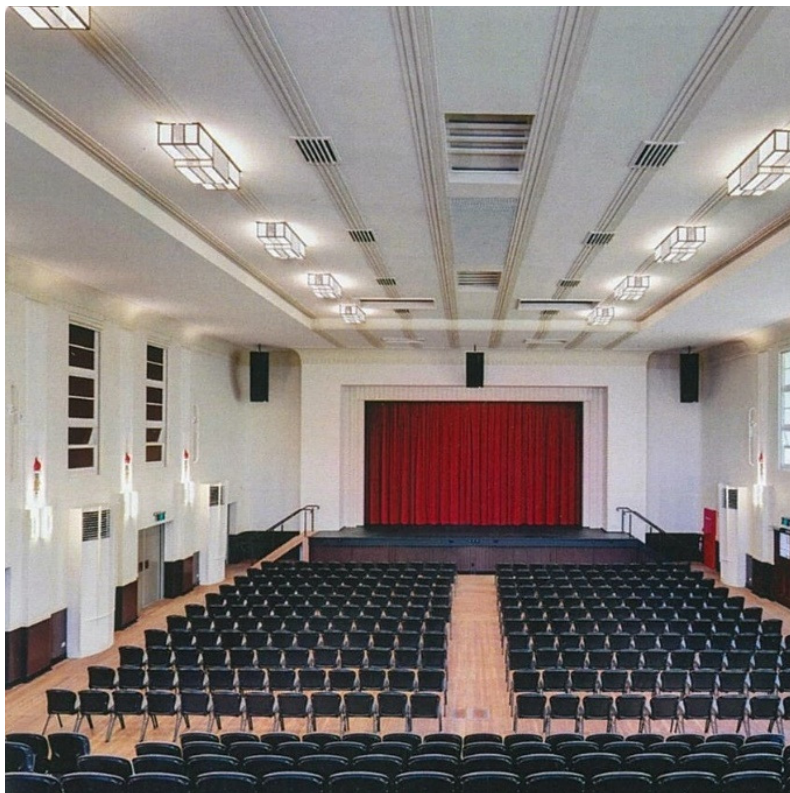
Rockdale Musical Society and the Regals Musical Society. Initial estimates from a 2010 report set a budget of \$4 million for the works, which would include a new roof, external refurbishment, a new lift to meet modern access requirements, refurbishing the seventies style foyer and improving amenities.<sup>126</sup>

Roof demolition began as Rockdale Musical Society was in the final stage of rehearsal for its latest show. Disaster struck when asbestos was discovered in the ceiling, which was hardly surprising considering the age of the structure. The work site was immediately shut down by Workcover inspectors.

Consequently, the process of renovation took much longer than expected, but the building was finally reopened in November 2013. The art deco detailing had been sensitively restored, the hall enlivened with a light colouring to the walls, and a new audio system installed. During the renovation, the floor and roof spaces were removed, enabling cables to be run underneath the new floor, something that would not otherwise have been possible.<sup>127</sup> The mechanisms for hanging and flyintg scenery were renovated to modern health and safety standards, although some of the scenery battens had been removed from the flytower, reducing the number of scenic elements which could be flown.

The area which had been used by the women's chorus as a dressing room for over fifty years, divided from the audience by a red velvet curtain and flimsy concertina partitioning, was at last separated from the auditorium by a solid wall, and converted into a bar area.

The Council was gratified to learn that the project was a finalist in the Australian Property Institute NSW Excellence in Property Awards for heritage projects.<sup>128</sup> Audiences and theatrical companies were delighted to find that the infra-structure had been updated to meet modern standards without marring the heritage look of the building,



**This Rockdale Town Hall interior photo, which appeared in the November 2012 Town Hall Re-opening Concert program, shows fresh paint work and new tiered seating at the rear of the hall.<sup>129</sup>**

## The Council and the Company— A Rocky Relationship

When Rockdale Opera Company was formed in 1948, Rockdale was widely considered to be a progressive shire council with grand ideas for the improvement of local facilities and cultural opportunities for its residents.

Rockdale Council was awarded the A.R. Bluett Memorial Award in 1950, a local government prize presented to the shire which had achieved the most in the last 12 months. The Minister for Local Government (and soon to be Premier of New South Wales) Joe Cahill, addressed an annual local government conference in Lismore in 1951. He cited Rockdale as a successful progressive council, praising it for the thriving commercial centre of the shire, its kindergartens, baby health centres, swimming pools, and assistance given to ex-servicemen through the sale of land allotments for housing.

Strikingly, Rockdale was also lauded for supporting the arts through maintaining a symphony orchestra, an opera company, a ballet, four musical comedy companies and a choral society.<sup>130</sup>

And yet by 1971 many aldermen were in a cost cutting mode and could not see the value of community based opera. As mentioned in a previous chapter, a vote on the motion to abolish the opera company was carried 9 to 6 in favour. Only the supreme efforts of Alderman Ron Rathbone and the committee reversed the decision, saved the company and restored the council subsidy.

Throughout the 1980s, 1990s and new millennium, the council seemed to be happy to offer assistance to the company in the form of an association with its name, a small fluctuating subsidy and the use of the Rockdale Town Hall as principal rehearsal and performance venue, but the Councillors' passion for the arts and the fervour of the early days, was gone.

In contrast, it can be seen from looking at cast, crew and committee lists over the years that many Rockdale stalwarts were devoted to the company and took on multiple and diverse tasks throughout their association with the organisation, fulfilling whatever roles were needed at the time. Without their countless hours of unpaid volunteering, the company would have foundered many years ago.

The Council's focus on the arts seems in modern times to be spread across many different art forms and has a particular emphasis on events as a medium for the arts. Rockdale Council published a Draft Plan for Public Art 2011—2016 defined Public Art as sculpture, murals, monuments, memorials, environmental art, dance, theatre, audio-visual and mixed media installations. The draft plan stated:

*“Rockdale Council is committed to working together with the community to promote Arts and Culture and develop Public art as an expression of the city's character and identity”.<sup>131</sup>*

The arts are also perceived as a drawing together of a multicultural community, rather than the promotion of western classical music and theatre. This is made clear in the 2015—2016 Operational City Plan adopted on 7 June 2015, which states in section 1.3.3 that its strategy is to promote Rockdale City as a premier cultural hub.

*“To build a vibrant and exiting city that reflects the range of cultures, events and networks that contribute to the wellbeing of the community (and) ensure that a variety of opportunities for the arts and cultural assets, programs and partnerships are offered throughout the city.”*<sup>132</sup>

With talk of council mergers, Rockdale may unite with Botany in the near future, leaving the opera company in a precarious position. Additionally, the council seems to have no money budgeted for the traditional arts, and no desire to do so. The provision of council services and staff with administration and technical help has also dried up in recent years.

Although Rockdale Opera Company was initially formed by the council for the benefit of the local community, times have changed and so has the relationship, as can be seen by the Council declining to nominate a representative as Company Chairman in 2010. In the Council Meeting of May 2012 it was made clear that the council now considers Rockdale Opera as an autonomous organisation which must make its own way in the future without council subsidy, although they are more than willing to support the three musical theatre companies through offering free hall hire, a not inconsiderable benefit.<sup>133</sup>

The cultural organisations mentioned by Joe Cahill in 1951 have been through some rocky patches, but despite this, through provision of rehearsal and performance facilities, Rockdale City Council continues to support the traditional arts in 2016; an opera company with its own small symphony orchestra, two theatre companies and two musical comedy companies.



## Funding

Opera critic John Cargher wrote in 1977 *“It is no reflection on Tasmania, Western Australia or the Capital Territory that their officially accredited regional companies are not yet developed enough to stand historical scrutiny.... Unofficial local groups like Sydney’s long established Rockdale Opera and the more recent Sydney Opera Company are in the same position. Good, bad or indifferent, their work has not been continuous enough, nor are their annual grants large enough to ensure a sound future”*.<sup>134</sup>

Fortunately, John Cargher has been proved wrong regarding the long-term future of Rockdale Opera. However, funding has always been a struggle for opera companies around the world, and Rockdale Opera is no exception. Rockdale Council has supported the company for many years with funding grants, and use of the Town Hall and the Coronation Hall at Arncliffe for rehearsals and performances. Periodically there has been considerable pressure exerted by councillors to cancel funding and allow the company to sink or swim on its own merits.

The organisation was created on a non-profit basis. Rockdale Council initially paid appearance and rehearsal fees for the professional principals and the conductor, Cedric Ashton. It also funded advertising costs, ticket and program printing, music scores, performance licences, and musician’s travelling expenses. In addition, they provided the Rockdale Town Hall for rehearsals and performances.

Costs were modest. At the Municipal Orchestra Committee meeting of 8 March 1948, the cost of the proposed inaugural production of Faust was as follows.

	£	s	d
Principals fees	52.	10.	0.
Scenery lighting and stage management	45.	0.	0.
Spot light and dome operation	10.	0.	0.
Costume hire	48.	0.	0.
Rehearsal pianists	10.	0.	0.
Ballet (including costumes)	25.	4.	0.
Hire of rehearsal hall	12.	0.	0.
Chorus parts (music)	5.	12.	6.
Piano score		17.	6.
Incidental stage props		17.	6.
Orchestra expenses	60.	0.	0.
<b>Total</b>	<b>270.</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>6.</b>

The ticket prices were envisaged as 7/6, 5/- and 3/-, with an annual subscription for four performances, including an opera, ballet and two orchestral concerts, set at £ 1.10.0. It was felt that 3 performances of Faust should create a reasonable profit after expenses had been deducted.<sup>135</sup>

Income was received from ticket sales, including a large number of subscribers. There were 440 subscribers by 1950, who still paid only £1/1s. per year to attend four symphony concerts, a ballet and an opera.<sup>136</sup>

An unusual partnership occurred in 1965 when St Georges Leagues Club sponsored the production of Iolanthe. An exclusive performance was staged at the club for members and

guests only. Over the years various businesses have been asked to subsidise productions through provision of goods or services. Today sponsorship through program advertising is a small but vital part of funding.

The Rockdale Council annual budget was \$5 million in 1971, with an annual opera subsidy of just \$13,000. Many aldermen saw this as a waste of money and voted to abolish the grant, in particular Alderman B. Austin, who expressed the opinion that if Rockdale Opera wanted to continue *"the interested people should come forward and do it themselves. The council helps those who help themselves"*. He seemed oblivious to the inherent contradiction in his statement. In this scenario the council would not help the interested people, even if they did help themselves.

The funding crisis of 1971 was indicative of the general state of affairs in the opera world during the 1970s.<sup>137</sup> When the Federal Minister for the Arts Mr Howson proudly announced Canberra was funding 71 arts organisations to the tune of \$1 million in 1972, Rockdale received a measly \$1,900. Even the country's premier music training school, NSW Conservatorium of Music only received \$1,800. Although The Australian Opera was the largest grant recipient (\$217,000), most of the smaller groups received grants of a couple of hundred dollars.<sup>138</sup>

Theatrescope magazine published an article in 1976 regarding the precarious state of funding for both major and minor opera companies in Australia. This disregard for the arts was considered a disgrace, particularly when the State Government of NSW had only just completed the world's most famous and controversial opera house in Sydney three years earlier. Mentioning that none of the minor opera companies had produced a show in the first eight months of 1976 apart from Rockdale Opera, which had been very active with performances of *Princess Ida* and *Don Pasquale* and rehearsals for an imminent *Samson and Delilah*, he finishes with a telling quote from Rockdale Opera Company Chairman Ron Rathbone;

*"We're staggering from one crisis to the next, but then... we have been for the last 40 years"*.<sup>139</sup>

One reviewer argued for the continuation of Rockdale Opera's funding in 1985;

*"Forget for a moment the high powered arguments of principle...the most important reason why opera should not be allowed to die in suburban Rockdale is that the local company is so good. Against formidable financial odds they have kept their flag flying for years, neglected by wealthy sponsors, ignored by the customary sources of official handouts, just subsisting on what their own local council can do to help them and a bit of understanding sympathy from the State Government"*.<sup>140</sup>

Forst comments that it cost around \$12,000 to present an opera for just 4 nights and even with full houses at each performance, compromises inevitably had to be made by a careful balancing of the budget. In 1985 it was only possible to balance the budget with the sponsorship of Mazda.<sup>141</sup>

In 1992 the 24 piece orchestra was significantly smaller than the 53 members of the 1940s ensemble. In the nineties they were paid students and retired professionals, earning \$25 per rehearsal call. If critics complained occasionally of a lack of cohesion in the orchestra, no doubt this was a result of the company only having the finances to pay for two rehearsals of

three-hours each. Principal singers could be paid up to \$1000 for their appearance. This all-inclusive fee did not really compensate for the many hours spent coaching and rehearsing the performance. The chorus, as always, was amateur, devoting several nights per week and approximately six weekends per year to rehearsals, for the love of opera.<sup>142</sup>

By 1993 the company was receiving \$15,000 in subsidies from council and had 1,000 subscribers paying \$24 per year. Opera in the suburbs was a bargain, costing \$12 per seat for an individual show. Rockdale Town Hall had a 600 seat capacity, requiring 90% seats to be sold in order to break even, although shows were often sold out weeks in advance. The company was governed by a committee chaired by Mayor Alderman Ron Rathbone, together with representatives from council, technical experts and subscribers. Ron was Mayor for eight terms.<sup>143</sup>

An indication of the continuing dire state of the company finances is given in 2002 when the production of *Martha* was forced to be accompanied solely by Estella Roche on piano. The company could not afford to pay an orchestra. Alarming, audience numbers were also down, with many empty seats on opening night.<sup>144</sup>



**Colin Mettam, who was a chorister, committee member and Assistant Stage Manager, is pictured constructing scenery. Photo courtesy of Colin Mettam, photographer and date unknown.**

Limited funding meant ingenuity was the order of the day. To save money, scenery was designed and constructed in modular pieces which could be assembled and reassembled indefinitely for successive shows. The basic scenery “flats” were then repainted for the new show. Rockdale Council provided scenery storage in the Bay Street Rockdale Masonic Hall for many years, and later in the Girl Guides Hall at Arncliffe, a space which they shared with Rockdale Musical Society. Additionally, council provided a truck to deliver the scenery to the Town Hall, or often the crew used their own trailer. This meant the pieces had to be dismantled and carefully stacked like a jigsaw puzzle in order to fit into the available transport.<sup>145</sup>

It seems that little has changed over the last 68 years regarding the constant battle for funding. After the initial flush of municipal pride that saw the founding of the orchestra in 1946 and the opera company in 1948, the Rockdale Opera Committee has seen a persistent struggle for finance and sponsorship.

Certainly the company could not have survived without the support of the Rockdale Council's modest grants, provision of goods and services, and the use of storage, rehearsal and performance space. In the financial year 2010—2011 Council estimated the Donations In-Kind Hall Hire as worth \$67,536 and Operations Maintenance and Support valued at \$16,033.<sup>146</sup> Nor would the company be in existence today without the occasional Arts Council grant and some notable rescues by local corporate businesses and sponsors.

In today's multicultural arts scene there are so many competing demands on both an audience's attention and the Council's limited funding, that it is increasingly difficult to justify supporting an art form that some sectors of the local community see as archaic. Additionally, in a mixed ethnic society, other community sectors must find classical western opera as alien and mystifying as Westerners find Chinese Opera.

After the 2011 asbestos crisis the council increased the \$17,000 annual funding to \$25,000 to compensate for the loss of the costumes; however, this was a one off and the subsidy was discontinued from that point forward. In accordance with current council policy, the opera company is welcome to submit an application for a small funding grant for a specific purpose, but grant applications take considerable time and skill to be successful.

It should be noted that due to the company's inception as a council activity in 1948, the opera company was previously in a privileged position in regards to council funding compared with the Regals and Rockdale Musical Society, neither of which received a direct council subsidy. They are funded by box office receipts, membership fees, fundraising events and business sponsorship, although they also benefit from free hall hire.<sup>147</sup> The difference is that unlike the two amateur societies, Rockdale Opera was conceived and created by the Rockdale Council as an official civic organisation, employing professional singers and musicians, albeit for a modest fee.

Rockdale City Council no longer provides administrative support or services, which places an additional funding burden on the company. The council is to be applauded for continuing to offer the rehearsal and performance venues rental free of charge, but this is insufficient to ensure a secure financial future. In 2016 the committee was forced to resort to fundraising activities in the form of a Bunnings Sausage Sizzle. No doubt there will be many more similar activities in the future.

Despite these financial difficulties, opera singers and musicians continue to champion Rockdale Opera as a vital part of Sydney's musical life. Conductor John Leeman's words from 1983 still ring true.

*"At Rockdale over the past 30 years or so many singers have used our stage as a springboard to the opera stages of Sydney as well as overseas opera houses."*<sup>148</sup>

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## The Changing Face of Rockdale

The demographic of Rockdale City has changed considerably over time, requiring the company to attract new audiences who are not necessarily attuned to opera. In previous decades the St George area population was mostly Australian and English, with a large number of post-war Greek and Italian migrants. Italians made up 7.2 per cent of Rockdale's migrant population by 1981 and were the fourth largest ethnic group in the area.<sup>149</sup> In 1977 the company even advertised a production of *La Traviata* in a Greek language newspaper. The mix has now totally changed, and with it the entertainment requirements of the population, creating huge challenges for a company performing a traditional European art form.



*An advertisement for *La Traviata* in a local Greek newsletter in 1977, collected in a Rockdale Opera Scrapbook held by the Rockdale Local History Library. The publication is unknown.*

Rockdale's population in 1947 was 47,290. That small population was supporting two amateur musical theatre companies and an orchestra and was soon to add an opera company to its entertainment. The Rockdale City Estimated Resident Population for 2014 was 108,072. Although the Rockdale boundaries have changed somewhat over the years, the number of residents has more than doubled since the formation of Rockdale Opera, but their interest in opera has declined. The reasons for this no doubt include the plethora of entertainment available today, including professional theatre company productions, movies, television, club and pub entertainment and evolving tastes. Undoubtedly, changing demographics in the Rockdale area is a contributing factor.

Just a year after Rockdale Municipal Orchestra had been formed, Sydney's city and suburban population totalled 932,000, including a mere 96,000 City of Sydney CBD residents. The 1947 census shows that 99.5% of New South Wales residents were British subjects, of whom 89.8% were born in Australia.<sup>150</sup>

Contrast this with the 2011 census, which shows that 42.3% of St George residents were born overseas. Most came from China, with small numbers of migrants from Greece, former Yugoslavia, UK, Lebanon, New Zealand, India, Nepal and the Philippines. Additionally, 38% of people living in the St George Region in 2011 came from countries where English was not their first language. Community languages today include Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Macedonian and Spanish.

As can be seen in the chart below, the ancestry of the population in 2011 had shifted to a mix of Australian, English and Chinese. St George residents of Chinese ancestry have increased by 18% since 2001.<sup>151</sup>

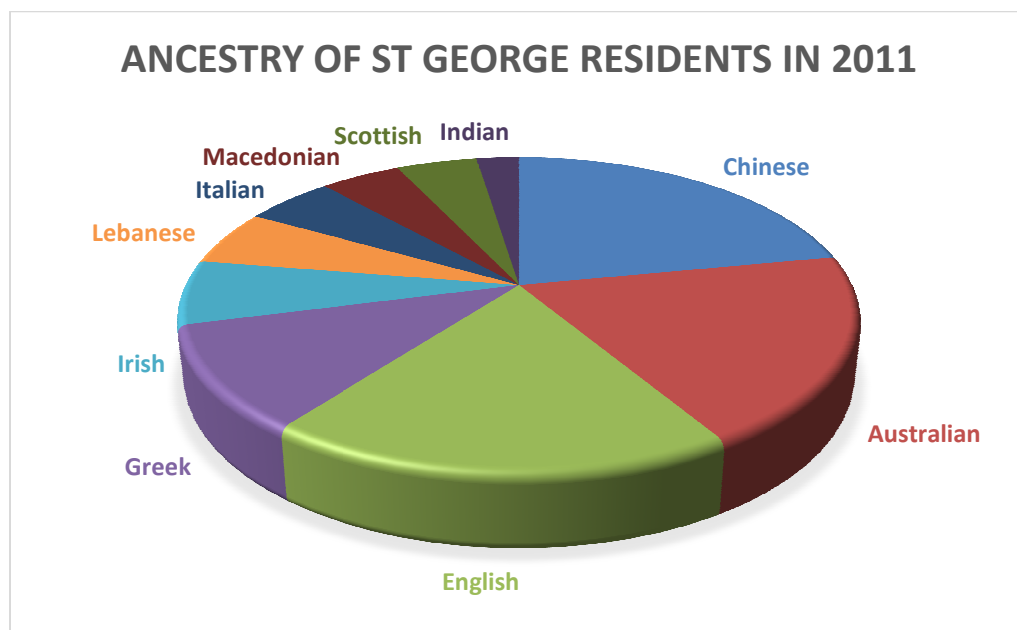
This is not a typical opera audience and in recent years the Rockdale Opera Committee has needed to re-think how to meet their needs and appeal to today's St George residents.

