

## STAN KERRIDGE

Stan Kerridge started out his career as an illustrated singer. Although considered one of the country's leading character vocalists he was forced to retire in 1912 due to health problems that affected his voice production. He returned to the entertainment industry in 1924 as Harry Clay's manager at the Bridge Theatre, Newtown, having spent the intervening years involved in various commercial interests. He remained with the company until it closed in late 1929.

As with so many artists and people involved in vaudeville, much of Stanford Kerridge's life remains unknown. The first reference found regarding his career is his association with Harry Clay's 1907 Queensland Waxworks and Comedy Co tour, in which he performed as a singer (in addition to other requirements such as appearing in the minstrel farces). Along with Wally Edwards and May Reade, he was one of the specialist illustrated song artists. The *Northern Miner* of that year describes one of his turns: "Mr Stan Kerridge's best was 'Like the Rose you're the Fairest Flower,' with beautiful dissolving effects, the rosebud slowly opening to the perfect flower" (30 May 1907, 5). He toured the northern state for Clay once more in 1910. During this later period Kerridge had begun to build a reputation as one of the country's leading character vocalists, until a severe nasal problem forced his permanent retirement from the stage in 1912/13. In December of 1913 he was given a benefit at St George's Hall, Newtown, organised by Bert Howard.

While it is not clear as to what Kerridge did during the next 10 years, *Everyone's* in 1925 indicates that he had been "engaged in commercial pursuits" for some time (28 Jan. 1925, 32). In December of 1924, he returned to the entertainment industry, taking on the managerial role at the Bridge Theatre, Newtown, after the death of the previous manager, Jimmy Boyle. Kerridge is known to have stayed on with the company until it folded its operations in late 1929.

Stan Kerridge, according to a number of reports (and as seems to be the case with most of Harry Clay's other managers) was well-liked and respected for his reliability and professionalism. An incident in 1925, in which Rosie Rifle, a sharp-shooting artist, ran a ramrod through her hand at the Bridge Theatre, is recorded in *Everyone's*. Kerridge's prompt assistance, and knowledge of first aid, which he had apparently studied, reportedly prevented serious complications from setting in (4 Mar. 1925, 32).

Whether Kerridge stayed on at the Bridge Theatre after the company leased it to H.R. Kitching in late 1929 is unknown. However, a NSW Fire Brigade report indicates that by December 1930, the theatre's manager was Bill Sadler. For this reason it can be assumed that he may left sometime during or shortly after Clay's closed its Newtown operations.

### FURTHER REFERENCE

- In the mid-1920s Kerridge provided the words for the song "The Best Pal Of All." The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (printed by E. F. Jones, Wellington, New Zealand) records that this version was arranged by W.H. Lynch and "sung and played... at the Lynch Family's concerts throughout Australasia" (ctd. "Lynch Family Bellringers," Adelaide University Library - MS 792.70994 L9871p).

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