

Early Geelong theatre program printed on silk

Pictures Collection H82.108

Acquired 1982

Theatre programs printed on silk or satin started to appear in the 1800s, and were gradually phased out towards the end of World War I. They were generally produced to mark a special occasion, such as a gala opening or the presence of a dignitary in the audience.

This program, acquired with the assistance of the Friends of the La Trobe Library, is the earliest program printed on silk in the Library's extensive collection of Australian theatre programs. It is a souvenir of the second theatrical performance held at the Albert Theatre in Corio Street, Geelong, on 19 December 1844,¹ marking the opening of Geelong's first theatre.² A notice in the *Geelong Advertiser* earlier that month reported that local identity Mr Boyd had gained the necessary permission of magistrates for a series of entertainments, and he sought the patronage of the people of Geelong and its environs.³

The program for the evening's entertainment is printed in black, with a black meander pattern border, on an elongated piece of silk. A pale blue ribbon terminating in a bow at the top of the program sits on the outermost edges of the silk, and the whole is surrounded by a lace border.

The program comprises three parts: the farce *Rendezvous* is followed by a musical interlude of songs, with the evening finishing on a light note with the comedy *The Rifle Brigade*. Full cast lists are provided, and a Mr Richards is named as conductor of the orchestra and Mr Boyd features as both entertainer and administrator. It would appear the two men have family support, with a Mrs Richards and a Mrs Boyd listed among the performers.

The night's entertainment was 'Under the Especial Patronage of the Ladies of Geelong', a note included on the program that Mr Boyd possibly hoped would indicate the 'respectability' of the entertainment. Respectable citizens could purchase a box for 4/- at various Geelong businesses, while the less respectable or less well-off could get a spot in the pit for 2/6.

Albert Theatre.
CORIO STREET, GEELONG.
THURSDAY, Dec. 19, 1844.

Under the Especial Patronage of the Ladies of Geelong.

MR. ROYD has the honour to announce to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Geelong and its vicinity, and the public generally, that, on the above evening, will be represented, for the first time, the highly laughable farce entitled, **The**

Rendezvous
OR
The Three Pairs of Lovers.

Quaker..... Mr. Cooper.
Baldy..... Mr. Johnson.
Charles..... Mr. Jacobs.
Blind..... Mr. Smith.
Sam..... Mr. Boyd.
Laurie..... Mrs. Richards.
Sophie..... Mrs. Murray.
Sam..... Mrs. Boyd.

To be followed by a
Musical Entertainment.

COMPRISING

Song..... Mrs. Richards
Song..... Mr. Boyd
Song..... Mrs. Murray
Comic Song..... Mr. Boyd
Song..... M. Richards
George's Character..... Mr. Boyd

The Society's Entertainment is complete and, for the first time, the following grand Comedy, called, **The**

RIFLE
BRIGADE.

Mr. Doubtless (a whimsical gentleman)..... Mr. Cooper.
Captain Wagner (a King of)..... Mr. Boyd.
Peter Simple (a page or valet's Tiger, an Blue Boy)..... Mr. Arden.
Mrs. Doubtless..... Mrs. Boyd.
Parker (the son)..... Wm. Jones.
Mrs. Major Matthews, an interesting lady, an actress, and a young girl..... Mrs. Murray.

The Orchestra will be conducted by Mr. Richards, assisted by Messrs W. Jones, Leman, &c., &c.

Prices of admission, Boxes 1s, Pit 2s, 6d.

Doors open at seven o'clock, and performance will commence at 8 o'clock.

Tickets may be obtained from Messrs. Atkins & Clark, Black's Hotel, Currier, Mr. Griffin, Railway Hotel, South Geelong; Mr. Harrison, Advertiser Office; and Mr. Boyd, at the Theatre, from eleven till ten o'clock, where places may be secured. Early application for Tickets in the Boxes are requested, as arrangements are only made for a limited number.

VIVAT BRITANNIA!

Theatre program, printed on silk bordered with lace, announcing a performance of the farce *Rendezvous* at the Albert Theatre, Corio Street, Geelong, 1844. Pictures Collection, H82.108