The majority of today's patrons are from St George and Sutherland Shires, however not all the audience members are locals. Company Secretary Lynette Davis was quoted by reporter Marianna Papadakis:

*" There has been a changing demographic in St George but we have audiences coming from the Eastern Suburbs, North Shore and City areas."* <sup>152</sup>

On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the company, critic James McCarthy wrote in Opera-Opera that he feared for the future of the company if they could not find new audiences and improve standards. He suggested that changing demographics and an aging audience may spell the end to Rockdale and similar ventures. <sup>153</sup>

David Gyger reiterated this in a 1999 review of Lucia di Lammermoor, noting an alarming sign in the significantly less-than- full house. He suggested the cause may be a reluctance of the aging audience to travel by public transport at night, traffic congestion making car travel unattractive and a change in demographics. He also observed that the *"every year it seems the mean age of the chorus goes up even as its actual numbers go down"*. <sup>154</sup>



**Note that Ancestry refers to the ethnic origins of a person rather than where they were born.**

Chart created by Leonie Bell using data from Profile.id-community Profile 2014 <sup>155</sup>

Anecdotally, there are some signs that artists and artisans are moving back into the area, changing the dynamic yet again, but it remains to be seen whether this is a trend or an anomaly.

Today the Council still supports Rockdale Opera and the arts in general, but in a broader community context that aims to reach out to this diverse ethnic mix. To meet the challenges

of the future, Rockdale Opera must find new ways to connect with the local community and attract subscribers in this contemporary urban dynamic.

Added to this problem is the vast range of entertainment available to young people, many of whom have never experienced opera or classical music and do not see these art forms as relevant to their lives. The company has realised that reaching these young people will involve employing social media in a revised marketing mix. Accordingly, it now has now a Facebook page to supplement its website.

This approach requires new skills and an innovative mindset for the opera committee and volunteers. If the company is to survive the times and operate for another 68 years it will need to grapple with this brave new world with the same fervour and dedication that inspired the company founders.

## Conclusion

The question was asked at the beginning of this history “Why has Rockdale Opera Company survived against the odds?”

Undoubtedly it is the vision, dedication and hard work of key individuals that have allowed it to weather financial crisis, changing demographics, indifference or occasional hostility from Rockdale Council, major asset losses and performance cancellations during the asbestos debacle.

Musical Director and Conductor Cedric Ashton O.B.E., who co-founded the company, dedicated himself to the ideal of producing quality opera, ballet and orchestral music in the suburbs, conducting almost every performance for thirty years. Cedric’s successor John Leeman continued his vision for twelve years, as did Ingrid Sakurovs for another seven years. John Leeman (1931-2013) regrettably passed away during the performance hiatus caused by the Town Hall renovations.

Without Company Chairman Ron Rathbone, the company probably would not have survived the financial troubles and opposition of the seventies. For twenty years Ron was the glue that held together Rockdale Municipal Opera Company. He was the man who coordinated the rescue of the company in 1971 when it nearly folded. He personally took to the streets with petitions to save the company and then oversaw the company re-structure.

Ron was a familiar, friendly face in the Town Hall, attending rehearsals and most performances. Initially he was the company’s Patron (an ex-officio position when elected as Mayor). He became its Chairman for more than two decades, devoting countless hours to the company for the benefit of the people of Rockdale, opera lovers throughout Sydney and the singers and musicians whose careers were nourished by association with Rockdale Opera Company. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1987 for service to local government.<sup>156</sup>



**Mayor of Rockdale, Alderman Ron Rathbone in the 1990s**

Photo courtesy of Rockdale City Library



Director Brian Phillips O.A.M. was a steady presence, steering the artistic direction of the company through almost four decades. Additionally, his tailoring skills alone saved the company thousands of dollars in costume hire. Brian himself credits much of the success and durability of the company to strong leadership by Chairman Ron Rathbone and Company Manager Kevin Casey.<sup>157</sup>

Director Ralph Bott has continued Brian's work since 1995 and took on the responsibilities of Artistic Administrator and Chairman when no-one else stepped forward to lead the company.

**John Bevan 1931–2013**

2013 was a sad year for Rockdale Opera Company. It saw the passing of our friend and colleague, John Bevan.

John was a ROC stalwart. He first showed up at Rockdale in the chorus of *The Mikado* in 1998. Two years later he was the Chorus Coordinator and by 2005 he had become the Treasurer.

However, these were just his 'official' jobs. He also spent hours photocopying scores for every show. He collected mail, attended meetings, liaised with the Council and our ticketing agency, collected tickets, emailed countless reminders to chorus and principals, took orders and money for CDs and DVDs and hounded us to fill in the sign-on book. He ran audition nights and after the show was over, often arranged for the dry cleaning of costumes.

In addition, he attended almost every rehearsal of every show from 2000 onwards. Some record – and very big shoes to fill.

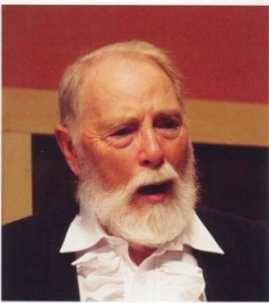

In the countless emails and messages received after his passing, the most frequently-used description was 'gentleman'. And indeed he was. Even his grumbling at the chorus was done with a twinkle in the eye and the hint of a smile.

We will remember John for his level-headed views at Committee meetings, for his efficiency as Treasurer, for his professionalism on stage, for his utter devotion to Gilbert and Sullivan and for the Rabbitohs hat and scarf that he always wore during football season.

We regret that John won't be here to see the Town Hall re-opened, to share the new dressing rooms and to be back once again on his beloved stage at Rockdale.

John, this show is for you, mate! We will miss your voice but we know you will be there in spirit, looking over our shoulders and reminding us to brush up on our words and music.

**Vale, John**

There were numerous stalwart chorus members whose lives revolved around rehearsal schedules for most of the year. Many of them also contributed to other backstage or administrative elements of mounting a production.

The late chorister John Bevan was Chorus Coordinator and a Committee Member. His touching Vale in the 2014 *Pirates of Penzance* program lists his duties as many and varied.

Many choristers assisted in the wardrobe department, sewing or adjusting costumes or dressing the principal artists. The company could not have operated without the willing labour of these company members turning their hands to whatever was needed at the time.

Backstage crew have also contributed to its longevity. Brian Tucker designed and built the sets for over twenty years from 1994, overseeing the technical aspects of production as the Stage Manager.

Retired gas inspector Harry Maidment was the company's longest serving Stage Manager, standing prompt side of the wings for over 25 years. He once told Sydney Morning Herald reporter Ava Hubble that he often felt nervous butterflies on opening nights.<sup>158</sup>

Colin Mettam sang in the chorus for many years, transferring to the duties of Assistant Stage Manager and Props until retiring from the company in 2011. Ken Carlin sang in the chorus, but often operated the hand powered fly lines, raising and lowering scenery and curtains. He assisted with the set build and served on the committee as Treasurer.



**Chorister Ken Carlin**  
assists in the  
scenery workshop.  
*Photo courtesy of Colin  
Mettam. Date unknown*

Over the years a succession of committee members dedicated long hours of volunteer time to administration, publicity, subscriber management and ticket sales. Auxiliary helpers, such as Paul Campbell in the Box Office, worked tirelessly for the company, in some instances for decades. There were numerous other assistants including Colin's wife Gladys Mettam, together with Jean Campbell, who sold programs at every performance. The company could not have thrived without these front of house helpers.



**Don Marks at the piano**  
*Photographer and date unknown*  
Pianist Don Marks accompanied rehearsals for 53 shows over thirty-two years, working with both Cedric Ashton and John Leeman.

Without the passion and dedication of these people, and many other company members, Rockdale Opera would long ago have fallen by the wayside. These are the people who enabled it to endure almost insurmountable problems. Their legacy is a flourishing musical venture that has survived, against the odds, into the twenty first century.

Today, with the guiding hand and vision of a committed Company Chairman, the dedication of Committee Members, and the enthusiasm of technical crew, choristers and volunteers, the company strives to transcend the difficulties of the times. Hopefully, Rockdale Opera Company can recruit and harness the passion and creative energy of a new generation of singers and volunteers, enabling it to celebrate a century in 2048.

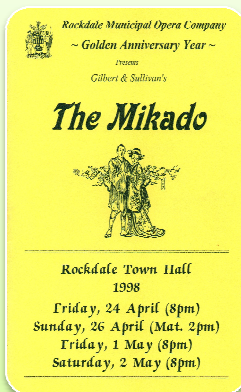
## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Most Popular Operas



Most performed opera with 8 productions

- **Pirates of Penzance**  
(2014 production, photo by Ray Wing-Lun)



A tie for the second most performed opera with 7 productions each. An 8th production of The Gondoliers scheduled for 2012 was cancelled due to the unexpected closure of Rockdale Town Hall. Clearly Rockdale audiences love Gilbert and Sullivan.

- **The Gondoliers**
- **The Mikado** (1998 program)



A tie for the third most performed opera with 6 productions each

- **Faust**
- **Iolanthe**
- **Carmen** (2010 production, photo by Ray Wing-Lun)

## Appendix 2 Longest Serving Company Members



### **Cedric Ashton**

Longest serving Music Director and Conductor. Cedric was the Maestro for orchestral concerts, operatic concerts and ballets. He rehearsed and conducted 72 opera productions from 1948 to 1979.



### **John Leeman**

Longest serving musician. John played flute in the orchestra from 1951 and was Musical Director from 1980 to 1992. He conducted 39 productions.



### **Ron Rathbone**

Longest serving Company Chairman from 1971 to 1993



### **Brian Phillips**

Longest serving Director and Producer. Directed 60 productions from 1966 to 2004.



### **Ralph Bott**

Joined the company as a singer in 1975. He Directed 19 shows between 1995 and 2015 and will direct Orpheus in the Underworld in 2016. Ralph is currently Company Chairman and Artistic Director.



### **Don Marks**

Longest serving accompanist. Don joined the company as rehearsal pianist for the 1960 Ruddigore and played for a total of 53 shows until 1992

Photos courtesy of Rockdale City Library



## Appendix 3 Committee Members Then and Now

### 1948 Municipal Orchestra Committee

His Worship the Mayor, Alderman Norman C. Guess  
Alderman W. E. McGuinness, Deputy Mayor  
Alderman W.A. Eggins  
Alderman E. Jones  
Alderman R.J. Scott  
Town Clerk Mr R. J. Scott  
Liaison Officer Mr R.H. Orchard

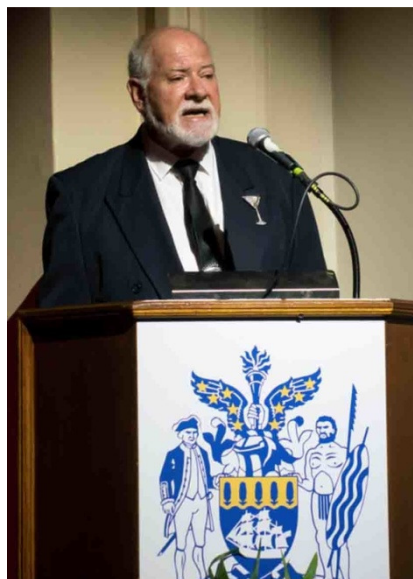
*Note: In 1949 the Municipal Orchestra Committee was renamed the Cultural Activities and Community Services Committee.*

### 1948 Subscribers Committee

Dr A.C. Thomas, President  
Mrs F.J. Graham, Vice President  
Mr E.V. Milverton, Vice President  
Mrs A. Ferris Hon. Secretary  
Mesdames E. Milverton, A.C. Thomas, R.H. Orchard and M. Hyland  
Misses E. Farleigh, M. Farleigh, E. Broadbent  
Messrs A. Glass, G. Tome, W. Aylward, C. Peir, H.A. Gill, Alan Ferris, Cedric Ashton and Rupert Orchard

### 2016 Rockdale Opera Company Committee

Ralph Bott, Chairman and Artistic Director  
Secretary, Lynette Davis  
Assistant Secretary, Lynda Cabeldu  
Treasurer, Stephen Yalouris  
Chorus Co-ordinator, John Tse  
Business and Development, Megan Chalmers



**2016 Company Chairman and Artistic Director Ralph Bott as Master of Ceremonies for Rendezvous at Orlofsky's Cabaret**

*Photo by Ray Wing-Lun*

## Appendix 4 Chronological List of Productions with Cast Lists

The following information has been compiled from the Rockdale Municipal Opera programs held at Rockdale Local History Library. The orchestral section of the company was founded in 1946 as the Rockdale Municipal Orchestra, which played for Rockdale Municipal Opera Company from 1948. It eventually merged to become the Rockdale Municipal Opera Company and Orchestra.

A Producer is technically the person who organises a production and arranges the finance. A Director is the person responsible for the artistic vision of the production, arranging the performers on stage, and rehearsing the singers both in the rehearsal room and on stage.

Rockdale Opera originally used the term Producer to describe what today we would call a Director. The terminology changes in the mid-nineties. The cast lists follow the job titles given to each person in the original program.

In addition to opera, the company also performed symphonic concerts in the forties and fifties, and ballet until the early seventies, which are not listed here.

### 1948

<b>Faust</b>		<b>May 22,24,26</b>	
Faust	Allan Ferris	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Mephistopheles	William Diamond	Producer	Allan Ferris
Margarita	Marjorie Gore	Choreography	Pamela Shield
Wagner	Reginald Cox	Scenery and	John L. Clugston
Valentine	William Tyrrell	Lighting	
Siebel	Joan Bray	Costumes	J.C. Williamson
Martha	Betty Allen		Buttonhole

### 1949

<b>Carmen</b>		<b>May 21,23,25,27,28</b>	
Morales	David Younger	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Micaela	Dacia Goatley	Producer	Allan Ferris
Zuniga	William Diamond	Stage Manager	E. Cartner
Don Jose	Allan Ferris	Choreography	Raissa Kousnetzova
Carmen	Patricia Church	Scenery and	John Clugston
	Norma Lever	Lighting	
Frasquita	Audrey Hodgkinson	Costumes	Buttonhole
Mercedes	Joan Smith	Rehearsal Pianist	Megan Evans
Escamillo	William Tyrrell		
Il Dancairo	Neil Easton		
Il Remendado	Hylton Collins		

## 1950

<b>Rigoletto</b>		<b>May 20,22,24,25,26</b>	
The Duke	Allan Ferris	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Borsa	Richard Bromley	Stage Director	Allan Ferris
Rigoletto	Ronal Jackson	Assistant Stage	Megan Evans
The Countess	Jill Sproule	Direction and	
Ceprano	Geoffrey Layton	Rehearsal Pianist	
Marullo	Neil Easton	Scenery	ACME Scenery company
Count	Donald Cameron	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
Monterone			
Sparafucile	William Diamond	Costumes	Buttonhole
Gilda	Arete Zantiotis		
	Jean Christopher		
Giovanna	Claire Ward, Pat Hynds		
A page	Rosalind Keene		
Maddalena	Jacqueline Talbot		

## 1951

<b>La Bohème</b>			
Marcel	Geoffrey Chard	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Rudolph	Allan Ferris	Stage Directors	Cedric Ashton
Colline	William Diamond		Allan Ferris
Schaunard	Neil Easton	Assistant Stage	Megan Evans
Benoit	John Young	Direction and	
Mimi	Angelina Arena	Rehearsal Pianist	
Musetta	Jean Christopher	Scenery	John Clugston
	Arete Zantiotis	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
Alcindore	John Young	Costumes	Buttonhole
Parpignol	Hylton Harris		

<b>Faust</b>		<b>November 22,24,26,28</b>	
Faust	Allan Ferris	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Mephistopheles	William Diamond	Producer	Allan Ferris
Margarita	Angelina Arena	Stage Manager	Megan Evans
Wagner	Michael Rafferty	Scenery	Jennifer Hocking
Valentine	Trevor Lewis		Allan Ferris
Siebel	Marjorie Conley	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
Martha	Nita Maughan	Costumes	Buttonhole
			Princess Theatre
			Melbourne
		Wigs	Michau

## 1952

<b>La Traviata</b>		May 14,15,17,19,21,22,23,24	
Violetta	Nerissa Niblo	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
	Joyce Izett	Producer	Allan Ferris
Alfred Germont	Allan Ferris	Deputy	George Humphries
George Germont	Trevor Lewis	Conductor	
Flora Bervoix	Nita Maughan	Rehearsal Pianist	Megan Evans
Baron Duphol	William Diamond	and Stage	
Marquis	George Harvey	Manager	
D'Obigne			
Doctor Grenvil	Reginald Ede	Makeup	Mrs R. Sutton
Gaston Letorieres	Cecil Davy	Costumes	J.C. Williamson
	Chris Verdi		Buttonhole
Annina	Joan Shute	Scenery deigned	Mrs C. Light
Joseph	Peter Arena	and executed	
		Electrician	F.J. Dunne

<b>Martha</b>		November 29, December 1,4,5	
Lady Harriet	Beryl Hardy	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
(Martha)		Producer	Allan Ferris
Nancy	Nita Maughan	Rehearsal Pianist	Megan Evans
Sir Tristam	William Diamond	Makeup	Arthur Gough
Mickelford			Mrs R. Sutton
Lionel	Connel Byrne		Dorothy Dunkley
Plunkett	Geoffrey Chard	Costumes	J.C. Williamson
The Sheriff	George Harvey		Buttonhole
		Scenery designed	Adrian Robinson
		and executed	
		Lighting	F.J. Dunne

## 1953

<b>Madame Butterfly</b>		May 14,16,18,20,21,22,23	
Madam Butterfly	Angelina Arena	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Suzuki	Valerie Isbister	Scenery designed	Wilfred Asplin
B.F. Pinkerton	Eric Morrisey	and painted by	
Kate Pinkerton	Betty Tattler	Direction	Franco Izal
Sharpless	Trevor Lewis	Stage Manager	Colin Tester
Goro	Richard Bromley	Rehearsal Pianist	Megan Evans
Prince Yamadori	George Gleed	Chorus Master	Allan Ferris
The Bonze	William Diamond	Makeup	Dorothy Dunkley
Yakuside	Hilton Harris	Floral Artist	Vera Moore
Imperial	George Harvey	Costume Design	Wilfred Asplin
Commissioner		Costume Maker	Ethel Gabriel
Official Registrar	Norman Steele	Props and	Peter Saint Hill
Trouble	Guy Vaughn	Wardrobe	
Cho-Cho San's	Coral Edmundson	Manager	
mother			
Butterfly's Aunt	Sylvia Preston		
Butterfly's Cousin	Margaret Farrell		



## 1953

<b>Rigoletto</b>		November 26,27,28	
The Duke	Eric Morrissey	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Borsa	Yusef Karooz	Producer	Allan Ferris
Rigoletto	Stewart Harvey	Rehearsal Pianist	Megan Evans
The Countess	Margaret Armstrong	Scenery	Allan Ferris
Ceprano	John Willis	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
Marullo	George Harvey	Costumes	J.C. Williamson
Count	Trevor Lewis		
Monterone			
Sparafucile	William Diamond		
Gilda	Betty Linke		
Giovanna	Margaret Farrell		
Maddalena	Marie Tyso		
	Constance Manning		
Page	Myrtle Hardy		

## 1954

<b>Manon</b>		May 15,17,19,20,21,22	
Poussette	Nerissa Niblo	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
	Lilian Haynes	& Producer	
Poussette	Jean Gillespie	Scenery	Allan Ferris
Javotte	Nita Maughan		Cliff Peir
Chevalier de	Allan Ferris		
Grieux	Richard Bromley	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
Lescaut	David Hillier	Costumes	J.C. Williamson
	Trevor Lewis	Rehearsal Pianist	Megan Evans
Guillot de	Leo Whiteman		
Morfontaine			
Sergeant	John McKenna		
Soldier	John Willis		

<b>Pirates of Penzance</b>		July 9,12,14,15	
Major General	Keith Walsh	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Stanley		Producer	Helen Langdon
Pirate King	William Diamond	Scenery	J.C. Williamson
Samuel	David Hillier	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
Frederick	Allan Ferris	Costumes	J.C. Williamson
Mabel	Nerissa Niblo	Rehearsal Pianist	Megan Evans
Edith	Mary O'Keefe		
Isabel	Una Philpott		
Ruth	Gladys Graham		
Sergeant	John McKenna		
Soldier	John Willis		

## 1954

<b>The Mikado</b>		November 22,24,25,26,27	
Nanki Pooh	Richard Bromley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Pooh Bah	Don Patton	Producer	Len Gotting
Pish Tush	David Hillier	Rehearsal Pianist	Grace Nicholls
Ko Ko	Robert Hatherley	Scenery	J.C. Williamson
Yum Yum	Nerissa Niblo	Costumes	J.C. Williamson
Peep-Bo	Mary O'Keefe	Makeup	Len Gotting
Pitti-Sing	Barbara Hill		
The Mikado	Murray Mardardy		
Katisha	Gladys Graham		

