

HARRY G. MUSGROVE

Harry G. Musgrove began his career working for his uncle George Musgrove. He moved into film exhibition with T. J. West and later with Union Theatres and Australasian Films in 1910, before joining E. J. Carroll and Dan Carroll in 1920 to form Carroll-Musgrove Theatres. The following year he took over control of Harry Rickards' Tivoli Theatres. Musgrove was forced into bankruptcy two years later, however, when his co-production with J. C. Williamson's, *The Forty Thieves*, failed to recoup its investment. Musgrove subsequently sold his interests in the Tivoli organisation to Williamson's and went on to work for United Artists in Shanghai. He died in obscurity at the age of sixty-six.

The son of theatrical manager Harry George Musgrove and nephew of George Musgrove, Harry G. Musgrove was born Henry George Musgrove in Melbourne on 2 August 1884. Popularly known as Harry G. to distinguish him from his father, he began his career in the Australian entertainment industry working for his uncle at the Princess Theatre (Melb) before leaving to work for pioneer film exhibitor T. J. West in 1906. When West's Pictures was taken over by Union Theatres and Australasian Films in 1910, he remained with the new organisation as a director. Musgrove joined E. J. Carroll and Dan Carroll in 1920 to form Carroll-Musgrove Theatres, and the firm soon afterwards built the Prince Edward Theatre in Sydney. That same year, he also obtained the Australian rights to screen films from the Hollywood studio First National.

In 1921 Musgrove created an exhibition company First National Exhibitors of Australia, as well as taking over operational control of Harry Rickards' Tivoli Theatres Ltd from previous general manager Hugh D. McIntosh. McIntosh still remained on the board of directors, however. Musgrove's initial decision to turn the organisation into the Musgrove's Theatres cinema chain proved to be unsuccessful, largely because the venues were unsuitable for film exhibition, and within a short period of time he was forced bring back vaudeville entertainment. At the same time he also brought on board his cousin, Jack Musgrove, who had more experience in the variety industry.



Theatre Dec. (1920), 33.

Theatre Royal

Lenses ... J. C. Williamson, Ltd.
Sub Lenses ... Musgrove's Theatres, Ltd.
S.I. Control ... A. M. Miller.

Under the Patronage and in the presence
of HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR,
LADY WEGGALL, and MRS. and the
BOX THE LORD MAYOR, LADY
MAYOR, and Party.

COMMENCING
TO-MORROW at 2.30.
HARRY G. MUSGROVE
announces the presentation of

**Celebrity
Vaudeville**

The Managerial Policy will be to present
Vaudeville of an international character
chosen in settings of superior beauty,
and in the accompaniment of music of
sparkling quality.

TO-MORROW
Com. at the Matinee,
Harry G. Musgrove will have pleasure in
presenting on his opening bill your old
friend Mr.

**CLAUDE
DAMPIER**

"THE PROFESSIONAL IDIOT,"
Supported by his charming associates,
HILDA ATTENBORO.
Since leaving Australia Mr. Dampier has
won an international reputation. He is
unusual, genial, with a dash of that
ever so drill.

The Tivoli continued its original founder's tradition of importing foreign acts, notably Wilkie Bard, Claude Dampier (the "professional idiot"), Ella Shields, Bert Gilbert (later of the Famous Diggers), Wee Georgie Wood, and Lee White and Clay Smith, along with directors such as James Gould-Taylor. Spencer Barry, who had previously spent several years in Paris, was also bought in to oversee one of the Tivoli Frolics, which at various times included such acts as Moon and Morris, Eric Masters, Madeline Rossiter, and Scottish basso Richard McClelland. Under the Musgrove, the company also produced pantomimes, revues, and musical comedies. Interestingly, Musgrove used the billing "Celebrity Vaudeville" (the name given to the Tivoli organisation in 1924 when under the sole management of J. C. Williamson (see advertisement below left).

Brisbane Courier 10 Nov. (1922), 2.

Register (Adelaide) 9 Dec. (1921), 2.

Cremorne Pantomime.

There are still vacancies for clever
children, good chorus ladies and ballet.
Bring music for vocal trial.
Miss Rappo, Cremorne, 10.30, this (Sat-
urday) morning.

**CREMORNE
THEATRE**

Proprietors ... John K. McCulloch
Directors ... Musgrove Theatres, Ltd.
Gen. Director ... Harry G. Musgrove
General Manager ... A. Marshall Miller.

NIGHTLY AT 8.
Continued success of
BURR & HOPE,
Who will present another artistic musical
sketch,
"THE LADY, THE LOVER, AND THE
LAMP."

**MADLINE ROSSITER,
ERIC MASTERS,
MOON AND MORRIS,
AND
THE TIVOLI FROLICS.**
in a series of bright Musical Revettes.
"THE CAFE CHANTANT,"
"DAUGHTERS OF THE GUARD,"
"LET'S ALL GO MAD."