## 1955

<b>Tosca</b>		May 14,16,18,19,20,21	
Tosca	Betty Greenfield	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
	Nita Maughan	Production	David Nettheim
Cavaradossi	Connell Byrne	Scenery	Robert Lloyd
Scarpia	Geoffrey Chard	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
Angelotti	Murray Mardardi	Costumes	J.C. Williamson Ltd.
Sacristan	David Hillier	Rehearsal Pianist	G. Nicholls
Sciarrone	George Gleed	Chorus	L. Bartlett
Spoletta	Richard Bromley	Conductor	
Shepherd Boy	Mary O'Keefe	Vocal Coach	Cedric Ashton
Gaoler	Noel Arnold	Manager Front of House Staff	R. Stretton

<b>The Gondoliers</b>		November	
Duke of Plaza-Toro	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Luiz	Richard Linden	Producer	Len Gotting
Don Alhambra	Don Paton	Rehearsal Pianist	Grace Nicholls
Marco Palmieri	Connell Byrne	Scenery and	J.C. Williamson
Giuseppe Palmieri	David Hillier	Costumes	
Antonio	Noel Arnold	Lighting and Stage	J. Singe
Francesco	William J. Wickham	Management	
Giorgio	George Gleed	Makeup	Len Gotting
Duchess of Plaza-Toro	Jean Aitken	Chorus Master	Cedric Ashton
Casilda	Monica Selig		
Gianetta	Jean Gillespie		
Tessa	Joan Worrall		
Fiametta	Betty Baker		
Vittoria	Betty Thomson		
Inez	Barbara Hill		

## 1956

<b>The Secret of Susanna</b>		May 12,17,18,19	
Count Gil	Ross Watson	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Susanna	Rae Candy	Decor and	Colin Garland
Sante	Donald Frost	Costumes	
		Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
<b>Amahl and the Night Visitors</b>		May 12,17,18,19	
Amahl	Nicholas Tate	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
His mother	Joy Stapleton	Decor and	Colin Garland
King Kaspar	Keith Wright	Costumes	
King Melchior	Ross Watson	Production	Alan Seymour
King Balthazar	John Brosman	Choreography	Joan Halliday
Page	Reginald Tester		
<b>Burning to Sing</b>		May 12,17,18,19	
Madame	Nita Maughan	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Marguerita		Producer	Len Gotting
Signor Edoardo	Keith Wright		
Tremolini			
Billy	David Hillier		
Thomassini	Ross Watson		
Firemen	W.J. Whigham		
	George Gleed		
<b>The Merry Widow</b>		November 19,21,22,23,25	
Camille	Paul Miskell	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Marquis de	George Gleed	Producer	Len Gotting
Cascada		Lighting and	J. Singe
M. de St. Brioche	Kevin Mills	Stage	
General	Tom Green	Management	
Nivikovich		Assistant Stage	Ralph Gosper
M Khadja	Ted Lansdowne	Manager	
Nisch	Terry O'Keefe	Chorus Master	Cedric Ashton
Prince Danillo	Rodney Smith	Rehearsal Pianist	Grace Nicholls
Baron Popoff	Edwin Pfeiffer	Makeup	Len Gotting
Natalie	Betty Cheal		
Olga	Mary O'Keefe		
Sylvaine	Marcia Boucher		
Praskovia	Betty Thompson		
Frou-Frou	Judy Barker		
Walter	Hilton Worthing		
Sonia	Joan Worrall		

## 1957

<b>Carmen</b>		May 11,15,16,17,18	
Morales	George Gleed	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Micaela	Margaret Moore	& Chorus Master	
Zuniga	William Diamond	Producer	Allan Ferris
Don Jose	Allan Ferris	Assistant Chorus	David Andrews
Carmen	Ivel Hilliard	Master	
Frasquita	Berenice Marks	Rehearsal Pianist	Grace Nichols
Mercedes	Shirley Arundale	Lighting	Fred Dunne
Escamillo	Kevin Mills		
Il Dancairo	Max Lindon		
Il Remendado	Hilton Harris		
Boys Chorus	Mortdale Police Club Boys Choir		

<b>The Barber of Seville</b>		September 25,27,28,30	
Count Almaviva	Allan Ferris	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Figaro	Geoffrey Chard	Producer	Allan Ferris
Dr. Bartolo	Frank Lisle	Costumes	Motley
Rosina	Betty Prentice	Wigs	Elsie Dayne
Basilio	William Diamond	Lighting	R. Bartram
		Equipment	
		Operator	F.J. Dunne
		Stage Manager & Rehearsal Pianist	Megan Evans

<b>The Yeomen of the Guard</b>		November 16,20,21,22,23	
Sir Richard	William Diamond	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Cholmondeley		& Producer	
Colonel Fairfax	John Wirth	Stage Manager	Allan Ferris
Sergeant Meryll	Charles Matthews	Lighting	Allan Ferris
Leonard Meryll	Gus Oberg	Rehearsal Pianist	F.J. Dunne
Jack Point	Robert Hatherley	Wigs	David Andrews
Wilfred Shadbolt	Harold Croxon	Wigs	Mischau
Headman	Herman Brett	Scenery	
1 <sup>st</sup> Yeoman	Gus Oberg	Costumes &	J.C. Williamsons
2 <sup>nd</sup> Yeoman	Bert Telford	Lighting	
Elsie Maynard	Janice Hamilton		
Phoebe Meryll	John Worrall		
Dame Carruthers	Gladys Graham		
Kate	Betty Thompson		



## 1958

### La Bohème

May 10,14,16,17

Marcel	Geoffrey Chard	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Rudolph	Allan Ferris	Producer	Allan Ferris
Colline	William Diamond	Rehearsal Pianist	Megan Evans
Schaunard	Kevin Stumbles	Scenery	Allan Ferris
Benoit	Noel McCabe		Moirra Harris
Mimi	Valerie Ryan	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
	Nerissa Niblo	Costumes	Gertrude Johnstone
Musetta	Shirley McGrath	Wigs	Dayne
Alcindore	Noel McCabe		

### H.M.S. Pinafore

November 15,19,21,22

Rt.Hon. Sir	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Joseph Porter		Producer	Charles Matthews
Ralph Rackstraw	John Wirth	Stage Manager &	F.J. Dunne
Josephine	Valerie Ryan	Lighting	
Captain Corcoran	Max Linden	Scenery	J.C. Williamsons
Little Buttercup	Mary Blake	Costumes	Motley
Dick Deadeye	Charles Matthews	Wigs	Dayne
Bill Bobstay	Barry Milne		
Carpenters Mate	George Gleed		
Cousin Hebe	Denise Nicholls		
Midshipmite	Edwina Butler		

## 1959

### Die Fledermaus

May 9,13,15,16

Count von	Michael Khlentzos	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Eisenstein		Producer	Ward Leopold
Rosalinda	Tais Taras	Rehearsal Pianist	David Andrews
Adele	Betty Prentice	Scenery	Paul Kathner
Alfred	Gino Zancanaro	Lighting	Frederick Dunne
Frank	Max Lindon	Costumes	Marita McKenzie
Falke	Frank D'Arcy	Wigs	Dayne
Prince Orlofsky	Barbara Catt		
Blind	Bruce Lang		
Frosch	Max Osbiston		
Molly	Rosemary Vaughan		
Ivan	George Gleed		

## 1959

<b>Iolanthe</b>		<b>November 14,18,20,21</b>	
Lord Chancellor	Ross Ware	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Earl of Mountarat	Ross Watson	Producer	Charles Matthews
Earl Tolloller	John Wirth	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
Private Willis	George Gleed	Rehearsal Pianist	Barbara Crewe
Strephon	David Hillier	Wigs	Dayne
Queen of the Fairies	Mary Blake	Scenery	J.C. Williamson
Iolanthe		Costumes	Motley
Phyllis	Moir Dalton		
Celia	Valerie Ryan		
Leila	Marcia Boucher		
Fleta	Margaret Trewartha		
	Patricia Byrne		

## 1960

<b>Gypsy Baron</b>		<b>May 14,18,19,20,21</b>	
Count Homonay	David Hillier	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Count Carnero	Charles Unsworth	Producer	Michael Khlentzos
Sandor Barinkay	Michael Khlentzos		Charles Matthews
Kalman Zsupan	Charles Matthews	Lighting	F.J. Dunne
Arsena	Nerissa Niblo	Rehearsal Pianist	Stephanie Boone
Mirabella	Beryl Cheers	Wigs	Dayne
Ottaker	Lance Lloyd	Scenery	J.C. Williamsons
Czipra	Shirley McGrath	Costumes	Motley
Saffri	Tais Taras	Costumes	Motley
Pali	George Gleed		

<b>Ruddigore</b>		<b>November 12,16,18,19</b>	
Sir Ruthven	Charles Matthews	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Murgatroyd		Producer	Charles Matthews
Richard Dauntless	Roy Ramsden	Lighting & Stage Manager	Nick Dowling
Sir Despard	David Cooper	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Murgatroyd			
Old Adam	George Gleed		
Goodheart			
Rose Maybud	Valerie Ryan		
Mad Margaret	Beryl Cheers		
Dame Hannah	Mary Blake		
Zora	Imelda Fitzgerald		
Ruth	Ruth Orr		
Sir Wilfred	Noel Summerwell		
Sir Jasper	Winston Eldridge		
Sir Lionel	Edward Potter		
Sir Conrad	Colin Mettam		
Sir Desmond	Herman Brett		
Sir Gilbert	Neil Cross		
Sir Merryn	John Main		
Sir Roderic	David Hillier		

## 1961

<b>Tales of Hoffmann</b>		<b>May 18,20,24,26,27</b>	
Nathaniel	Winston Eldridge	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Herman	Ted Potter	Producer	Ronald Denson
Luther	Herman Brett	Lighting & Stage	Nick Dowling
Spalanzani / Schlemil	Charles Matthews	Manager	
Hoffman	Michael Khlentzos	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Nicklaus	Vivienne Ross	Set Design	Paul Kathner
Cochenille / Franz	John Rundle		
Giuletta	Loise Empey		
Schlemil (alternate cast)/ Crespel	Robert Hoose		
Antonia / Olympia	Maureen London		
Coppelius / Dapertutto / Dr Miracle	Alan Light		
Pitinoccio	John Rundle		

<b>The Mikado</b>		<b>November 11,15,17,18</b>	
The Mikado	Ivan Dennis	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Nanki-Poo	Paul Miskell	Producer	Charles Matthews
Ko Ko	Robert Hatherley	Lighting & Stage	J. Singe
Pooh Bah	Charles Matthews	Manager	
Pish Tush	David Hillier	Costumes	Motley
Yum Yum	Valerie Ryan	Rehearsal Pianist	Enid Partridge
Peep-Bo	Dawn Orr	Wigs	Dayne
Pitti-Sing	Imelda Fitzgerald	Scenery	J.C. Williamsons
Katisha	Mary Blake		

## 1962

<b>The Bartered Bride</b>		<b>May 19,23,25,26</b>	
Krushina	Charles Matthews	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Ludmila	Jacqueline Silver	Producer	Ivan Dennis
Marenka	Shirley McGrath	Lighting & Stage	Nick Dowling
Micha	Terrence Reilly	Manager	
Hata	Mary Blake	Rehearsal	Patricia Halpin
Vashek	John Rundle	Pianists	Vaila Mead
Jenik	Lina Naudi	Set Design	Paul Kathner
Kezal	David Hillier	Ballet	Dawn Ransley
Comedian	Robert Hatherley		
Esmeralda	Imelda Fitzgerald		
Indian	Denis Soames		

## 1962

<b>Cox and Box</b>		September 21,22	
James John Cox	Charles Matthews	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
John James Box	Roy Ramsden	Producer	Charles Matthews
Sergeant Bouncer	David Hillier		
<b>Trial by Jury</b>			
Learned Judge	Charles Matthews	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
The Plaintiff	Imelda Fitzgerald	Producer	Charles Matthews
The Defendant	Winston Eldridge		
Council for the Plaintiff	John Trainor		
Usher	David Hillier		
Foreman of the Jury	Herman Brett		
Associate	Noel Summerell		
First Bridesmaid	Margaret Nobbs		
<b>Phaudrig Crohoore</b>			
Rockdale Opera Chorus		Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
		Producer	Charles Matthews
<b>The Gondoliers.</b>		November 10,14,16,17	
Duke of Plaza-Toro	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Luiz	Noel Meddows	Producer	Charles Matthews
Don Alhambra	Charles Matthews	Rehearsal	Vaila Mead
Marco Palmieri	Roy Ramsden	Pianists	Mavis Noakes
Giuseppe Palmieri	David Hillier	Scenery	John Clugston
Antonio	Winston Eldridge	Costumes	Motley
Annibale	John Trainor	Lighting and	Nick Dowling
Francesco	Robert Cronin	Stage	
Giorgio	Robert Matheson	Management	
Duchess of Plaza-Toro	Mary Blake		
Casilda	Wendy de Beyer		
Gianetta	Valerie Ryan		
Tessa	Joan Worrall		
Fiametta	Noeleen Fairfield		
Vittoria	Carol Dalimore		
Giulia	Lynette Dunning		
Inez	Lesley Stender		



## 1963

<b>Faust</b>		May 18,22,24,25	
Faust	Gino Zancanaro	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Mephistopheles	Alan Light	Producer	Ivan Dennis
Margarita	Althea Bridges	Stage Manager	Nick Dowling
Wagner	Charles Matthews	Scenery Design &	Maurice Sullivan
Valentine	Raymond Maraton	Execution	
Siebel	Lino Naudi	Lighting	Theatre Engineering
Martha	Mary Blake	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan
			Theatre Trust
		Properties	Michael Sargent
		Wigs	Mona Workman

<b>The Pirates of Penzance</b>		November 9,13,15,15	
Major General	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Stanley		Producer	Gwen Gillard
Pirate King	Charles Matthews	Scenery	John Clugston
Samuel	Bernard McCarthy	Costumes	Motley
Frederick	Roy Ramsden	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Mabel	Valerie Ryan		
Edith	Noeleen Fairfield		
Isabel	Margaret Trainor		
Ruth	Lesley Stender		
Sergeant	David Hillier		

## 1964

<b>Tosca</b>		May 16,20,22,23	
Tosca	Judith Turner	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Cavaradossi	Serge Baigildin	Producer	John Young
Scarpia	Alan Light	Scenery Design &	Ronald Sinclair
Angelotti	Frank Lisle	Execution	
Sacristan	David Hillier	Stage Manager	Gwenda Howse
Sciarrone	Ray Leatherday	Lighting	Theatre Engineering
Spoletta	Les Novak	Costumes &	Australian Elizabethan
Shepherd Boy	Francis Carr-Boyd	Props	Theatre Trust

<b>Patience</b>			
Colonel Calverley	Charles Brook	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Major	Graham Williams	Producer	Gwen Gillard
Murgatroyd		Costumes	Motley
Lieut. Duke of	John Main	Scenery	John Clugston
Dunstable	Graham Stevens	Wigs	Dayne
Reginald	Robert Hatherley	Pianist	Don Marks
Bunthorne			
Archibald	Damon Beck		
Solicitor	David Williams		
Lady Angela	Lesley Stender		
Lady Saphir	Lyn Dunning		
Lady Ella	Noeleen Fairfield		
Lady Jane	Mary Blake		
Patience	Valerie Ryan		

## 1965

### **Iolanthe** May 22,25,26,28,29

Lord Chancellor	Brian Phillips	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Earl Mountararat	David Hillier	Producer	Gwen Gillard
Earl Tolloller	Graham Stevens	Scenery	John Clugston
Private Willis	Graham Williams	Costumes	Motley
Strephon	John Main	Wigs	Dayne
Fairy Queen	Mary Blake	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Iolanthe	Dawn Orr		
Phyllis	Valerie Ryan		
Celia	Noeleen Fairfield		
Leila	Lesley Stender		
Fleta	Sonya Williams		

### **Don Pasquale** July 14,15

Don Pasquale	Alan Light	Musical Director	John Leeman
Dr. Malatesta	John Germain	Producer	Ereach Riley
Ernesto	Robert Gard	Design	Brian Bona
Norina	Rosalind Keene		
Notary	Terrence Finnigan		

### **Madame Butterfly** November 13,17,19,20

Madam Butterfly	Mary Hayman	Acting Musical	John Leeman
B.F. Pinkerton	Reginald Byers	Director	
Sharpless	Ronald Maconaghie	Producer	Stephen Beinl
Suzuki	Pamela Coleman	Stage Director	Moffat Oxenbould
Goro	Eric Jones	Scenery Design	Ronald Sinclair
Prince Yamadori	David Hillier	and Execution	
The Bonze	John Durham	Wardrobe	Merle Byrne
Commissioner	Malcolm Donnelly	Mistress	
Kate Pinkerton	Lesley Stender	Wigs	Mona Workman
Butterfly's	Gladys Mettam	Costumes	Motley
Mother		Properties	Australian Elizabethan
Cousin	Beverley Barsby		Theatre Trust
Uncle	Colin Mettam		

## 1966

### **Rigoletto** May 21,27,28

Rigoletto	John Germain	Guest Conductor	Gerald Krug
Gilda	Rosalind Keene	and Musical	
The Duke	Reginald Byers	Director	
Monterone	William Coombs	Producer	Stephen Beinl
Marullo	Frank Lisle	Design	Allan Lees
Borso	Terry Finnigan		
Ceprano	Malcolm Donnelly		
Sparafucile	Noel Jelfs		
Maddalena	Jacqueline Peace		
Countess	Lesley Stender		
Ceprano			

## 1966

Operatic Concert		July 29,30	
Gino Zancanaro		Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Alan Light		Director	James Sharman
Shirley McGrath		Narration written	Richard Walsh
Mary Blake		by	
Areta Zantiotis			
Heather MacMillan		Costumes	Australian Elizabethan
Marie Tysoe			Theatre Trust
Ronald Maconaghie			
Noel Jelfs			
Serge Baigildin			
Alan Edwards			

The Yeomen of the Guard		November 12,16,18,19	
Sir Richard	Charles Dansie	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Cholmondeley		Producer	Brian Phillips
Colonel Fairfax	Roy Ramsden	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan
Sergeant Meryll	Morris Mathias		Trust
Leonard Meryll	Winston Eldridge	Wigs	Dayne
Jack Point	Laurie Butler	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Wilfred Shadbolt	Jim Finlay		
Headman	Brian Treloar		
1 <sup>st</sup> Yeoman	Garth Partridge		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Yeoman	Graham Williams		
1 <sup>st</sup> Citizen	Neville L'Oste Brown		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Citizen	Brian Treloar		
Elsie Maynard	Arete Zantiotis		
Phoebe Meryll	Dawn Orr		
Dame Carruthers	Lesley Stender		
Kate	Noeleen Eldridge		

## 1967

Princess Ida		July 26,28,29	
King Hildebrand	Charles Dansie	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Hilarion	John Wirth	Producer	Brian Phillips
Cyril	Roy Ramsden	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan
Florian	William Murray		Theatre Trust
King Gama	John Milson	Wigs	Dayne
Arac	Jim Finlay	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Guron	Geoffrey Turner	Scenery	Allan Lees
Scynthus	Peter Clive		
Princess Ida	Arete Zantiotis		
Lady Blanche	Mary Blake		
Melissa	Dawn Orr		
Lady Psyche	Valerie Ryan		
Sacharissa	Noeleen Eldridge		
Ada	Jillian Stewart		
Chloe	Joy Salan		

## 1967

<b>La Serva Padrona</b>		September 23	
Serpina	Marie Tysoe	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Uberto	Ross Watson	Producer	Alan Light
Vespone	Robert Tasman	Accompanist	John Champ
		Costumes and Props	Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
		Furniture	Bebarfalds

<b>Interlude</b>		September 23	
Soloist	Robert Tasman	Guitarist	John Champ

<b>The Telephone</b>		September 23	
Lucy	Marie Tysoe	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Ben	Ross Watson	Producer	Alan Light

<b>The Barber of Seville</b>		November 16,17,18	
Count Almaviva	Roy Ramsden	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Figaro	John Wood	Producer	Rick Billinghamurst
Dr. Bartolo	William Coombs	Costumes and Scenery	Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
Rosina	Marion Miller	Wigs	Mona Workman
Basilio	Graham Williams	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Marcellina	Mary Blake		
Fiorello	Jeffrey Warnock		
Fiorello	John Milson		
Officer	Geoffrey Turner		

## 1968

<b>La Traviata</b>		May 23,24,25	
Violetta	Rosalind Keene	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Flora Bervoix	Arete Zantiotis	Producer	Rick Billinghamurst
Alfred Germont	Barry Shepherd	Designer	Allan Lees
George Germont		Choreography	Anita Ardell
Baron Duphol	Richard Divall	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
Marquis	Richard Woodley		
D'Obigney		Stage Manager	Brian Phillips
Doctor Grenvil	Peter Maegraith	Wardrobe	Maud Daggett
Gaston Letorieres	Paul Ferris	Mistress	
Annina	Jacqueline Peace		
Joseph	Jeffrey Warnock		

<b>The Mikado</b>		November 20,22,23	
Nanki Pooh	John Wirth	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Pooh Bah	Ross Watson	Producer	Brian Phillips
Pish Tush	Charles Dansie	Costumes	Motley
Ko Ko	Robert Hatherley		
Yum Yum	Doreen Morrow		
Peep-Bo	Maud Daggett		
Pitti-Sing	Betty Morison		
The Mikado	William Murray		
Katisha	Mary Blake		



## 1968

### **The Sorcerer** September 27,28

Sir Marmaduke	Peter Maegraith	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Poindextre		Producer	Brian Phillips
Alexis	Roy Ramsden	Wigs	Elsie Dayne
Dr Daly	Ross Watson		
Notary	Jim Finlay		
John Wellington	Robert Hatherley		
Wells			
Lady Sangazure	Mary Blake		
Aline	Doreen Morrow		
Mrs Partlet	Arete Zantiotis		
Constance	Betty Morison		

### **Cox and Box** September 27,28

James John Cox	William Toohey	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
John James Box	Roy Ramsden	Producer	Brian Phillips
Sergeant Bouncer	Peter Clive	Costumes	Motley

## 1969

### **La Bohème** May 23,25,26

Marcel	John Woods	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Rudolph	Paul Ferris	Producer	Stephan Beinl
Colline	John Brosnan	Designer	Allan Lees
Schaunard	Malcolm Donnelly	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan
John Young	Kevin McGrath		Theatre Trust & Old Tote
Mimi	Rosalind Keene		Theatre Company
Musetta	Arete Zantiotis	Wigs	Mona workman
Alcindore	Kevin McGrath	Scenery builder	Hugh Baird
		Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black

### **The Gondoliers** November 19,21,22

Duke of Plaza-Toro	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Luiz	Richard Woodley	Producer	Brian Phillips
Don Alhambra	Russ Watson	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Marco Palmieri	Paul Ferris	Wigs	Elsie Dayne
Giuseppe	Austin Punch	Scenery	Theatre Craft
Palmieri	John Woods		
Antonio	Jim Finlay		
Francesco	Ray Thomas		
Giorgio	Tom Kennelly		
Duchess of Plaza-Toro	Mary Blake		
Casilda	Joan Shute		
Gianetta	Anne Potter		
Tessa	Dawn Orr		
Fiametta	Joan Briggs		
Vittoria	Kathy Watson		
Inez	Bernice Curtis		

## 1970

### Ruddigore

July 22,24,25

Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Richard Dauntless	John Wirth	Producer	Brian Phillips
Sir Despard Murgatroyd	William Murray	Wigs	Elsie Dayne
Old Adam	Peter Egan	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Goodheart			
Rose Maybud	Janice Hill		
Mad Margaret	Arete Zantiotis		
Dame Hannah	Mary Blake		
Zora	Joy Salan		
Sir Rupert	Doug Hawkes		
Sir Jasper	Ian Botton		
Sir Lionel	Herman Brett		
Sir Conrad	Tom Kennelly		
Sir Desmond	Wayne O 'Halloran		
Sir Gilbert	Graham Heap		
Sir Merryyn	Roy Ramsden		
Sir Roderic	James Finlay		

### Die Fledermaus

November 18,20,21

Adele	Joan Shute	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Rosalinda	Arete Zantiotis	Producer	John Milson
Alfred	John Brady	Designer	Allan Lees
Gabriel von Eisenstein	David Gray	Scenery	Theatre Craft and Allan Lees
Blind Falke	John Kempers	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
Frank	Ross Whatson		
Sally	James Finlay	Wigs	Mona Workman
Prince Orlofsky	Judith Gledhill	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Ivan	Lesley Stender		
Carikoni	William van der Graaf		
Lord Barrymore	Keith Gledhill		
Frosch	Tom Kennelly		
Guest artists from the Imperial Opera	John Milson		
	Carolyn Vaughan		
	John Wirth		

## 1971

<b>Carmen</b>		<b>May 22,28,29</b>	
Morales	Vincenzo Nesci	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Micaela	Rosalind Keene	Producer	John Milson
Zuniga	Peter Egan	Designer	Allan Lees
Don Jose	John Main	Scenery	Theatre Associates
Carmen	Meg Chilcott	Costumes	Allan Lees & Associates
Frasquita	Joan Shute		and Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
Mercedes	Arete Zantiotis	Stage Manager	Brian Phillips
Escamillo	Christopher Field	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Il Dancairo	Jim Finlay	Wigs	Mona Workman
Il Remendado	Kevin McGrath	Rehearsal Pianists	Linn Robertson
			Reg Black
			Barry Golding

<b>Patience</b>		<b>November 17,19,20</b>	
Colonel Calverley	James Finlay	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Major	Roger Howell	Producer	Brian Phillips
Murgatroyd		Costumes	Brian Phillips and Motley
Lieut. Duke of Dunstable	John Wirth	Scenery	Theatre craft
Reginald Bunthorne	Robert Hatherley	Wigs	Dayne
Archibald Solicitor	Austin Punch	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Lady Angela	Kevin Hewitt		
Lady Saphir	Joy Salan		
Lady Ella	Maud Daggett		
Lady Jane	Judith Gledhill		
Patience	Mary Blake		
	Roslyn Dansie		

## 1972

<b>HMS Pinafore</b>		<b>April 8.12.14.15</b>	
The Rt.Hon. Sir Joseph Porter	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Ralph Rackstraw	Ron Stevens	Producer	Brian Phillips
Josephine	Joan Shute	Scenery	Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
Captain Corcoran	Barry Strong	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Little buttercup	Mary Blake	Male Chorus	Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
Dick Deadeye	Peter Wirth	costumes	Theatre Trust
Bill Bobstay	William Murray	Wigs	Dayne
Carpenter's Mate	Max Orwin		
Cousin Hebe	Linn Robertson		
Midshipmite	Andrew Dodd		

## 1972

<b>Il Trovatore</b>		November 10,15,18	
Ferrando	John Brosnan	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Leonore	Valerie Hanlon	Producer	John Milson
	Arete Zantiotis	Production and	Allan Lees
Inez	Joy Salan	costume designer	
Count of Luna	Leonard Lee	Scenery	Built in Old Tote Ltd.
Manrico	Ron Stevens		workshop
Azucena	Lesley Stender	Costumes	Made by Rockdale Opera
Ruiz	Vincenzo Nesci		Wardrobe and Harlequin
Old Gypsy	Peter Brown	Wigs	Mona Workman
		Repetiteurs	Reg Black
			Barry Golding

## 1973

<b>Iolanthe</b>		April 7,11,13,14	
Lord Chancellor	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Earl Mountarat	Barry Strong	Producer	Brian Phillips
Earl Tolloller	John Wirth	Scenery designed	Ian Robinson
Private Willis	Peter Wirth	and painted by	
Strephon	Larry Davis	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Fairy Queen	Mary Blake	Wigs	Dayne
Iolanthe	Wendy Vercoe	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Phyllis	Joan Shute	Scenery supplied	Australian Elizabethan
Celia	Marie Guthrie	by	Theatre Trust
Leila	Kathleen Watson		
Fleta	Susan Gandy		
Page	Angela Linquist		

<b>Viennese Concert</b>		May 25,26	
Soprano	Valerie Hanlon	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Baritone	Leonard Lee	Producer	Leonard Lee
Tenor	John Wirth	Lighting	Frank Oakes
Narrator	John Milson	Piano	L Robertson
Solo Violin	William Hennessey		

<b>An Evening with Gilbert &amp; Sullivan</b>		July 28	
Mary Blake		Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Roslyn Dansie		Producer	Brian Phillips
Brian Phillips			
John Wirth			
Wendy Vercoe			
William Murray			



## 1973

<b>Così Fan Tutte</b>		November 17,21,23,24	
Ferrando	Ron Stevens	Musical Director	Barry Golding
Guglielmo	Roger Howell	Producer	John Thompson
Alfonso	Neil Easton	Designer	Allan Lees
Fiordiligi	Heather McMillan	Lighting	Peter Smith
Dorabella	Helga Willis		
Despina	Roslyn Dunbar		

## 1974

<b>The Pirates of Penzance</b>		April 19,20,26,27	
Major General	Austin Punch	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Stanley		Producer	Brian Phillips
Pirate King	Roger Howell	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Samuel	Martin Cooke	Wigs	Dayne
Frederick	Roy Ramsden	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Mabel	Roslyn Dansie	Lighting	Gary Stonehouse
Edith	Joy Salan	Scenery	Doug Kingsman
Kate	Jule Sassall		
Isabel	Susan Gandy		
Ruth	Mary Blake		
Sergeant of Police	John Colditz		

<b>Orchestral Concert</b>		May 24,25	
Soprano	Roslyn Dunbar	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Violin	Chou Liang		

<b>Opera Excerpts in concert</b>		September 27,28	
Arete Zantiotis		Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Kathy Watson			
John Garratt			
Barry Strong			
John Brosnan			

<b>Amahl and the Night Visitors staged and in costume</b>		September 27,28	
Amahl	Deidre McAlinden	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Mother	Arete Zantiotis	Producer	Gary Stonehouse
Kaspar	John Garratt	Choreography	Margaret Chapple
Melchior	Barry Strong	Lighting Operator	John Lewis
Balthazar	John Brosnan		
Page	Sue Gandy		
Dancers	Bodenwieser Dance Centre		

## 1974

Orpheus in the Underworld		November 15,16,22,23	
Calliope	Mary Blake	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Eurydice	Rosalind Keene	Producer	Brian Phillips
Orpheus	Sidney Richardson	Scenery	Brian Kingsman
Pluto	Gary Young	Lighting	Gary Stonehouse
Chloe	Faye Taylor	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Icarus	Martin Cooke	Choreography	Margaret Chapple
Venus	Kerrie O 'Connor		
Cupid	Susan Gandy		
Mars	Jim Finlay		
Jupiter	William Diamond		
Juno	Jule Sassall		
Diana	Van Wilson		
Mercury	Ron Stonestreet		
John Styx	Patrick Donnelly		

## 1975

The Gondoliers		April 18,19,23,26	
Duke of Plaza-Toro	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Luiz	Steven Johnson	Producer	Brian Phillips
Don Alhambra	Patrick Donnelly	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Marco Palmieri	John Garrett	Wigs	Elsie Dayne
Giuseppe Palmieri	Austin Punch	Scenery	Doug Kingsman
Antonio	Gus Oberg	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Annibale	Ralph Bott	Lighting	Gordon Evans
Giorgio	Peter O'Brian		
Duchess of Plaza-Toro	Mary Blake		
Casilda	Roslyn Dansie		
Gianetta	Kerrie O 'Connor		
Tessa	Petah Burns		
Fiametta	Kathy Watson		
Vittoria	Jule Sassall		
Inez	Bonita Surene		

## 1975

<b>La Perichole</b>		July 15,16,19,20	
La Perichole	Doreen Morrow	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Paquillo	Tony Clarke	Producer	Robert Hatherley
Don Andres de Ribiera	Bernard King	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Don Pedro de Hinoysa	Patrick Donnelly	Wigs	Elsie Dayne
Count of Pantellas	Bill Kirwin	Lighting	Peter Smith
Marquis de Tarapote	Ralph Bott	Scenery	Doug Kingsman
Old Prisoner	David Goddard	Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
Guadalena	Gwenda Hawkins	Choreography	Ross Hutchison
Estrella	Susan Gandy	Accompanist	Reg Black
Viginella	Bonita Surene		
Brambilla	Joy Salan		
Frasquinella	Jule Sassall		
Manuelita	Betty O'Reilly		
Ninetta	Lylie Broughton		
First Notary	Gus Oberg		
Second Notary	David Goddard		
The Turnkey	Alec Fisher		

<b>Lucia di Lammermoor</b>		November 21,22,28,29	
Norman	Gus Oberg	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Henry Ashton	Desmond Taylor	Producer	Brian Phillips
Bide the Bent	Laurence Miro	Rehearsal Pianist	Reg Black
Lucy Ashton	Yvonne Carroll	Wigs	Elsie Dayne
Alice	Lesley Stender	Design	Brian Phillips
Edgar	Gino Zancanaro	Scenery	Doug Kingsman
Arthur Bucklaw	Vincent Spano	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Assistant Stage Manager	Phillip Collins

## 1976

<b>Princess Ida</b>		April 23,24,30, May1	
King Hildebrand	Roger Howell	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Hilarion	John Wirth	Producer	Brian Phillips
Cyril	Roy Ramsden	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Florian	Austin Punch	Scenery	Doug Kingsman
King Gama	Robert Hatherley	Wigs	Dayne
Arac	Rhys Daniell	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Guron	Damien Beck	Assistant Stage	Philip Collins
Scynthus	Graham Allen	Manager	
Princess Ida	Doreen Morrow	Lighting	Peter Smith
Lady Blanche	Mary Blake	Rehearsal	Gabrielle Pusner
Melissa	Bronwyn Moore	Pianists	Joyce Billings
Lady Psyche	Kerrie O 'Connor		
Sacharissa	Shireen Jaworski		
Ada	Lylie Broughton		
Chloe	Jule Sassall		

<b>Don Pasquale</b>		July 24,28,30,31	
Don Pasquale	John Faassen	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Malatesta	Roger Howell	Producer	Robert Hatherley
Norina	Rosalind Keene	Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
Ernesto	John Wirth-Linquist	Wigs	Dayne
Notary	Patrick Donnelly	Rehearsal Pianist	Louise Scott
		Scenery	Doug Kingsman
		Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Lighting	Peter Smith

<b>Samson and Delilah</b>		November	
Samson	John Main	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Delilah	Lesley Stender	Producer	Brian Phillips
High Priest	Roger Howell	Ass. Producer	Gary Stonehouse
Abimelech	Patrick Donnelly	Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
Aged Hebrew	Rhys Daniell	Wigs	Dayne
Philistine	Gus Oberg	Rehearsal Pianist	Louise Scott
Messenger		Scenery	Doug Kingsman
		Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Assistant Stage	Philip Collins
		Manager	
		Lighting	Peter Smith



## 1977

<b>The Sorcerer</b>		<b>April 15,16,22,23</b>	
Sir Marmaduke	Damon Beck	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Poindextre		Producer	Brian Phillips
Alexis	John Wirth-Linquist	Choreography	
Dr Daly	Patrick Donnelly	Scenery	Prompt
Notary	Rhys Daniell	Costumes	Brian Phillips
John Wellington	Robert Hatherley	Wigs	Dayne
Wells		Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Lady Sangazure	Mary Blake	Assistant Stage Manager	Philip Collins
Aline	Roslyn Dansie	Lighting	Peter Smith
Mrs Partlett	Kathy Watson	Rehearsal	Louise Scott
Constance	Bronwyn Moore	Pianists	Joyce Billings
Hercules	Timothy Lisle		
<b>Trial by Jury</b>			
Learned Judge	Robert Hatherley		
The Plaintiff	Roslyn Dansie		
The Defendant	John Wirth-Linquist		
Council for the Plaintiff	Damon Beck		
Usher	Rhys Daniell		
Foreman of the Jury	Gus Oberg		
Associate	Colin Semmler		
Drunken Lady	Jo Chalmers		
<b>Robinson Crusoe</b>		<b>July 20,21,23,24</b>	
Robinson Crusoe	Robert Gard	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Edwige	Doreen Morrow	Producer	Robert Hatherley
Sir William	Peter Avery	Choreography	Ross Hutchinson
Crusoe		Scenery	Prompt
Lady Crusoe	Margaret Winkler	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
Suzanne	Petah Burns		Dayne
Toby	Bill Kirwin	Wigs	
Man Friday	Judy Glen	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Jim Cocks the cannibal chef	Robert Gay	Stage Assistants	Susan Gandy
			Colleen Higgins
		Lighting	Peter Smith
		Rehearsal	Joyce Billings
		Pianists	Don Marks

## 1977

<b>La Traviata</b>		<b>November 18,19,25,26</b>	
Violetta	Yvonne Laki	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Flora Bervoix	Wendy Oliver	Producer	Brian Phillips
Alfred Germont	Paul Ferris	Choreography	Lyn Cherie
George Germont	Vadim Laptev	Scenery	Prompt
Baron Duphol	William Toohey	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan
Marquis	Peter Binning		Theatre Trust
D'Obigny		Wigs	Dayne
Doctor Grenvil	Rhys Daniell	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Gaston Letorieres	Jeffrey Lock	Assistant Stage	Philip Collins
Annina	Marie-Louise Valkenburg	Manager	
Joseph	Anthony Adams	Lighting	Peter Smith
		Accompanists	Don Marks
			Joyce Billing

## 1978

<b>The Yeomen of the Guard</b>		<b>April 14,15,21,22</b>	
Sir Richard	Tony Adams	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Cholmondeley		Producer	Brian Phillips
Colonel Fairfax	John Wirth=Linguist	Scenery	Prompt
Sergeant Meryll	Rhys Daniell	Costumes	Motley and Brian Phillips
Leonard Meryll	Gus Oberg	Wigs	Dayne
Jack Point	David Goddard	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Wilfred Shadbolt	John Colditz	Assistant Stage	Philip Collins
Headman	Harry Maidment	Manager	
1 <sup>st</sup> Yeoman	Gus Oberg	Lighting	Peter Smith
2 <sup>nd</sup> Yeoman	Colin Mettam	Accompanist	Don Marks
1 <sup>st</sup> Citizen	Colin Semmler		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Citizen	Rod Russell		
Elsie Maynard	Wendy Oliver		
Phoebe Meryll	Sylvia Byron		
Dame Carruthers	Mary Blake		
Kate	Bronwyn Moore		
	Lylie Broughton		

## 1978

### The Gypsy Baron

July 26,28,29,30

Sandor Barinkay	Andrew Reid	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Saffi	Jennifer Lindfield	Producer	David Goddard
Kalman Szupan	John Colditz	Choreography	Lyn Cherie
Arsena	Kerry O Connor	Scenery	Prompt
Mirabella	Penelope Bruce	Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
Ottokar	Colin Clark		Trust
Conte Carnero	Bill Toohey	Wigs	Dayne
Czipra	Bonita Surene	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Graf Peter	Anthony Adams	Lighting	Gary Stonehouse
Homonay		Accompanist	Don Marks
Istvan	Ralph Bott		
Pali	Gus Oberg		
Etelka	Jo Chalmers		
Mihaly	Colin Mettam		
Irma	Pippa Power		
Ilka	Robyn Bevan		
Principal Dancer	Lyn Cherie		

### Manon

November 17,18,25,26

Manon Lescaut	Yvonne Laki	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton
Chevalier de	Howard Spicer	Producer	Brian Phillips
Grieux		Scenery	Prompt
Guillot de	George Carter	Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
Morfontaine		Wigs	Dayne
De Bretigny	Rhys Daniell	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Poussette	Wendy Oliver	Lighting	Peter Smith
Javotte	Lylie Broughton	Accompanist	Don Marks
Rosette	Sylvia Byron		
Lescaut	Bill Toohey		
The Count	John Colditz		
Guardsman	Gus Oberg		
Gambler	Coli Mettam		
Maid	Shireen Jaworski		

## 1979

### The Mikado

April 20,21,27,28

Nanki Pooh	John Wirth	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton M.B.E.
Pooh Bah	Patrick Donnelly	Producer	Brian Phillips
Pish Tush	Tony Adams	Producers	Betty Morrison
Ko Ko	David Goddard	Assistant	
Yum Yum	Jeni Martin	Scenery	Prompt
Peep-Bo	Maggi Guy	Lighting	Peter Smith
Pitti-Sing		Costumes	Brian Phillips
The Mikado	John Colditz	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Katisha	Mary Blake	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Ko-Ko's Page	Timothy Lyle		

## 1979

<b>La Belle Hélène</b>		July 25,27,28,29	
Venus	Noeline Eldridge	Musical Director	John Leeman
Juno	Esmae Sugerman	Producer	John Faassen
Minerva	Lorraine George	Costumes	Anne Lidstone
Mercury	Gus Oberg	Scenery	Michael O 'Kane
Paris	Gino Zancanaro	Lighting	Gary Stonehouse
Leonia	Noeline Eldridge	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Cressida	Esmae Sugerman	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Calchas	Greg Martin		
Philocomus	Gus Oberg		
Orestes	Robert Gay		
Helen Queen of Sparta	Gaye MacFarlane		
Nesta	Lorraine George		
Ajax	Tony Adams		
Archilles	Wallace Carroll		
Agamemnon	Peter Avery		
Menelaus	Robert Kempt		