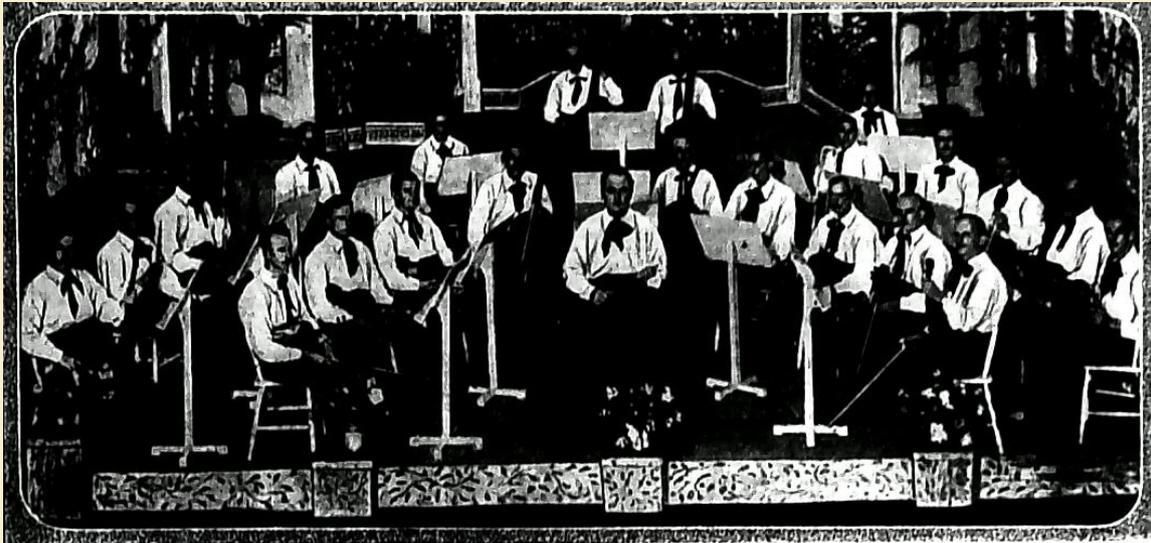
MILTON OWEN, DOROTHY SUMMERS,
THE CITY POLE, VERA BENSON, MAY
GEARY, AND

HECTOR ST. CLAIR.
Producer: JAMES GOULD-TAYLOR.
Ballads arranged by Miss Vera Jayne.
Stage Director: Reg. Long.

PRICES: 2/ (reserved), Saturdays 4/
Unreserved, 1/ and 1/2, plus tax. Box Plan
at Palmer's, and after 5 p.m. at the Theatre.
Book by Telephone. Two Numbers: 8194 and
1595.

The Tivoli Frolics

In December 1923, Musgrove Theatres and J. C. Williamson's Ltd co-produced what was to be a financially disastrous production of *The Forty Thieves* at Wirth's Hippodrome in Sydney. After being forced into bankruptcy, Musgrove sold his interests in the Tivoli organisation to the Williamson's firm, which operated the circuit as Tivoli Celebrity Vaudeville up until 1931. Although Musgrove later worked for United Artists in Shanghai, his entrepreneurial career never again reached the levels he had attained during the decade or more leading up to 1922. In his book *Tivoli*, Frank Van Straten notes that Musgrove, "once a good-looking, enterprising charmer... died in penniless obscurity in 1951 at the age of sixty-six" (66).



THE FIRST NATIONAL ORCHESTRA AT THE TIVOLI (SYDNEY).
 Centre: Fred G. Mumford. Front row (left to right): Theo. Turner (leader), P. Aniol (first violin), H. Henderson (first violin), Hummerhays (cello), W. Hoops (cello), J. Aniol (viola), Hoggitt (viola), Waddington (second violin), and H. Hissell (second violin). Back row (left to right): Key (flute), King (oboe), Habari (clarinette), Mills (clarinette), Williams (bassoon), Smith (bass), Crook (bass), Purdon (trombone), Bayliss (cornet), Wilson (cornet), H. Hela (French horn), Amadio (French horn), and Scott (drums and tympanal, etc.).
 Block by W. T. Baker and Co.

Theatre May (1921), 34.

FURTHER REFERENCE

Djubal, Clay. "[Musgrove, Harry G.](#)" AustLit (2007).

"Harry G. Musgrove's Success with First Nationals: The New Way in Pictures." TT: May (1921), 34.

"Momentous Theatrical Move: Harry G. Musgrove in a Wider Sphere, A." TT: Mar. (1920), 3-4.

Musgrove, Harry G. "First National Exhibitors of Australia Ltd: Policy Outlined by Harry G. Musgrove, The" TT: Feb. (1921), 28. [see also two page advertising spread in same issue, pages 40-41.]



Harry George Musgrove (Snr)
(1894)

Source: State Library of Victoria
 "Dramatic Costume Football Match"



Theatre Mar. (1920)

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Expanded and updated from the 200? AustLit entry

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