<b>Tosca</b>		November 16,17,23,24	
Tosca	Kerrie O'Connor	Musical Director	Cedric Ashton M.B.E.
Cavaradossi	John Main	Producer	Brian Phillips
Scarpia	William Toohey	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust
Angelotti	Ryhs Daniell		
Sacristan	Patrick Donnelly		
Sciarrone	Tony Adams	Scenery	Prompt
Spoletta		Wigs	Dayne
Shepherd Boy	Wendy Oliver	Lighting	Gary Stonehouse
		Stage Managers	Gus Oberg
			Robert Kempt
		Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks

## 1980

### Ruddigore

April 11,12,18,19

Sir Ruthven	David Goddard	Musical Director	John Leeman
Murgatroyd		Producer	Brian Phillips
Richard	John Wirth	Scenery	Prompt
Dauntless		Costumes	Brian Phillips
Sir Despard	John Colditz	Wigs	Dayne
Murgatroyd		Lighting	Peter Smith
Old Adam	Robert Kempt	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Goodheart		Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Rose Maybud	Jeni Maybud	Manager	
Mad Margaret	Carleen Kelemen	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Dame Hannah	Mary Blake		
Zora	Elizabeth Newton		
Ruth	Sally Thurlow		
Sir Rupert	Herman Brett		
Sir Jasper	Bob Watson		
Sir Lionel	Robert King		
Sir Norman	Alec Fisher		
Sir Conrad	Colin Semmler		
Sir Desmond			
Sir Gilbert	Theo Janssen		
Sir Merryyn	Bernard David		
Sir Roderic	William Toohey		

### Naughty Marietta

July 23,25,26,27

Fanchon	Kristy Dickson	Musical Director	John Leeman
Nanette	Michelle Leeman	Producer	Brian Phillips
Felice	Robyne Bevan	Scenery	Prompt
Marietta	Jeni Martin	Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
Captain Dick	Bill Toohey		Trust
Warrington		Wigs	Dayne
Etienne Grandet	Stephen Yalouris	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Lieutenant-	Tony Adams	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Governor		Manager	
Grandet		Lighting	Peter Smith
Silas	Robert Kempt	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Lizette	Elizabeth Newton		
Rudolfo	Gregory Dwyer		
Adah	Deborah Winterburn		
Florenz	Ralph Bott		
Graziella	Jo Chalmers		
Indian	Herman Brett		
Gambler	Bill Fraser		
Bidder	Ian Lucas		
Dice Players	Alec Fisher		
	Bob King		



## 1980

<b>Faust</b>		<b>November 21,22,28,29</b>	
Faust	John Main	Musical Director	John Leeman
Mephistopheles	Alan Light	Producer	Brian Phillips
Margarita	Yvonne Laki	Lighting	Peter Smith
Wagner	Tony Adams	Stage Manager	Robert Kempt
Valentine	Trevor Brown	Assistant Stage	Ralph Bott
Siebel	Deborah Winterburn	Manager	
Martha	Judith Fay-Taylor	Stage Assistants	Gus Oberg
			Colin Mettam
		Scenery	Prompt
		Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
			Trust
		Wigs	Dayne and Workman
		Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks

## 1981

<b>Iolanthe</b>		<b>April 8,10,11,12</b>	
Lord Chancellor	Christopher Hamilton	Musical Director	John Leeman
Earl Mountarat	Lionel Bidwell Brown	Producer	Brian Phillips
Earl Tolloller	Alan Brookes	Lighting	Peter Smith
Private Willis	John Colditz	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Strephon	John Main	Scenery	Prompt
Fairy Queen	Judith Fay-Taylor	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Iolanthe	Petah Burns	Wigs	Dayne
Phyllis	Jeni Martin	Accompanist	Don Marks
Celia	Lylie Broughton		
Leila	Michelle Leeman		
Fleta	Kerry Banwell		
Page	Evana Bevan		

## 1981

### Merrie England

July 22,24,25,26

Earl of Essex	Trevor Brown	Musical Director	John Leeman
Sir Walter Raleigh	Roy Ramsden	Producer	Lesley Stender
Walter Wilkins	Gregory Martin	Lighting	Peter Smith
Silas Simkins	David Adams	Scenery	Prompt
Long Tom	Barry Strong	Costumes	A.E.T. Trust
	Ian Sappey	Wigs	Mona Workman
Big Ben	Ken Wells	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Queen Elizabeth	Sylvia Clarke	Accompanist	Don Marks
Bessie	Romola Tyrrell		
Trockmorton			
May Queen	Janet Walker		
Queens Fool	George Carter		
A Lord	Gus Oberg		
A Butcher	Bill Frazer		
A Baker	Allan Brookes		
A Tinker	Tony Adams		
A Tailor	David White		
1 <sup>st</sup> Royal Page	Jo Chalmers		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Royal Page	Sylvia Jacobs		
1 <sup>st</sup> Soldier	Colin Mettam		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Soldier	Alec Fisher		
Kate	Julie Dalton		
Inn-Keeper's	Edna Caldwell		
Wife			
Lady in Waiting	Jeannette Courtney		

### Madame Butterfly

November 20,21,27,28

Madam Butterfly	Kerrie O'Connor	Musical Director	John Leeman
Suzuki	Sylvia Clarke	Producer	Ronal Jackson
B.F. Pinkerton	Gino Zancanaro	Lighting	Peter Smith
Kate Pinkerton	Michelle Leeman	Scenery	Conservatorium Opera
Sharpless	Trevor Brown		School
Goro	Paul Coolahan	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Prince Yamadori	Ken Wells	Wigs	Dayne
The Bonze	Michael Bell	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Commissioner	David Tarpin	Accompanist	Don Marks
Registrar	Colin Mettam		
Trouble	Sandra McLean		

## 1982

<b>H.M.S Pinafore</b>		<b>April</b>	
The Rt.Hon. Sir	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	John Leeman
Joseph Porter		Director	Robert Hatherley
Ralph Rackstraw	Alan Brookes	Producer	Robert Hatherley
Josephine	Jeni Martin	Scenery	Prompt
Captain Corcoran	Barry Strong	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Little Buttercup	Lesley Stender	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Dick Deadeye	Rhys Daniel	Lighting	Peter Smith
Bill Bobstay	Ken Wells	Accompanist	Don Marks
Carpenter's Mate	Patrick Togher	Ensemble	Patricia Sall
		Mistress	
Cousin Hebe	Jacqueline Kensett-Smith	The Ship's Cat	Alan Highfield

<b>Hansel and Gretel</b>		<b>July 21,23,24,25</b>	
Peter	Stephen Yalouris	Musical Director	John Leeman
Gertrude	Bronwyn Powell	Producer	Brian Phillips
Hansel	Gail Robertson	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Gretel	Romola Tyrrell	Choreography	Simone Young
Dew Fairy	Yvonne Laki	Stage Assistants	Gus Oberg
The Witch	Silvio Rivier		Colin Mettam
		Accompanist	Don Marks

<b>Il Trovatore</b>		<b>November 19,20,26,27</b>	
Ferrando	Alan Hendrie	Musical Director	John Leeman
Leonore	Maureen Wright	Producer	Ronal Jackson
Inez	Bronwyn Powell	Designer	Colin Williams
Count of Luna	Neville Wilkie	Scenery	Conservatorium of Music
Manrico	Jon Sydney		NSW & Wollongong
Azucena	Lesley Stender		Conservatorium
Ruiz	Patrick Joseph	Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
Old Gypsy	David Tappin		Trust
		Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Lighting	Peter Smith
		Accompanist	Don Marks

## 1983

<b>Pirates of Penzance</b>		<b>April 22,23,29,30</b>	
Major General	Carl Erle	Musical Director	John Leeman
Stanley		Producer	Brian Phillips
Pirate King	Greg Martin	Choreography	
Samuel	Ken Wells	Scenery	Prompt
Frederick	Ian Delaney	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Mabel	Romola Tyrrell	Wigs	Dayne
Edith	Kirsty Hayden	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Kate	Kerry Banwell	Lighting	Peter Smith
Isabel	Sally Thurlow	Accompanist	Don Marks
Ruth	Lesley Stender		

## 1983

Lilac Time		July 27,29,30,32	
Mrs Weber	Olga Hodel	Musical Director	John Leeman
Mrs Kraus	Barbara Thompson	Producer	Robert Hatherley
Andreas Brun	Rhys Daniel	Choreography	Patricia Sall
Ferdinand Binder	David White	Scenery	Australian Opera
Piccolo	Troy Ayers	Costumes	Australian Elizabethan
Mitzi Zell	Jeni Martin		Trust
Litzi Zell	Gwenda Hall	Wigs	Dayne
Fritzi Zell	Michelle Lansdowne	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Johan Vogel	Colin Gill	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Moritz von	Jim Finlay	Manager	
Schwind		Lighting	Alan Manning
Ludwig Kuppel	David Tappin	Accompanist	Don Marks
Von Schober	Barry Strong		
Franz Schubert	Stephen Wheatley		
Otto Zell	Howard Courtney		
Rosl	Fiona Beattie		
Mrs Zell	Barbara Thompson		
Adelina Tallani	Arete Zantiotis		
Novotny	Kevin Hewitt		
Count Scharntorff	Sidney Lambert		

La Boheme		November 18,19,25,26	
Rudolph	Gino Zancanaro	Musical Director	John Leeman
Marcel	Neville Wilkie	Producer	Colin Williams
Colline	Stephen Bennett	Designer	Colin Williams
Schaunard	Trevor Brown	Scenery and	Australian Opera
Benoit	Rod Lander	Props	
Mimi	Maureen Wright	Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
Musetta	Carolle Enkelmann		Trust
Parpignol	Patrick Joseph	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Alcindore	Rod Lander	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
		Manager	
		Lighting	Peter Smith
		Accompanist	Don Marks

## 1984

### The Gondoliers

April 25,27,28,29

Duke of Plaza-Toro	Robert Hatherley	Musical Director	John Leeman
		Producer	Brian Phillips
Luiz	Lionel Bidwell-Brown	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Don Alhambra	John Colditz	Scenery	Prompt
Marco Palmieri	Patrick Togher	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Giuseppe Palmieri	Stephen Yalouris	Wigs	Dayne
Antonio	Ralph Bott	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Giorgio	Bill Frazer	Assistant Stage Manager	Gus Oberg
Duchess of Plaza-Toro	Mary Blake	Lighting	Peter Smith
Casilda	Roslyn Dansie		
Gianetta	Romola Tyrrell		
Tessa	Gail Robertson		
Fiametta	Kirsty Hayden		
Vittoria	Michelle Lansdowne		
Giulia	Lylie Broughton		
Inez	Cheryl Landers		

### I Pagliacci

July 25,27,28,29

Tonio	Trevor Brown	Musical Director	John Leeman
Canio	Jon Sydney	Producer	Brian Phillips
Beppe	David Foley	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Nedda	Christa Leahmann	Scenery	Prompt
Silvio	Stephen Yalouris	Costumes	Brian Phillips
		Wigs	Dayne
		Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Assistant Stage Manager	Gus Oberg
		Manager	
		Lighting	Peter Smith

### Cavalleria Rusticana

July 25,27,28,29

Turiddu	Jon Sydney	Musical Director	John Leeman
Santuzza	Leslee Mandich	Producer	Lesley Stender
Mamma Lucia	Patricia Whitbread	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Alfio	Stephen Yalouris	Scenery	Prompt
Lola	Gail Robertson	Costumes	Elizabethan Trust
			Feather and Finery
		Wigs	Dayne
		Stage Manager	Gus Oberg
		Assistant Stage Manager	Philip Colins
		Manager	
		Lighting	Peter Smith



## 1984

<b>Barber of Seville</b>		November 16,17,23,24	
Count Almaviva	Jonathon Welch	Musical Director	John Leeman
Figaro	Stephen Yalouris	Producer	John Milson
Dr. Bartolo	Geoffrey Crook	Designer	Colin Williams
Rosina	Deborah Riedel	Lighting	Peter Smith
Marcellina	Judith Fay-Taylor		
Basilio	John Brosnan	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Ambrosius	Graham Dodge	Continuo	June Tyzack
Fiorello	Daniel Sumegi	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Officer	Daniel Sumegi		
Notary	Roger Clark		

## 1985

<b>Patience</b>		April 9,20,26,27	
Colonel Calverley	Stephen Yalouris	Musical Director	John Leeman
Major	Ralph Bott	Producer	Brian Phillips
Murgatroyd		Scenery	Prompt
Duke Dunstable	Roy Ramsden	Costumes	Motley
Reginald	David Goddard	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Bunthorne		Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Archibald	Patrick Togher	Manager	
Grosvenor		Lighting	Adam Smith
Solicitor	Arthur Haddad	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Lady Saphir	Michelle Lansdown		
Lady Ella	Fay Sugar		
Lady Jane	Patricia Whitbread		
Patience	Liza Rintel		

<b>The Count of Luxembourg</b>		July 24,26,27,28	
Count Rene	Robert Gard O.B.E.	Musical Director	John Leeman
Prince Basil	Eric Thornton	Producer	Robert Hatherley
Princess Stasa	Patricia Whitbread	Choreography	Ross Hutchison
Armand Brissard	Stephen Yalouris	Scenery	Prompt
Angele Didier	Maureen Howard	Costumes	Abba Dabba
Juliette Vermand	Petah Burns	Wigs	Dayne
Mentschikoff	Barry Strong	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Pavlovich	Andrew Overend	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Pelegrin	Dean Sinclair	Manager	
		Lighting	Adam Smith
		Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks

## 1985

<b>Rigoletto</b>		<b>November 22,23,29,30</b>	
The Duke	Jon Sydney	Musical Director	John Leeman
Rigoletto	Neville Wilkie	Producer	Brian Phillips
Gilda	Liza Rintel	Scenery	Prompt
Sparafucile	Constantine Mavridis	Costumes	Elizabethan Theatre
Borsa	Patrick Togher		Trust
The Countess	Michelle Leeman	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Ceprano	Ralph Bott	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Marullo	Stephen Yalouris	Manager	
Count	Stephen Bennett	Lighting	Adam Smith
Monterone		Rehearsal	Don Marks
Giovanna	Esme Sugerman	Pianists	Joyce Billing
A page	Michelle Leeman		
Maddalena	Gail Robertson		

## 1986

<b>Princess Ida</b>		<b>April 18,19,25,26</b>	
King Hildebrand	Daniel Sumegi	Musical Director	John Leeman
Hilarion	Patrick Togher	Producer	Brian Phillips
Cyril	Barry Ryan	Scenery	Prompt
Florian	Matthew Glasgow	Costumes	Brian Phillips
King Gama	Robert Hatherley	Wigs	Dayne
Arac	Alan Hendrie	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Guron	Ken Carlin	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Scynthus	Ralph Bott	Manager	
Princess Ida	Cheryl McGuinness	Lighting	Adam Smith
Lady Blanche	Patricia Whitbread	Rehearsal	Don Marks
Melissa	Michelle Lansdown	Pianists	Joyce Billing
Lady Psyche	Penelope Paige Clark		
Sacharissa	Leonie Bell		
Ada	Jo Chalmers		
Chloe	Kerry Banwell		

## 1986

White Horse Inn		July 19,25,26,27	
Kathi	Lylie Broughton	Musical Director	John Leeman
Karl	Gavin Mitford	Producer	Lesley Stender
Forester	Rudi Voss	Choreography	Denise Little
Courtier	Nick Mueck	National Dance	Rudi Voss
Franz	Sue Dayes	Co-ordinator	
Leopold	John Main	Assistant to	Margaret Hayter
Josepha	Jeni Martin	Producer	
Steamer Captain	Jo Chalmers	Properties	Margaret Hayter
Bridegroom	Colin Mettam	Costumes	Abba Dabba
Bride	Heather Coombs		Hurstville Light Opera Co
John Ebenezer	Carle Erle		Lesley Stender
Ottoline	Penelope Paige Clarke	Lighting	James Bruce
Valentine Sutton	Patrick Togher	Set Design	James Bruce
Sigismund Smith	Dean Sappey	Set construction	Prompt Scenery
Professor Hinzl	Dennis Fisher	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Gretel	Janet Mayfield	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Mayor	Robert O 'Shea	Manager	
Mayors secretary	Lorraine Crane	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Emperor	Peter Ryan		
Ketterl	Paul Vandyk		
Landlord	Ken Carlin		

Don Giovanni		November 21,22,28,29	
Don Giovanni	Constantine Mavridis	Musical Director	John Leeman
Donna Anna	Cheryl McGuinness	Producer	Brian Phillips
Donna Elvira	Frances Chambers	Scenery	Prompt
Commandant	Gregory Scott	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Ottavio	James Bonnefin	Wigs	Dayne
Leporello	Geoffrey Crook	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Masetto	Stephen Yalouris	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Zerlina	Romola Tyrell	Manager	
		Lighting	Adam Smith
		Assistant to	Peter Splinter
		Producers	
		Rehearsal	Don Marks
		Pianists	June Tyzack

## 1987

### La Rondine

April 24,25,26

Magda	Patricia Anne Johnston	Musical Director	John Leeman
Rambaldo	Daniel Sumegi	Producer	Brian Phillips
Ruggero	John Main	Scenery	Prompt
Prunier	Ian Delaney	Costumes	Elizabethan Trust
Lisette	Penelope Clarke	Wigs	Dayne
Perichaud	Ralph Bott	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Suzy	Gail Robertson	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
Bianca	Susan Gandy	Manager	
Yvette	Nerelle Secomb	Lighting	Adam Smith
Gobin	Roger Dornan	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Crebillon	Bill Frazer		
Lolette	Kerry Banwell		
Georgette	Fay Taylor		
Gabriella	Allison Roberts		

### Yeomen of the Guard

July 18,19,24,25

Sir Richard	Keith Binns	Musical Director	Geoff Kennedy
Cholmondeley		Producer	Robert Hatherley
Colonel Fairfax	David Lewis	Choreography	Patricia Saille
Sergeant Meryll	Barry Strong	Scenery Design	Robert Hatherley
Leonard Meryll	David White	Costumes	Harlequin
Jack Point	Dean Sinclair	Wigs	Dayne
Wilfred Shadbolt	Peter Ryan	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Headman	Brian Vazey	Assistant Stage	Gus Oberg
1 <sup>st</sup> Yeoman	Ted Evans	Manager	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Yeoman	Charles Matthews	Lighting	Adam Smith
Elsie Maynard	Jeni Martin	Accompanist	Don Marks
Phoebe Meryll	Petah Burns		
Dame Carruthers	Lesley Stender		
Kate	Nellie Nahlous		

### Samson and Delilah

November 20,21,27,28

Samson	John Main	Musical Director	John Leeman
Delilah	Lesley Stender	Producer	Brian Phillips
High Priest	Timothy Dufore	Choreography	Denyse Little
Abimelech	Geoffrey Crook	Scenery	Prompt
Ancient Hebrew	Daniel Sumegi	Costumes &	Brian Phillips
Philistine	Roger Dornan	Design	
Messenger		Wigs	Dayne
1 <sup>st</sup> Philistine	Colin Semmler	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
2 <sup>nd</sup> Philistine	Ralph Bott	Assistant Stage	Petah Burns
Boy	Tanya Mitford	Manager	
		Lighting	Adam Smith
		Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks

## 1988

### The Mikado

April 22,23,29,30

Nanki Poo	Patrick Togher	Musical Director	John Leeman
Poo Bah	John Colditz	Producer	Robert Hatherley
Pish Tush	Edward Grieve	Assistant Director	Patrician Sall
Ko Ko	Robert Hatherley	Scenery	Prompt
Yum Yum	Jeni Martin	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Peep-Bo	Marie Tyrrell	Wigs	Dayne
Pitti-Sing	Michele Lansdown		G&S Society
The Mikado	Barry Strong	Makeup Design	Peter Ryan
Katisha	Patricia Whitbread	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Assistant Stage Manager	Marley Fitzpatrick
		Lighting	Phillipa Wooten
		Backstage Crew	Craig Neil
			Bill Arthur
			Kay McLeod
		Accompanist	Don Marks

### The Student Prince

July 23,24,29,30

Karl Franz	Patrick Togher	Musical Director	John Leeman
	David Lewis	Producer	Lesley Stender
Kathie	Toni Nunn	Choreography	Denyse Little
Lutz	Robert Hatherley	Scenery	Prompt
Von Mark	Peter Ryan	Costumes &	Harlequin
Dr Engle	Neville Grave	Design	Abba Dabba
Princess	Meryl Lynam		Toni Stephens
Stephanie		Wigs	Mavier Brown
Captain Tarnitz	Peter Farmer	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Duchess	Margaret Hayter	Assistant Stage Manager	Colin Mettam
Countess	Lorraine Craine	Manager	
Hubert	Rickard Roach	Lighting	Jim Bruce
Gretchen	Susan Marquet	Accompanist	Don Marks
Detleff	George Carter		
Lucas	Keith Binns		
Asterberg	Bill Frazer		
Ruder	Dennis Fisher		
Joseph	Francis Young		
Arnheim	Colin Mettam		
Secretaries	Bill Frazer		
	Francis Young		
	Lorraine Craine		
	Esther Perrett		



## 1988

<b>Lucia di Lammermoor</b>		November 18,19,25,26	
Edgardo	James Bonnefin	Musical Director	John Leeman
Normano	David Lewis	Producer	Brian Phillips
Enrico Ashton	Timothy Du Fore	Choreography	Denyse Little
Raimondo	Daniel Sumegi	Scenery	Prompt
Lucia Ashton	Toni Nunn	Costumes &	Brian Phillips
Alina	Gail Robertson	Design	
Arturo Bucklaw	William Amer	Wigs	Elsie Dayne
		Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Lighting	Adam Smith
		Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks

## 1989

<b>Trial by Jury</b>		April 22,23,28,29	
Learned Judge	Peter Ryan	Musical Director	John Leeman
The Plaintiff	Jeni Martin	Producer	Lesley Stender
The Defendant	Neville Grave	Scenery	Prompt
Council for the Plaintiff	Timothy Scott	Costumes	Abba Dabba
Usher	Neil Litchfield	Wigs	Harlequin
Foreman of the Jury	Colin Semmler	Dayne	
Drunken Lady		Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Associate	Dawn Plasto	Lighting	Jim Bruce
First Bridesmaid	Robert Conduit	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
	Sheila Hosie		
<b>The Sorcerer</b>		April 22,23,28,29	
Sir Marmaduke	Neil Litchfield	Musical Director	John Leeman
Poindextre		Producer	Lesley Stender
Alexis	Roy Ramsden	Scenery	Prompt
Dr Daly	Dean Sinclair	Costumes	Abba Dabba
Notary	Peter Ryan		Harlequin
John Wellington Wells	Robert Hatherley	Wigs	Dayne
Lady Sangazure	Bonita Surene	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Aline	Jeni Martin	Lighting	Jim Bruce
Mrs Partlet	Fay Sugar	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Constance	Susan Gandy		
Page	Marley Fitzpatrick		

## 1989

### The Merry Widow

July 22,23,28,29

Baron Zeta	Lester Morris	Musical Director	John Leeman
Valencienne	Meryl Lynam	Producer	John Main
Count Danilovitch	Tony Morgan	Choreography	Denyse Little
Anna Glawari	Sussane Towers	Scenery	Prompt
Camille de	John Main	Costumes	Harlequin
Rosillon		Wigs	Dayne
Viscomte	Colin Gill	Stage Manager	Lyn Morris
Cascada		Lighting	Richard Bransley
Raoul de St	Robert Chard	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Brioche			
Bogdanowitsch	Brett Crocker		
Sylviane	Lynette Davis		
Kromlow	Ian Johnson		
Olga	Joanne Martin		
Pritschitsch	Bruce Kirby		
Praskowia	Beverly Emms		
Njegus	Geoff Sirmaj		

### Carmen

November 17,18,24,25

Morales	Timothy Scott	Musical Director	John Leeman
Micaela	Louise Hudson	Producer	Brian Phillips
Zuniga	Peter Avery	Choreography	Denyse Little
Don Jose	Howard Spicer	Scenery	Prompt
Carmen	Gail Robertson	Costumes	Harlequin
Frasquita	Genevieve Killalea	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Mercedes	Hilary Oliver	Assistant Stage	Margaret Hayter
Escamillo	Timothy Du Fore	Manager	
Il Dancairo	Greg Dwyer	Lighting	Adam Smith
Il Remendado	Will Amer	Rehearsal	Don Marks
Lillas Pastia	Ken Carlin	Pianists	Prue Gibbs
			Audrey Oertel

## 1990

### Pirates of Penzance

April 21,22,27,28

Major General	Geoff Sirmaj	Musical Director	John Leeman
Stanley		Producer	Brian Phillips
Pirate King	Peter Avery	Choreography	Denyse Little
Samuel	Timothy Scott	Scenery	Prompt
Frederick	David Adams	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Mabel	Jane Edwards	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Edith	Hilary Oliver	Assistant Stage	Margaret Hayter
Ruth	Patricia Whitbread	Manager	
Sergeant	John Colditz	Lighting	Adam Smith
		Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks

## 1990

### Showboat July 21,22,25,27,28

Wendy	Michael Withall	Musical Director	John Leeman
Pete	Barry Strong	Director	Robert Hatherley
Steve	James Dixon	Choreography	Patricia Sall
Queenie	Barbara Thompson	Set Designer	Robert Hatherley
Parthy Ann	Pamela Hawken	Scenery	Prompt
Hawks		Costumes	Craig Lincoln
Cap 'n Andy	David Goddard		Bankstown Theatrical
Ellie	Susan Gandy		Society
Frank	Dean Semmler	Wigs	Mavia Brown
Julie	Debbi Wells	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Gaylord Ravenal	W.P. Brennan	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Vallon	Peter Ryan	Manager	
Magnolia	Jane Edwards	Lighting	Adam Smith
Joe	David Ashton	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Backwoodsman	Peter Ryan		
Jeb	Michael Withall		
Sideshow Barker	Michael Ryan		
Landlady	Allana Jarman		
Jake	Jim Anderson		
Man	James Dixon		
Man with Guitar	Michael Vickery		
Charlie	Michael Withall		
Lottie	Joanne Martin		
Dollie	Lyn Davis		
Drunken Man	Peter Ryan		
Kim (child)	Katrina Lewins		
Kim (adult)	Vanessa Manche		
	Jane Edwards		

### La Traviata November 16,17,23,24

Violetta Valery	Wendy Dixon	Musical Director	John Leeman
Alfredo Germont	Grazio di Paola	Producer	Lesley Stender
Georgio Germont	Donald Lister	Choreography	Greer di Luca
Flora Bervoix	Leslee Mandich	Scenery	Prompt
Baron Duphol	Timothy Scott		Derick Wilson
Marquis	Damien Whitely	Costumes	Harlequin
D'Obigny		Props	Australian Opera
Doctor Grenvil	Rhys Daniell		Guild Theatre
Gaston Letorieres	Stuart Skelton	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Annina	Nancy Hoskins	Lighting	James Bruce
Joseph	Roger Dornan	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Servant	Michael Murray		

## 1991

### HMS Pinafore

April 20,21,26,27

The Rt.Hon. Sir	Terry Ryan	Musical Director	John Leeman
Joseph Porter		Producer	Denise Little
Ralph Rackstraw	Stuart Skelton	Choreography	Denise Little
Josephine	Louise Hudson	Production	Margaret Hayter
Captain Corcoran	Timothy Scott	Co-ordinator	
Little Buttercup	Patricia Whitbread	Scenery	Prompt
Dick Deadeye	Chris Manfield	Special Effects	Michael Finger
Bill Bobstay	Bruce Giovanelli		David Brown
Carpenter's Mate	Michael Murray	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Cousin Hebe	Rebecca Gale		Hurstville Light Opera
Midshipmite	Nigel Ubrihien	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Lighting	Adam Smith
		Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks

### The Land of Smiles

July 20,21,26,27

Count Lichtenfels	Barry Strong	Musical Director	John Leeman
Countess Roheim	Fay Sugar	Producer	Lesley Stender
Colonel Bloch	John Milligan	Chorus Master	Michael Dale
Captain Gustl von	Timothy Scott	Choreography	Kylie Cox
Ploetz		Scenery	Prompt
Lisa	Helena Sindelar		Derick Wilson
Franz	Colin Mettam	Costumes	Harlequin
Lieutenant Rudi	Geoff Sirmal		Hurstville Light Opera
Lore	Sarah Keen	Wigs	Mavia Brown
Toni	Heather Lees	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Franzi	Barbara Chenoweth	Lighting	James Bruce
Prince Sou-Chong	Stuart Skelton	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Fu Li	Greg Taylor		
Prince Tschang	Jane Rees		
Chi-Fu	John Milligan		
Wong Tao	Greg Taylor		
The Brides	Sarah Keen		
	Fay Sugar		
	Barbara Chenoweth		

### Tosca

November 22,23,29,30

Tosca	Christine Hore	Musical Director	John Leeman
Cavaradossi	Howard Spicer	Producer	Brian Phillips
Scarpia	Trevor Brown	Scenery	Prompt
Angelotti	David Aston	Costumes	Harlequin
Sacristan	Michael Dale	Wigs	Dayne
Sciarrone	Timothy Scott	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Spoletta	Michael Warby	Lighting	Adam Smith
Cleric	Ken Carlin	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Shepherd Boy	Sarah Keen		

## 1992

<b>Iolanthe</b>		<b>April 22,24,25,26</b>	
Lord Chancellor	David Adams	Musical Director	John Leeman
Earl Mountararat	Donald Lister	Producer	Lesley Stender
Earl Tolloller	Bill Palmer	Scenery	Prompt
Private Willis	David Aston	Costumes	Abba Dabba
Strephon	Lionel Bidwell Brown		Hurstville light Opera
Fairy Queen	Lesley Stender		Gilbert & Sullivan Society
Iolanthe	Michelle Lansdown	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Phyllis	Helena Sindelar	Lighting	Jim Bruce
Celia	Johanna Swift	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Leila	Katherine Cassidy		

<b>Viktoria and Her Hussar</b>		<b>July 18,19,24,25</b>	
Stefan Koltay	Howard Spicer	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Janzci	Richard Roach	Producer	Denyse Little
Sentry	Ian Daniel	Production	Margaret Hayter
Viktoria	Jeni Martin	Coordinator	
Tokeromo	Roger Dornan	Orchestration	David Trainer
Loanano	Bob Chard	Scenery	Prompt
John Carling	Barry Strong	Costumes & wigs	Hurstville Light opera Co.
Miki	George Pavlov		Brian Phillips
Riquette	Jennifer Anstee		Mrs Little
Count Ferry	Tim Scott		Stepping Out Creative
O Miki San	Lyn Davis		Costumes
O Lia San	Louise Hudson	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
High Priest	Ian Daniel	Lighting	Denis Cale
O Lia San Mother	Jo Chalmers	Dance &	Sonia Mitford
L Lia San Father	Colin Mettam	Ensemble	Tanya Mitford
		Coordinator	
Webster	Bob Chard	Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks
Embassy	Lyn Davis		
Secretary			
Russian Officer	Bryan Lewis		
Maid	Lylie Broughton		

<b>Faust</b>		<b>November 20,21,27,28</b>	
Faust	Howard Spicer	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Mephistopheles	David Aston	Producer	Brian Phillips
Margarita	Inara Molinari	Scenery	Prompt
Wagner	Jonathon McAuley	Lighting	Adam Smith
Valentine	Dallas Watts	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Siebel	Catherine Hassard	Props	Australian Opera
Martha	Judith Fay Taylor	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Rehearsal Pianist	Don Marks



## 1993

### The Gondoliers

April 17,18,23,24

Duke of Plaza-Toro	David Goddard	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Luiz	Dean Sinclair	Producer	Robert Hatherley
Don Alhambra	Barry Strong	Choreography	Patricia Sall
Marco Palmieri	Michael Martin	Set Designer	Robert Hatherley
Giuseppe	David Brunsdon	Scenery	Prompt
Palmieri		Costumes	Brian Phillips
Antonio	Tony Pike	Wigs	Ascot
Anibale	Frank Hardy	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Francesco		Lighting	Adam Smith
Giorgio	Colin Mettam	Accompaniste	Tamone Jamieson
Duchess of Plaza-Toro	Patricia Whitbread		
Casilda	Leslie Martin		
Gianetta	Naomi Fulton		
Tessa	Rebecca Wallace		
Fiametta	Lorraine Lee		
Vittoria	Shireen Jaworski		
Guilia	Leonie Aitkin		
Inez	Rebecca Fergus		

### The Chocolate Soldier

July 17,18,23,24

Nadina	Barbara Newton	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Aureelia	Erica Witt	Director	Denise Little
Mascha	Nancy Hoskings	Choreography	Denise Little
Bumerli	Lionel Bidwell Brown	Set Designer	Terry Byrne
Kasimir Popoff	Hilton Wickham	Costumes	Caper Costumes
Alexius Spiridoff	Rickard Roach		D and M Theatrical
Captain	Bryan Lewis	Wigs	Mavia Brown
Massarkroff		Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Stephen	George Pavlov	Assistant Stage	Tanya Mitford
Katinka	Lynette Davis	Manager	
		Lighting	Denise Cale

### L'Elisir D'Amore

November 19,21,26,27

Gianetta	Cinzia Montresor	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Nemorino	Howard Spicer	Producer	Brian Phillips
Adina	Teresa Rayner	Scenery	Prompt
Belcore	David Aston	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Dulcamara	Tim Collins	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Assistant Stage	Alison Nash
		Manager	
		Lighting	Adam Smith
		Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp

## 1994

<b>Patience</b>		<b>April 23,24,29,30</b>	
Colonel Calverley	Ralph Bott	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Major	Hilton Wickham	Producer	John Trainor
Murgatroyd		Lighting	Adam Smith
Lieut. Duke of Dunstable	Michael Warby	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
Reginald	David Goddard	Scenery	Prompt
Bunthorne		Props	Harry Maidment
Archibald	Nicholas Davison	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Lady Angela	Rebecca Fergus	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Lady Saphir	Leonie Butler		
Lady Ella	Esther Perrett		
Lady Jane	Shelley C Hayton		
Patience	Leslie Martin		

<b>Die Fledermaus</b>		<b>July 16,17,22,23</b>	
Falke	Brett Allcock	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Alfred	Jonathon Welch	Producer	Robert Hatherley
Adele	Alinta Carroll	Choreography	Neroli Moore
Rosalinda	Louise Page	Set Construction	Brian Tucker (Prompt)
Gabriel von Eisenstein	Lionel Bidwell Brown	Set Draughting	Prasid Tan
Blind	David Goddard	Costumes	John Tilbrook
Colonel Frank	Guennadi Doubinski	Stage Manager	Harry Maidment
		Assistant Stage Manager	Peter Hine
Prince Orlofsky	Gabrielle Morton	Lighting	Adam Smith
Ivan	Sean Saliba	Makeup advisor	Betty Morrison
Isa	Lynette MacDonald	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Frosch	Sean Kramer		
Special Guests	Ron Stevens		
	John Wood		
	Dennis Olsen		
	Robert Gard		

## 1994

The Tales of Hoffman		November 18,20,25,26	
Lindorf	David Aston	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Luther	Brian Green	Producer	Brian Phillips
Hoffman	Howard Spicer	Choreography	Avril Vorsay
Nicklausse	Catherine Hassard	Set Construction	Brian Ticker (Prompt)
Spalanzani	Brent Allcock	Costume	Arthur Haddad
Cochenille	Michael Warby	Assistant	
Coppelius	David Aston	Makeup Adviser	Betty Morrison
Olympia	Liza Rintel	Stage Manager	Peter Hine
Guilletta	Suzy Corcoran	Lighting	Adam Smith
Pittichinaccio	Michael Warby	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Schlemil	Brian green		
Dapertutto	David Aston		
Antonia	Bianca Teremi		
Crespel	Brent Allcock		
Frantz	Michael Warby		
Dr. Miracle	Michael Warby		
Antonia's Mother	Shelley Hayton		
Stella	Candida Teremi		
Muse of Poetry	Catherine Hassard		

## 1995

Ruddigore		April 1,2,7,8	
Zorah	Fay Sugar	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Ruth	Vivien Faler	Director/Designer	Brian Phillips
Dame Hannah	Shelley Hayton	Director's	Betty Morrison
Rose Maybud	Alinta Carroll	Assistants	Arthur Haddad
Robin Oakapple	Brent Allcock	Scenery	Brian Tucker (Prompt)
Old Adam	Ralph Bott	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Richard	John De Voy	Make-up Advisor	Betty Morrison
Dauntless		Lighting	Adam Smith
Mad Margaret	Michelle Agius	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Sir Despard	Brian Green		
Murgatroyd			
Sir Roderic	Guennadi Doubinsky		
Murgatroyd			

## 1995

<b>Kismet</b>		July 22,29,30	
Iman	Tim Keegan	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Muezzine	John de Voy	Producer	Ralph Bott
	Alex Hopkins	Choreography	Sandra Seymour
	Tim Keegan	Scenery	Brian Tucker (Prompt)
	Mark Gardiner	Costumes	Ross Hinds
Omar Khayyam	Brian green		Janet Chaseling
Marsinah	Lisa Cooper	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Wazir	Peter Ryan		
Lalume	Deborah Wells		
Princesses of	Avril Vorsay		
Abbabu	Mary Alin Serendero		
	Katherine Rowell		
Caliph	John de Voy		
Prosecutor	Greg Cornwell		
Princess	Mary de Bono		
Zubbediya			
Princess Samahris	Sandra Seymour		

<b>Il Trovatore</b>		November 17,19,24,25	
Ferrando	Richard Brattan	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Leonore	Camille Mercep	Director/Designer	Brian Phillips
Inez	Sally Corcoran	Scenery	Brian Tucker (Prompt)
Count of Luna	Guennadi Doubinsky	Lighting	Adam Smith
Manrico	Lionel Bidwell-Brown	Stage Manager	Brian Ticker
Azucena	Judith Fay-Taylor	Assistant Stage	Alison Nash
Ruiz	Michael Warby	Manager	
Old Gypsy	Roger Dornan	Repetiteur	Megan Evans
	Robert Hampshire	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp

## 1996

<b>The Yeomen of the Guard</b>		April 19,21,26,27	
Sir Richard	Andrew Young	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Cholmondeley		Director	Ralph Bott
Colonel Fairfax	Joshua Cohen	Choreography	
Sergeant Meryll	Richard Brattan	Scenery	Brian Tucker (Prompt)
Leonard Meryll	Greg Taylor	Costumes	Brian Phillips
Jack Point	Alistair Cowie		Hurstville Light Opera Co
Wilfred Shadbolt	Wallace Carrol		Motley
1 <sup>st</sup> Yeoman	Andrew Ingegnari	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
2 <sup>nd</sup> Yeoman	Ross James	Assistant Stage	Alison Nash
1 <sup>st</sup> Citizen	Ian Roach	Manager	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Citizen	John Tully	Lighting	Adam Smith
Elsie Maynard	Rachael Cunningham	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Phoebe Meryll	Michelle Agius		
Dame Carruthers	Catherine Wilson		
Kate	Bianca Teremi		

## 1996

### Orpheus in the Underworld

July 19,21,26,27

Eurydice	Janette M Walker	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Cupid	Jennifer Dunn	Directors	Ralph Bott
Mars	Richard Brattan		Brian Phillips
John Styx	Andrew Young	Choreography	Denise Little
Public Opinion	Margaret Andrews	Scenery	Brian Tucker (Prompt)
	Russell	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Pluto	John De Voy	Assistant Stage	Alison Nash
Chloe	Caroline Nahlous	Manager	
Venus	Marisa Mariani	Props	Harry Maidment
Morpheus	Shireen Jaworski	Makeup	Betty Morrison
Jupiter	Alistair Cowe	Lighting	Adam Smith
Juno	Rebecca Fergus	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Diana	Catherine Hassard		
Mercury	Alan Dun		
Aurora	Heather Lees		
Nox	Sue Capon		
Vesta	Narelle Burke		
Iris	Emily Tuon		
Flora	Fay Sugar		
Hebe	Sara Watts		
Minerva	Virginia Kidd		
Nike	Lyn Davis		
Fortuna	Mary-Alin Serendero		
Vulcan	Ken Carlin		
Poseidon	John Markey		
Hymen	Ian Roach		
Sol	Peter O 'Brian		
Terminus	Roger Dorman		
Hypnus	Sindey Abeyenardene		

### Roméo et Juliette

November 22,24,29,30

Tybalt	Greg Taylor	Musical Director	Bransby Byrne
Count Paris	John De Voy	Artistic	Brian Phillips
Count Capulet	Andrew Young	Director/Producer	
Juliette	Meagan Gaffney-Ward	Scenery	Brian Tucker (Prompt)
Gertrude	Rebecca Fergus	Props	Colin Mettam
Romeo	Maximilian Naguit	Makeup	Betty Morrison
Mercutio	Brent Allcock	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Stephano	Catherine Hassard	Assistant Stage	Emily Tucker
Gregory	Alan Dun	Manager	
The Duke / Friar	Richard Brattan	Lighting	Adam Smith
Lawrence		Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp



## 1997

### Pirates of Penzance

April 11,13,18,19

Major General Stanley	Andrew Young	Musical Director	Paul Holmes
Pirate King	John de Voy	Director	Ralph Bott
Samuel	Ross James	Scenery	Brian Tucker (Prompt)
Frederick	Timothy Keegan	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Mabel	Jennifer Dunn	Assistant Stage Manager	Emily Tucker
Edith	Nicole Smeulders	Props	Colin Mettam
Isabel	Caroline Nahlous	Lighting	Peter Smith
Ruth	Rebecca Fergus	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Kate	Vanessa Brown		
Sergeant	Rick Hume		

### Gypsy Baron

July 18,20,25,26

Count peter	Wallace Carroll	Musical Director	Louise Clark
Hominay		Producer	Ralph Bott
Lodovico Camero	Tim Scott	Scenery	Prompt Scenery
Sandor Barinkay	Craig Glenroy Patterson	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Kalman Zsupan	John de Voy	Assistant Stage Manager	Emily Tucker
Arlena	Rachael Cunningham	Manager	
Mirabella	Deborah Johnson	Lighting	Peter Smith
Ottakar	Craig Curran	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Czipra	Desiree Van Loon		
Saffi	Lisa Cooper		
Pali	Angie Rega		
Mihaly	John Junna		
Andras	Ian Roach		
Matyas	Tony Intartaglia		
Martin	Ken Carlion		
Irma	Barbara Sanders		
Ilka	Anneliese Kelvin		

### La Sonnambula

November 21,23,28,29

Lisa	Jennifer Dunn	Musical Director	Louise Clark
Allessio	Andrew Young	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Amina	Meegan Gaffney-Ward	and Producer	
Teresa	Catherine Hassard	Choreography	Arthur Haddad
Notary	Roger Dornan	Scenery	Prompt Scenery
Elvino	Maximillian Naguit	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
The Count	Richard Brattan	Assistant Stage Manager	Emily Tucker
		Lighting	Peter Smith
		Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp

## 1998

<b>The Mikado</b>		April 24,26, May 1,2	
Nanki Pooh	Daniel Madigan	Musical Director	David Trainer
Pooh Bah	Richard Brattan	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Pish Tush	Tim Scott	and Producer	
Ko Ko	Carl Erle	Choreography	Arthur Haddad
Yum Yum	Janette Walker	Scenery	Prompt Scenery
Peep-Bo	Donna Cain	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Pitti-Sing	Nicole Smeulders	Lighting	Peter Smith
The Mikado	Andrew Young	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Katisha	Catherine Hassard		

<b>The Merry Widow</b>		July 24,26,31 August 1	
Merry Widow	Cherly MacDonald	Musical Director	Paul Holmes
Count Danilo	John de Voy	Director	Arthur Pickering
Baron Zeta	David Goddard	Personal	Lynne Beach
Valencienne	Jennifer Dunn	Assistant to	
Camille de	Daniel Madigan	Director	
Rosillon		Scenery	Prompt
Njegus	Rickard Roach	Costumes	I.P.A.C.
Kromow	Jon Prowse	Choreographer	Denise Little
Olga	Wendy de Beyer	Stage Manager	Lee Abrahart
Sylvane	Joan Green	Lighting	Peter Smith
Vicomte Cascada	Sebastien Maury	Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
Raoul de St.	Tristan Everett		
Brioche			
Praskowia	Jo Chalmers		

## 1998

<b>Carmen</b>		November 20,22,27,28	
Morales	Tim Scott	Musical Director	Alan Foster
Micaela	Jennifer Dunn	Director	Brian Phillips
Zuniga	Peter McKenna	Choreography	Denise Little
Don Jose	Craig Patterson	Scenery	Prompt
Carmen	Catherine Hassard	Lighting	Adam Smith
Frasquita	Deborah Cheethan	Stage Manager	Lee Abrahart
Mercedes	Marisa Mariani	Rehearsal Pianist	Peter Aberg
Escamillo	Dallas Watts		
Il Dancairo	Wallace Carroll		
Il Remendado	Tristan Everett		
Lilias Pastia	Ken Carlin		

## 1999

<b>Lucia di Lammermoor</b>		April 23,25,30, May 1	
Edgardo	Craig Patterson	Musical Director	Alan Foster
Enrico Ashton	Jose Carbo	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Normanno	Paul Stephen	Scenery	Prompt
Lucia Ashton	Meagan Gaffney=Ward	Costumes	
Alisa	Phoenicia Johnson	Wigs	
Raimondo	Richard Brattan	Stage Manager	Lee Abrahart
Arturo Bucklaw	Lindsey Marshall	Assistant Stage Manager	Colin Mettam
		Lighting	Adam Smith
		Rehearsal Pianist	Peter Aberg

<b>Princess Ida</b>		July 30, August 1,6,7	
King Hildebrand	Brett Allcock	Musical Director	Alan Foster
Hilarion	Lindsey Marshall	Director	Brian Phillips
Cyril	Tristan Everett	Scenery	Prompt
Florian	Tim Scott	Stage Manager	Lee Abrahart
King Gama	Carl Erle	Assistant Stage Manager	Colin Mettam
Arac	Peter McKenna	Manager	
Guron	Cameron Glass	Lighting	Adam Smith
Scynthius	Stuart Annels		
Princess Ida	Lisa Cooper		
Lady Blanche	Catherine Hassard		
Melissa	Christina Burgess		
Lady Psyche	Amber Shuhya		
Sacharissa	Lisa Thomson		
Ada	Heather Lees		
Chloe	Jillian Benson		

## 1999

<b>The Great Waltz</b>		November 19,21,26,27	
Organ Grinder	John Bevin	Musical Director	Alan Foster
1sr Composer	Ron Kuczynski	Artistic Director	Brent Allcock
2 <sup>nd</sup> Composer	Bryan Dennis	Rehearsal	Peter Aberg
3 <sup>rd</sup> Composer	Roger Dornan	Pianists	Joel Sarakula
4 <sup>th</sup> Composer	Stuart Annels		Pip Lewis
Karl Ebeseder	Tony Girdler	Lighting	Adam Smith
Katie	Maria Valercou	Stage Manager	Lee Abrahart
Hirsch	Paul McLeod	and Sound	
Dommayer	John de Voy	Design	
Resi Ebeseder	Natasha Hunter	Back Stage Crew	Colin Mettam
Helene Vernet	Meera Bell-Thomson		Michael Sheridan
Captain Elliot	Robert Sutcliffe	Set Design	Brent Allcock
Johann Strauss	Robert Hoffman		Prompt
Jnr		Costumes	Brian Phillips
Gustav Hartkopf	Wallace Carroll	Costume	Arthur Haddad
Johann Strauss	Tim Collins	Coordinators	Anne Kintominas
Snr		Assistant Stage	Ron Kuczynski
Fritz	Bill Linton	Manager	
Clerk	Roger Dornan	Scenery & Props	Prompt
Dreschler	Peter McKenna	Choreographer	Marilyn Shock
Ernst	Bernard David		
Frua	Robyne Bevan		
Haberwaetzel			
Prince Ling Ching	John Tse		
Doorman	Michael Sheridan		

## 2000

<b>The Barber of Seville</b>		April 28,30, May 5.6	
Count Almaviva	Daniel Madigan	Musical Director	Brett Weymark
Figaro	Jose Carbo	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Dr. Bartolo	Brent Allcock	Rehearsal Pianist	Pip Lewis
Rosina	Christina Burgess	Lighting	Joseph Mercurio
Basilio	Richard Brattan	Stage Manager	Lee Abrahart
Berta	Shelley Hayton	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Ambrosius	Arthur Haddad	Manager & Props	
Fiorello	Andrew Heggie	Scenery	Prompt Scenery

<b>HMS Pinafore</b>		July 21,23,28,29	
The Rt.Hon. Sir	Brent Allcock	Musical Director	Brett Weymark
Joseph Porter		Artistic Director	Ralph Bott
Ralph Rackstraw	Randall Stewart	Repetiteur	Pip Lewis
Josephine	Janette Walker	Lighting	Joseph Mercurio
Captain Corcoran	Wallace Carroll	Stage Manager	Lee Abrahart
Little Buttercup	Jean Callaghan	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Dick Deadeye	Tony Morgan	Manager & Props	
Bill Bobstay	David Greco		
Carpenter's Mate	Stuart Annels		
Cousin Hebe	Helen Sherman		

## 2000

<b>Andrea Chenier</b>		November 17,19,24,25	
Major Domo	Stuart Annels	Musical Director	Alan Foster
Carlo Gerard	Jose Carbo	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Contessa di Coigny	Catherine Hassard	and Designer	
Maddalena di Coigny	Lisa Cooper	Assistant to Director	Edward Gadaev
Bersi	Desiree van Loan	Repetiteur	Pip Lewis
Fleville	Craig Deitroch	Lighting	Adam Smith
Andrea Chenier	Craig Glenroy-Patterson	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
L 'Abbe	Wayne Miller	Assistant Stage Manager	Colin Mettam
Mathieu	Peter McKenna	Scenery	Prompt
L 'Incredibile	Daniel Madigan		
Roucher	Carl Olsen		
Madelon	Catherine Hassard		
Rogert Albert	Eliot Simpson		
Dumas	Sholto MacPherson		
Fouquier-Tinville	Stuart Annels		
Schmidt	Craig Deitroch		

## 2001

<b>Don Pasquale</b>		April 28,28, May 4,5	
Don Pasquale	Richard Brattan	Musical Director	Brett Weymark
Malatesta	John de Voy	Producer &	Brian Phillips
Norina	Rachael Cunningham	Artistic Director	
Ernesto	Daniel Madigan	Repetiteur	Pip Lewis
Notary	David Greco	Pianist	Estella Roche
		Lighting	Andrew Binns
		Stage Manager	Brian tucker
		Assistant Stage Manager	Colin Mettam
		Scenery	Brian Phillips



## 2001

<b>Auf Wiedersehen Lulu</b>		<b>July 20,21,28,29</b>	
Animal	Brent Allcock	Musical Director	George Ellis
Tamer/Wiegel		Director &	Sally Greenwood
Lulu	Marissa Denyer	Designer	
Schigol	Tony Girdler	Choreography	Cathy Sargent
Hoffman/ Prosecutor/Ripper	John Burfitt	Assistant to Director	Beth Koorey
Margot	Mary Julian	Assistant Musical	Darren Postema
Otto	Tony Morgan	Director	
Schon/Captain		Repetiteurs	Pip Lewis
Countess	Meera Bell-Thomson		Estella Roche
Geschwitz		Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Dieter	Paul McLeod	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Bernard	Ron Kuczynski	Manager/Props	
Madam Hall	Yvonne Powditch	Lighting	Andrew Binns
Vespermann	Ken Noad	Set Building	Brian tucker
/Judge		Scenic Artwork	Brian Tucker
Brigitte	Chantelle Gregory		Colin Mettam
Becker / Old Polly	Angela Lewis	Set Design	Christopher Hamilton
Archer / Publican	John Bevan	Concept	
Elsie	Maria McDougall		

<b>Cavalleria Rusticana</b>		<b>November 17,18,23,24</b>	
Alfio	Jose Carbo	Musical Director	Tobias Foscett
Turiddu	Stephen Oehme	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Santuzza	Desiree Van Loan	& Designer	
Lucia	Shelley Hayton	Chief Repetiteur	Estella Roche
Lola	Phoenicia Johnson	Repetiteur	Pip Lewis
		Lighting	Andrew Binns
		Stage Manager	Brian tucker
		Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
		Manager & Props	
		Scenery	Brian Tucker

<b>I Pagliacci</b>	
Tonio	Jose Carbo
Caniuo	Robert Penwill
Nedda	Lisa Cooper
Peppe	Daniel Madigan
Silvio	John De Voy

## 2002

<b>The Gondoliers</b>		April 27,28, May 3,4	
Duke of Plaza-Toro	Simon Ward	Musical Director	Tobias Foscett
Luiz	Brad Cooper	Director	Ralph Bott
Don Alhambra	Tony Morgan	Artistic Designer	Brian Phillips
Marco Palmieri	Lindsey Marshall	Chief Repetiteur	Estella Roche
Giuseppe Palmieri	Craig Scott	Lighting	Andrew Binns
Antonio	David Visentin	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Francesco	Robert Conduitt	Assistant Stage Manager & Props	Colin Mettam
Giorgio	Damian Blackburn	Scenery	Brian Tucker
Annibale	Ron Kuczynski		
Duchess of Plaza-Toro	Deborah Johnson		
Casilda	Jane Wang		
Gianetta	Phoenicia Johnson		
Tessa	Elizabeth Hylton		
Fiametta	Harriet Moir		
Vittoria	Chantal Sneddon		
Giulia	Chantell Gregory		
Inez	Alexandra Lymberi		
	Robyne Bevan		
<b>Martha</b>		July 20,21,26,27	
Lady Harriet		Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Nancy	Meryl Southwell	Director	Howard Spicer
Lionel	Lindsey Marshall	Artistic Designer	Brian Phillips
Plunkett	Peter McKenna	Chief Repetiteur	Estella Riche
Sir Tristram	Murray Dahm	Lighting	Andrew Binns
Sheriff	Vicken Mamou	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Maid	Rae Levien	Assistant Stage Manager & Props	Colin Mettam
Maid	Elizabeth LaCamera	Scenery	Brian Tucker
Maid	Karen Brand		
Farmers Wife	Elizabeth Farrant		
Servant	David Visentin		
Servant	Michael Canaris		
Servant	John Tse		
<b>La Favorita</b>		November 16,17,22,23	
Leonora di Guzman	Desiree Van Loan	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Inez	Jane Wang	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Fernando	Michael Warby	Repetiteur	Maria Okunev
Don Gasparo	David Vincentin	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Alfonso XI	Simon Militano	Assistant Stage Manager & Props	Colin Mettam
Baldassare	James Homann	Scenery	Brian Tucker
		Lighting	Adam Smith

## 2003

<b>The Sorcerer</b>		<b>April 5,6,12,13</b>	
Sir Marmaduke	Ralph Bott	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Poindextre		Director	Howard Spicer
Alexis	Michael Warby	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Dr Daly	Leigh Ladd	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Notary	Dion Khlentzos	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
John Wellington	Kevin Hewitt	Manager	
Wells		Lighting Designer	Katrina Midgley
Lady Sangazure	Victoria Wallace	Flyman	Ken Carlin
Aline	Katherine Langford	Scenery Assistant	Mike Little
Mrs Partlet	Nicole Smeulders		
Constance	Sally Harrison		
Hercules	John Tate		

<b>La Périchole</b>		<b>July 19,20,26,27</b>	
La Perichole	Phoenicia Johnson	Musical Director	Peter McCallum
Paquillo	Lindsey Marshall	Director	Ralph Bott
Don Andres de	Tony Morgan	Rehearsal	Estella Roche
Ribiera		Pianists	Noortje Trump
Don Pedro de	Murray Dahm	Music Copyist	David Trainer
Hinoysa		Lighting Designer	Katrina Midgley
Count of	Peter-John Layton	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Pantellas		Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Marquis de	David Vicentin	Manager	
Tarapote		Flyman	Ken Carlin
Guadalena	Maria Okunes	Scenery Assistant	Mike Little
Estrella	Chantal Sneddon		
Brambilla	Maria Okunev		
Frasquinella	Eleanor McPhee		
Manuelita	Meryl Southwell		
Ninetta	Chantal Sneddon		
First Notary	Dion Khlentzos		

<b>Mignon</b>		<b>November 15.16.22.23</b>	
Mignon	Meryl Southwell	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Wilhelm Meister	Michael Warby	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Philine	Leonie Bell	Artistic Designer	Brian Phillips
Lothario	James Homann	Orchestration	David Trainer
Laertes	Peter-John Layton	Lighting Designer	Daniela D'Onofrio
Giarno	Vicken Mamourian		Katrina Midgley
Frederick	Nicole Smeulders	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Gypsy Dancer	Simon McKoy	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
		Manager & Props	
		Flyman	Ken Carlin
		Scenery Assistant	Mike Little
		Rehearsal Pianist	Estella Roche

## 2004

<b>The Yeomen of the Guard</b>		<b>April 17,18,24,25</b>	
Phoebe Meryll	Stacey Wilson	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Wilfred Shadbolt	James Homann	Director	Petah Burns
2 <sup>nd</sup> Yeoman	Owen Ryan	Designer and	Brian Tucker
Dame Caruthers	Deborah Johnson	Stage Manager	
Sergeant Meryll	Murray Dahm	Lighting	ESP Management
Colonel Fairfax	Peter-John Layton	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Leonard Meryll	David Vicentin	Manager & Props	
Colonel Fairfax	Peter-John Layton	Flyman	Ken Carlin
The Lieutenant	Patrick Wood	Scenery Assistant	Mike Little
Elsie Maynard	Leonie Bell		
Jack Point	Simon Ward		
1 <sup>st</sup> Yeoman	Robert Conduit		
Kate	Rae Levien		
First Citizen	Michael Canarls		
Headsman	Ron Kuczynski		

<b>Paganini</b>		<b>July 19,20,26,27</b>	
Princess Anna	Anita Kyle	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Elisa		Director	Judith Rowling
Paganini	Michael Warby	Choreography	Laurie Tancred
Bella	Rae Levien	Designer & Stage	Brian Tucker
Pimpinelli	Leigh Ladd	Manager	
Prince Felice	Murray Dahm	Scenery Assistant	Mike Little
Bartucci	Peter-John Layton	Lighting	ESP Management
Bartolo	Illio Vrckoski		
/Innkeeper			
Marco/Vivaldi	Arlen Fahey-Leigh		
Ricardo/Marciano	Ron Kuczynski		
Emanuele	John Bevan		
Filippa	Betty Konta		
Anita	Jillian Benson		
Foletta	Christine Berry		
Flower Seller	Chantel Sneddon		
De la Place	Amber Griffiths		
Count Hedouville	Illio Vrckoski		
Captain Clermont	Ian Roach		
Corallina	Robyne Bevan		
Beppo	John Tse		
Old Gobbo	Ken Carlin		
Severo	Bernard David		

## 2004

<b>Attila</b>		November 13,14,20,21	
Uldino	Peter-John Layton	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Attila	Murray Dahm	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Odabella	Deborah Johnson	Orchestration	David Trainer
Ezio	Ivo Busato	Designer & Stage	Brian Tucker
Foresto	Richard Feint Lane	Manager	
Leone	Vicken Mamourian	Scenery Assistant	Mike Little
		Lighting Designer	Adam Smith
		Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
		Manager & Props	
		Flyman	Ken Carlin

## 2005

<b>Patience</b>		April 16,17,23,24	
Colonel Calverley	Douglas McRae	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Major	Lincoln Matrozis	Director	Ralph Bott
Murgatroyd		Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Lieut. Duke of	Peter-John Layton	Designer & Stage	Brian Tucker
Dunstable		Manager	
Reginald	Jon Smith	Lighting Designer	Walter Van Poppel
Bunthorne		Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Archibald	Alan Dun	Manager & Props	
Solicitor	Arthur Haddad	Flyman	Ken Carlin
		Scenery Assistant	Mike Lillie
Lady Angela	Anne-Maree Haines		
Lady Saphir	Amanda Wagg		
Lady Ella	Ann Merchant		
Lady Jane	Deborah Johnson		
Patience	Sharon Old		

<b>The Merry Widow</b>		July 23,24,30,31	
Anna	Leah Thomas	Musical Director	Peter Shepherd
Danilo	Douglas McRae	Producer	Judith Rowling
Baron Zeta	Ian Johnson	Choreographer	Laurie Tancred
Valencienne	Angela Lewis	Artistic Director	Brian Phillips
Camille	Costa Latsos	Orchestration	David Trainer
Njegus	Arthur Haddad	Designer & Stage	Brian Tucker
St Brioch	Gaetano Bonfante	Manager	
Cascade	Dennis Foote	Lighting Designer	Walter Van Poppel
Kromow	Orry de Paola	Flyman	Ken Carlin
Olga	Chantal Sneddon	Scenery Assistant	Mike Little
Bogdanovitch	John Bevan		
Pritsch	Lincoln Matrozis		
Sylvia	Vivien Boosz		
Praskovia	Robyne Bevan		



## 2005

<b>The Merry Wives of Windsor</b>		November 19,20,26,27	
Mrs Ford	Leonie Bell	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Mrs Page	Deborah Johnson	Director	Ron Popenhagen
Mr Ford	Randall Stewart	Designer and	Brian Tucker
Mr Page	Peter Hunt	Stage Manager	
Sir John Falstaff	Murray Dahm	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Anne Page	Claire Egan	Chorus	John Bevan
Fenton	Peter John Layton	Coordinator	
Slender	Gaetano Bonfante	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Dr. Cajus	Alan Dun	Manager& Props	
Mistress Quickly	Robyne Bevan	Scenery Assistant	Mike Lillie
Robin	Darius Popenhagen	Costumes	Robyne Bevan
		Mask Designer	Ron Popenhagen

## 2006

<b>The Pirates of Penzance</b>		April 22,23,29,30	
Major General	Simon Ward	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Stanley		Director	Jon Smith
Pirate King	Garry Pollack	Designer & Stage	Brian Tucker
		Manager	
Sergeant of	Peter Hunt	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Police		Manager	
Samuel	Jon Smith	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Frederick	John Komadina	Flyman	Ken Carlin
Mabel	Sharon Olde	Wardrobe	Ralph Bott
Edith	Una Reynolds		Brian Phillips
Isabel	Makare Farina		Michael Warby
Kate	Jacqueline Suttor		James Worner
Ruth	Deborah Johnson	Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Assistant	
		Costumes	Bankstown Theatrical Society

<b>La Belle Hélène</b>		July 22,23,29,30	
Calchas	David Hidden	Musical Director	Vincent Cologuri
Philocoem	Patrick Sherwood	Director	Ralph Bott
Helen	Narelle Yeo	Designer & Stage	Brian Tucker
Bacchis	Laura Noack	Manager	
Orestes	Chantal Sneddon	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Parthenis	Wendy Falker	Manager	
Leona	Jessica Walls	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Paris	Peter-John Layton	Flyman	Ken Carlin
Ajax I	David Commisso	Scenery Assistant	Mike Lillie
Ajax II	Benjamin Loomes	Costumes	Pauline Paull
Archilles	Claudio Sgaramella		Bankstown Musical Society
Menelaus	Jon Smith		Brian Phillips
Agamemnon	Richard Brattan		Janet Chaseling
		Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Assistant	

## 2006

<b>Don Giovanni</b>		<b>November 18,19,25,26</b>	
Don Giovanni	Garry Pollack	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Donna Anna	Kerry Nicholson	Director	Murray Dahm
Donna Elvira	Camille Maria Mercep	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
Commendatore	Richard O'Neill	Stage Manager	
Ottavio	David Visentin	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Leporello	Peter Hunt	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Masetto	Callan Dellar	Manager	
'Zerlina	Regina Daniel	Flyman	Ken Carlin
		Costumes	Michael Warby
			Pauline Paul
			James Worner
		Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Assistant	

## 2007

<b>The Mikado</b>		<b>April 21,22,28,29</b>	
Nanki Poo	Peter-John Layton	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Poo Bah	Richard Mitchell	Director	Ralph Bott
Pish Tush	Leigh Ladd	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
		Stage Manager	
Ko Ko	Jon Smith	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Yum Yum	Regina Daniel	Lighting	Ian Gerrard
Peep-Bo	Andria Bingham	Assistants	Leesa Hazlewood
Pitti-Sing	Victoria Greenaway	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
The Mikado	Richard O'Neill	Manager	
Katisha	Rhonda Walczak	Flymaster	Ken Carlin
Go-To	Amos McKegg	Carpenter	Mike Lillee
KO-Ko's Page	Bronte Hampson	Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Mistress	
		Costumes	Judith Rowling
			Brian Phillips
		Wig hire	Arcadians Theatre Group

## 2007

<b>Die Fledermaus</b>		<b>August 4,5,11,12</b>	
Adela	Sharon Olde	Musical Director	Vincent Cologuri
Rosalinda	Tanith Bryce	Director/Producer	Narelle Yeo
Freddy	Ken Berry	Assistant to	Vanessa Van Valin
Eisenstein	Benjamin Loomes	Director	
Blind	Leigh Ladd	Artistic Director	Ralph Bott
Harry Falke	Adam Player	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
Frank	David Hidden	Stage Manager	
Bill Orlofsky	Clarissa Foulcher	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Inez	Lexi Hutton	Lighting desk	Liza Hazelwood
Ed/Refugee/Frosch	Alison Griffiths	Assistant Stage Manager	Colin Mettam
		Flymaster	Ken Carlin
		Carpenter	Mike Lillee
		Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Mistress	
		Costumes	Narelle Yeo
		Rehearsal Pianists	Keith Mitchell
			Noortje Tromp
<b>L'Elisir D'Amore</b>		<b>November 17,18,24,25</b>	
Giannetta	Lisa Thomson	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Nemorino	John Komadina	Director	Murray Dahm
Adina	Angela Edwards	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
Sergeant Belcore	Greg McLeod	Stage Manager	
Dulcamara	Richard Mitchell	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Dulcamara's	Arthur Haddad	Orchestration	David Trainer
Assistant		Assistant Stage Manager	Colin Mettam
		Flymaster	Ken Carlin
		Carpenter	Mike Lillee
		Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Mistress	
		Choreographer	Arthur Haddad

## 2008

Utopia Ltd		April 19,20,26,27	
King Paramount	David Goddard	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Scapio	Kevin Hewitt	Director	Ralph Bott
Phantis	Paul Williamson	Orchestration	David Trainer
Calynx	Peter-John Layton	Set Design &	Brian Tucker
Lord Dramaleigh	Daniel Tambasco	Stage Manager	
Captain	Geoffrey Knight	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Fitzbattleaxe		Lighting Controller	Leesa Hazlewood
Captain Corcoran	Carl Olsen	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Mr Goldbury	Simon Ward	Manager & Props	
Mr Bailey-Barre	Glenn Pritchard	Flymaster	Ken Carlin
Mr Blushington	Gordon Costello	Carpenter	Mike Lillee
Princess Zara	Una Reynolds	Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
Princess Nakaya	Lisa Thomson	Mistress	
Princess Kalyha	Victoria Greenaway	Wardrobe	Robyne Bevan
Lady Sophy	Vivien Bousz	Assistant	
Phylla	Andrea Bingham	Costume Design	Ralph Bott
Salata	Sosofina Langifisi		Anne Kintominas
		Costumes	Bankstown Theatrical Society
			The Wardrobe
			Michael Warby

Fra Diavolo		August 2,3,9,10	
Fra Diavolo	Ben Loomes	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Zerline	Angela Edwards	Director	Murray Dahm
Lord Francaise	Peter=John Layton	Set Design &	Brian Tucker
Lady Hyacinth	Victoria Greenaway	Stage Manager	
Lorenzo	Julian Brun		
Matthieu	Murray Dahm	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Beppo	Wayne Miller	Lighting Controller	Leesa Hazlewood
Giacomo	Paul Williamson	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
		Manager & Props	
		Flymaster	Ken Carlin
		Carpenter	Mike Lillee
		Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Mistress	

## 2008

<b>Faust</b>		<b>November 22,23,29,30</b>	
<b>60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary production</b>			
Faust	Joshua Cohen	Musical Director	Carolyn Watson
Mephistopheles	Callen Dellar	Director	Ralph Bott
Valentin	Rik Dawson	Choreography	Lisa Harris
Wagner	Randal Stewart	Set design &	Brian Tucker
Marguerite	Regina Daniel	Stage Manager	
Siebel	Emma Brennan	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Marthe	Rhonda Walczak	Lighting	Leesa Hazlewood
Schwerlein		Controller	
		Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
		Manager & Props	
		Flymaster	Ken Carlin
		Carpenter	Mike Lillee
		Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Mistress	
		Costumes and	Michael Warby
		Wigs	The Arcadians
			Anne Kintominas

## 2009

<b>HMS Pinafore</b>		<b>April 24,26 May 2,3</b>	
The Rt.Hon. Sir	Jon smith	Musical Director	Mark Pinner
Joseph Porter		Director	Jon Smith
Ralph Rackstraw	Lincoln Scott	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
Josephine	Una Reynolds	Stage Manager	
Captain Corcoran	Richard Mitchell	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Little Buttercup	Rhonda Walczak	Manager & Props	
Dick Deadeye	Gordon Costello	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Bill Bobstay	Ralph Bott	Lighting	Leesa Hazlewood
Carpenter's Mate	Bob Becket	Controller	
Cousin Hebe	Andria Bingham	Flymaster	Ken Carlin
		Carpenter	Mike Lillee
		Repetiteur	Liz Wilton
		Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Mistress	
		Costumes & Wigs	The Arcadians



## 2009

Merrie England		August 1,2,8,9	
Earl of Essex	Rik Dawson	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Sir Walter Raleigh	Benjamin Loomes	Director	Ralph Bott
Walter Wilkins	Simon Ward	Orchestration	David Trainer
Silas Simkins	Nicholas Spellicy	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
Long Tom	Thomas Storer	Stage Manager	
Big Ben	Tony Guyot	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Doctor Lopez	Paul Williamson	Manager & Props	
A Butcher	John Shorter	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
A Baker	Wayne Miller	Lighting	Leesa Hazlewood
A Tinker/Soldier	Vince Grek	Controller	
A Tailor	Gary Selby	Flymaster	Ken Carlin
Queen Elizabeth	Rhonda Walczak	Carpenter	Mike Lillee
Bessie	Susannah Lawergren	Repetiteur	Ingrid Sakurovs
Throckmorton		Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
Jill-all-alone	Jacqueline Sutto	Mistress	
The May Queen	Lisa=Marie Harris	Wardrobe	Betty Konta
Kate	Jennifer Medway	Assistant	
Morris Dancers	Black Joke side	Costumes	The Arcadians
			Michael Warby
		Wigs	James Worner

La Traviata		November 21,22,28,28	
Violetta Valery	Rae Levien	Director	Paul Williamson
Flora Bervoix	Lisa-Marie Harris	Conductor	Cristian Cimei
Marquis	Wayne Miller	Assistant	Sadaharu Maramatau
D'Obigny		Conductor	
Baron Duphol	Craig Scott		
Dr. Grenvil	Kobad Bhavnagri	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
Alfredo Germont	Kent Maddock	Stage Manager	
Gastone de	Daniel Tambasco	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Letorieres		Manager & Props	
Annina	Sarah Clark	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Georgio Germont	Randall Stewart	Lighting	Leesa Hazlewood
		Controller	
		Flymaster	Ken Carlin
		Carpenter	Mike Lillee
		Repetiteur	Zsuzsa Giczy
		Costume Design	Anne Kintominas
		& Wardrobe	
		Mistress	

## 2010

<b>Ruddigore</b>		<b>April 17,18,23,24</b>	
Sir Ruthven	Damien Noyce	Musical Director	Rod Mounjed
Murgatroyd		Director	Ralph Bott
Richard	Peter-John Layton	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
Dauntless		Stage Manager	
Sir Despard	Kristopher Brown	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Murgatroyd		Manager & Props	
Old Adam	John Shorter	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Goodheart		Lighting	Leesa Hazlewood
Rose Maybud	Victoria Collopy	Controller	
Mad Margaret	Rhonda Walczak	Flymaster	Ken Carlin
Dame Hannah	Vivien Boosz	Carpenter	Mike Lillee
Zorah	Yeou-Ling Wen	Rehearsal Pianist	Graham Fuller
Ruth	Rachael Fullston	Costumes	Michael Warby
Sir Jasper	David Visentin		Sandra Tutt
Sir Lionel	Robert Conduit	Wigs	Nicola Magiros-Waters
Sir Conrad	Joh Bevan		
Sir Gilbert	Gary Selby		
Sir Roderic	Graham Tier		

<b>Barber of Seville</b>		<b>August 7,8,14,15</b>	
Count Almaviva	Joshua Cohen	Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Figaro	John Donohue	Director	Paul Williamson
Dr. Bartolo	Ryhs Daniell	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
Rosina	Anna Yun	Stage Manager	
Don Basilio	Bernard Leon	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Marcellina	Sophia Mitchell	Manager & Props	
Fiorello	Kobad Bhavnagri	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
		Lighting	Leesa Hazlewood
		Controller	
		Flymaster	Ken Carlin
		Carpenter	Mike Lillee
		Repetiteur	Ingrid Sakurovs
		Hired Costumes	Michael Warby

## 2010

<b>Carmen</b>		<b>November 20,21,27,28</b>	
Carmen	Dora Armannsdottir	Musical Director	Sadaharu Maramatau
Don Jose	Geoffrey Knight	Director	Ralph Bott
Escamillo	Raphael Hudson	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Micaela	Katie Connor	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Zuniga	Rhys Daniell	Manager & Props	
Morales	Carl Olsen	Lighting Designer	Stephen Prochowski
Frasquita	Lisa-Marie Harris	Lighting	Leesa Hazlewood
Mercedes	Silvia Colloca	Controller	
Il Dancairo	Rik Dawson	Scenery	Rockdale Opera
Il Remendado	David Visentin	Construction	Company Workshop
Street Children	Tempe Public School	Scenic Artists	Brian Tucker
	Choir		Ken Carlin
		Choreographer	Lisa-Marie Harris
		Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
		Mistress	
		Hired Costumes	Michael Warby
			Sandra Tutt
		Rehearsal Pianist	Graham Fuller
		Costumes	Michael Warby
			Sandra Tutt

## 2011

<b>Iolanthe</b>		<b>April 9,10,16,17</b>	
Lord Chancellor	Gordon Costello	Musical Director	Steven Stanke
Earl Mountarat	Raphael Hudson	Director	Lester Morris
Earl Tolloller	David Visentin	Set Designer &	Brian Tucker
		Stage Manager	
Private Willis	Graham Tier	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Strephon	James Gander	Manager & Props	
Fairy Queen	Vivien Boosz	Lighting Designer	
Iolanthe	Megan Chalmers	Lighting Designer	Walter van Poppel
Phyllis	Rachel Fullston	Lighting	Leesa Hazlewood
Celia	Minh Huynh	Controller	
Leila	Yeon-Ling Win	Lighting Assistant	Mike Smith
Fleta	Elizabeth Beilhaz	Scenic Artists	
		Flymaster	Ken Carlin
		Scenery	Brian Tucker
		Construction	Ken Carlin
		Rehearsal Pianist	Darren Saady
		Costumes & Wigs	Sandra Tutt
			Judith Rowlings
			Anne Kintominas
			Michael Warby
			FAMS
			Helen Sundercome

## 2011

<b>Lucia di Lammermoor</b>		August 6,7,13,14	
Lucia Ashton	Kerry Nicholson	Musical Director	Sadaharu Muramatsu
Enrico Ashton	Raphael Hudson	Director	Ralph Bott
Raimondo	Ian Fisher	Stage Manager	Brian Tucker
Alisa	Vivien Boosz	Assistant Stage	Colin Mettam
Edgardo	Daniel Sloman	Manager & Props	
Arturo Bucklaw	David Visentin	Set Design	Brian Tucker
Normano	Wayne Miller	Lighting Designer	Andy Weston
		Lighting	Keith Gillies
		Electricians	Blake Garner
		Scenery	Rockdale Opera Co.
		Construction	Workshop
		Scenic Artists	Brian Tucker
			Ken Carlin
		Hired Costumes	Michael Warby
		Repetiteur	Mayuka Oda
		Chorus Master	Gareth Chan
		Musical	Brian Sim
		Preparation	

<b>Man of La Mancha [cancelled]</b>	November
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## 2012

<b>The Gondoliers [cancelled]</b>	April
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<b>The Marriage of Figaro [cancelled]</b>	August
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## 2013

Rockdale Town Hall reopening concert		November 24	
Soloists from Rockdale Opera Company, The Regals and Rockdale Musical Society accompanied by the Sydney Concert Orchestra			
Megan Chalmers		Musical Director	Dr Steve Watson
Gordon Costello			
Rik Dawson			
Hannah King			
Michele Lansdown			
Bridget Patterson			
Monique Salle			
Randall Stewart			
Andrew Symes			
Louise Symes			
Daniel	(no surname given in program)		
Stephen	(no surname given in program)		
Lachlan	(no surname given in program)		

## 2014

<b>Pirates of Penzance</b>		June 21,22,28,29	
Major General Stanley	Matthew Lendrum	Musical Director	Jon Smith
Pirate King	Ray Pittman	Director	Ralph Bott
Samuel	Ray Dubber	Stage Manager	Fiona Strutzenburger
Frederic	Isaac Reefman	Assistant Stage Manager	Harald Strutzenburger
Mabel	Stephanie Jennifer Poropat	Set Design	Bob Peet
Ruth	Megan Chalmers	Set Construction	Bob Peet
Edith	Sarah Malcher Rosie		Colin Peet
Kate	Clare Shorter		Peter Munn
Isabel	Micaela Callan	Lighting	Stephanie Josifovski
Sergeant	Peter Strachan		Rod's Sound & Lighting Services
		Costumes	Sandra Tutt
			Anne Kintominas
		Props	John Plaege
		Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp

<b>Merry Widow</b>		November 8,9,15,16	
Baron Zeta	Garth Saville	Musical Director	Sadaharu Muramatsu
Valencienne	Stephanie Jennifer Poropat	Director	Bob Peet
Count Danilo	Michael Johnson	Assistant to	David Gao
Camille de Rosillon	Alastair Colgrave	Musical Director	
St Brioche	Ray Dubber	Choreographer	Leslie Scott
Anna Glawari	Sylvie Humphries	Repetiteur	Mayuka Oda Oakley
Vicomte Cascada	Jon Prowse	Stage Manager	Veronique Benett
Njegus	Tim Wotherspoon	Props Manager	Andrea Munn
Kromov	Glen Stelzer	Set Design	Bob Peet
Olga	Rose Sapuppo	Set Construction	Bob Peet
Pritschitsch	Tony Guyot		Coll Peet
Praskovia	Megan Chalmers	Lighting	Peter Munn
Bogdanovich	Jareth Norman		David Glance
Sylvane	Micaela Callan	Follow Spot	Rod's Sound & Lighting Services
		Costumes	Patricia Sharpe
			James Worner
			Dance Encore
		Costume Coordinator	Erin Macbeth

## 2015

<b>Rendezvous at Orlofsky's Cabaret!</b>		April 18 matinee and evening	
Megan Chalmers		Musical Director	Ingrid Sakurovs
Jonathon Chan		Master of Ceremonies	Ralph Bott
Jermaine Chan		Stage Manager	Meredith Simpson
Soonki Park		Lighting	Rodney Bertram
Corinne Parker		Accompanist	Ingrid Sakurovs
Stephanie Jennifer Poropat			
Daniel Sloman			

## 2015

<b>Cox &amp; Box and Trial by Jury</b>		<b>May 30,31, June 6,7</b>	
James John Cox	Rory Struthers	Musical Director	Jon Smith
John James Box	Peter John Layton -	Director	Jon Smith
Mrs Bouncer	Megan Chalmers	Stage Manager	Fiona Strutzenburger
Learned Judge	John Morrison	Assistant Stage	Harold Strutzenburger
Angelina	Samanta Lestavel	Manager	
Edwin	Mitch Bryson	Set Design	Bob Peet
Counsel for the	Megan Chalmers	Set Construction	Bob Peet
Plaintiff			Col Peet
Usher	Glen Stelzer		Peter Munn
Foreman	John Tse		David Glance
The Associate	Peter-John Layton	Lighting	Rod's Sound and Lighting
Bridesmaids	Rhiannon Bateman		Services
	Zoe Yalouris	Wardrobe	Anne Kintominas
Mother of the	Lynette Davis	Mistress	
Bride		Costume Hire	Sandra Tutt
			Arcadians
		Props	Ralph Bott
			Colin Mettam
		Rehearsal Pianist	Noortje Tromp
<b>Marriage of Figaro</b>		<b>November 7, 8, 14,15</b>	
Count Almaviva	James Olds	Musical Director	Steven Stanke
Countess	Kirsten Jones	Director	Paulo Montoya
Susanna	Phoebe Celeste	Set Design	Jayne Pickering
	Humphrey Humphreys	Costume design	Jayne Pickering
			Anne Kintominas
Cherubino	Jermaine Chau	Lighting	Rodney Bertram
Figaro	Daniel Macey	Assistant Director	Joseph Restubog
Doctor Bartolo	Ian Fisher	Musical	Elizabeth Wilton
Marcellina	Megan Chalmers	Preparation	
Basilio	Blake Parham	Stage Manager	Luke Middlebrook
Don Curzio	Ray Dubber	Set Construction	Simon Boyd
Barbarina	Bernice Zandona		Belvoir street Theatre
Antonio	Rory Struthers		



## 2016

<b>Rendezvous at Orlofsky's Cabaret!</b>		April 2 evening and matinee
Jermaine Chau		Musical Director Ingrid Sakurovs
Harrison Collins		Director Megan Chalmers
Samanta Lestavel		Master of Ceremonies Ralph Bott
Soonki Park		
Stephanie Jennifer Poropat		Stage Manager Joseph Restubog
Corinne Parker		
Daniel Sloman		Lighting Rod Bertram
Paul Sutton		
Megan Chalmers		

<b>Orpheus in the Underworld</b>		July 30,31, August 6,7
Public Opinion	Megan Chalmers	Musical Director Jon Smith
Eurydice	Stephanie J Poropat	Director Ralph Bott
Orpheus	Paul Sutton	Choreographer Sami Shalom
Artisteus/Pluton	Blake Parham	
Venus	Tisha Kelemen	
Cupid	Rachael Fullston	
Mars	Christopher Curcuruto	
Morpheus	Elizabeth Beilharz	
Jupiter	Gordon Costello	
Diana	Claire Crehade-James	
Mercury	Daine Ellicott	
Juno	Kate Wilmot	
John Styx	Rory Struthers	

<b>The Bartered Bride</b>	November 12,13,19,20
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