

EDWIN LEWIS SCOTT

Edwin Lewis Scott started out his career in the late-1860s as an actor and some ten years later began establishing his reputation as a writer, adapting and/or localising a series of pantomimes, while also producing a range of theatrical works, including dramas and comedy sketches. After he retired from the theatre Scott became a draftsman for the NSW Lands Department. He was also the Australian theatrical correspondent for the London *Era* for some 45 years. Scott died in the Sydney suburb of Petersham in 1921, aged 77.

The eldest son of Yorkshireman Robert Scott, Yorkshire and his wife Elizabeth, Edwin Lewis Scott was born in Hull, Yorkshire on 3 January 1844. During his youth and early adult years he sang as a tenor and acted small parts in companies that included Toole, Paul Bedford, Madge Robertson (Mrs Kendall) and other thespian celebrities from that period. He is also said to have studied elocution under G. V. Brooke.

Scott came to Australia in 1865 to work for the contractor building the Ipswich to Toowoomba railway. Although Scott's obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald* records that he returned to the stage in 1869, securing an engagement at the Sydney School of Arts as tutor and stage manager for a juvenile troupe. Over the next year or so he also reportedly supported a number of touring actors, including Charles Matthews. Scott appears to have returned to Queensland by the early 1870s, however. His name has first been identified publically in Brisbane in 1873 when he was forced to endure the public humiliation of insolvency. The notice published in *Brisbane Courier* refers to him not as an actor but as a comedian, and indicates that his first public sitting, held before Judge A.J.P. Lutwyche of the Queensland Supreme Court on 6 September, was to be followed by a further examination on 20 October (BC: 6 Sept. 1873, 2). A little over a month later Scott married Florence Ryal, fifth daughter of John James Ryal of St Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex, England, and a sister of J. J. Ryal (who by then had been a resident of Sydney for some twenty years. The marriage was formalised by special licence at St Paul's Church, Ipswich on 25 November.



Source: State Library of Victoria

By the mid-1870s Scott had begun adapting and localising a number of pantomimes. While very few of his works survive in either manuscript or published form, those attributed to him include *Robinson Crusoe* (1874); *Snow White and Hit Grease, Or, The Short Roan* (1875), *The Brothers*, *The Gay Masquerade*, *Off to the War*, *Ruby and Alpine Apples* (all 1876); and *Town and Country* (1877). In reviewing *The Brothers* in his *Sydney Morning Herald* column "Music and Drama," Sheridan Knowles reports on the Victoria Theatre production of *The Brothers*. He writes that although specially written for J. K. Emmett, the actor refused to play the role of "a German of the Fritzcumjan order" and Scott subsequently played it himself. According to Knowles:

He succeeded in doing this very well, although it is impossible to dissociate from imitation, except in the songs and dances, to which there is no imitation whatever. The play is by no means devoid of interest or "go;" but the author has apparently hurried the scenes to create bustle and sensation, to the injury of the story itself... Both as actor and author, in the latter, probably most apparent, possesses an ability to produce a drama that shall yet bring his name more prominently into notice in *l'universe dramatique* (2 Dec. 1876, 13).

Scott also dramatised *The Silence of Dean Maitland* for a season at Sydney's Theatre Royal. The production was closed after one night, however, when Arthur Dacre (real name, Doctor James) shot dead his wife and co-star Amy Roselle in a Macquarie Street flat the following day. He then killed himself (SMH: 30 Apr. 1921, 8; SYM 4 May 1921, 24).

BOX OFFICE at NICHOLSON and ARCHERBERG'S.
VICTORIA THEATRE.
NEW DRAMA, BY A LOCAL AUTHOR.
THE AUTHOR AS THE HERO.

THIS (Monday) EVENING, November 27, 1876,
 First Night of
THE BROTHERS.
 Written by E. Lewis Scott, Esq.,

Klaus	The AUTHOR
Ernst	Mr. B. FULFORD
Brand Walton	Mr. Booth
Mr. Falkner	Mr. Mowry
Fat Clancy	Mr. B. N. JONES
Tom Cabbage	Mr. J. Toland
Mr. Costerton	Mr. Kingston
Policeman	Mr. Ryan
Piegan	Mr. Miller
Boy	Miss Marsh
Larrikin	Miss Myra Lloyd
Carlotta	Miss ANNIE PIXLEY
Rosa	Miss Myra Kem Je
Meta	Miss Lisa Edwin
Mrs. Vardy	Miss Jennie Gray
Servant	Miss Cissy Lloyd.

GRAND BALLET.
RITTA and Madame ZAVISTOWSKI.
 Brilliant Fiasco,
FRA DIAVOLO.

Fra Diavolo	Miss Annie Pixley
Beppo	Mr. Bland Holt.

Sydney Morning Herald 27 Nov. (1876), 2.

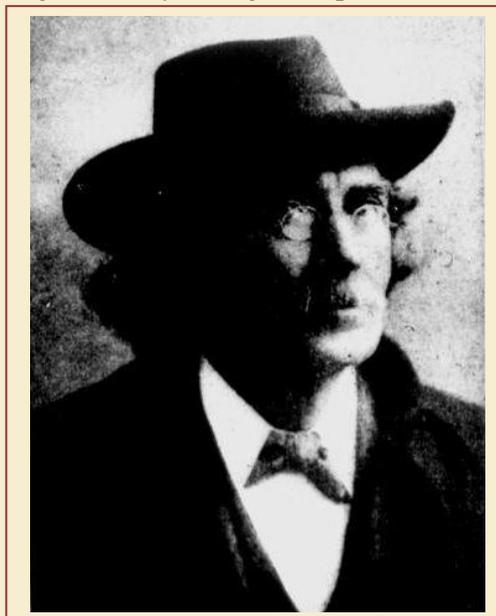
In addition to his theatrical works Scott compiled and indexed the *Opinions of the Attorney General (the Hon. W.B. Dalley)*. It was published in 1886. One of his other known works was *A Tale of the Transvaal* (1899), a dramatisation of H. Rider Haggard's novel *Jess*.

It is believed that sometime during the 1880s, Scott effectively retired from the stage, turning back to his original profession as a draftsman with the New South Wales Lands Department (SYM: 4 May 1921, 4). His last public appearance is said to have occurred at a testimonial organised for him at Sydney's Y.M.C.A. Hall in November 1909 following his recovery from a serious illness. *Theatre* magazine noted: "[Scott's] wealth of hair is becoming rapidly shot with grey, his face is marked with a number of wrinkles, but still his eyes glint keenly through his spectacles" (Sept. 1909, 7). Among the contributors to the evening were Madame and Herr Slapoffski, Ada Baker, Cyril Monk and Ernest Truman. The *Sydney Morning Herald* notes that around a year after the benefit Scott was hospitalised again, this time as a result of having been knocked down by a tram. His injuries included a fractured skull (30 Apr. 1921, 8).

In addition to being the London *Era's* Australian theatrical representative for some 45 years, Scott was for 18 years the Registrar of the Friendly Societies. He also directed concert entertainments at various times, worked as a journalist and edited various publications.

The writer of his obituary described Scott as "a man of indefatigable activity before his surrender to illness and old age" and noted that in his last years he was cared for by his daughter Ada (aka Mrs George Glenister) at his Petersham residence "Cottingham," in Renwick Street. He died there in late April 1921, a little over a year after his wife, Florence, passed away (5 Jan 1920).

Sydney Mail 4 May 1921, 4.



MUSIC THEATRE WORKS:

- 1874:** **The Brothers** (play with music, 1876) • **Robinson Crusoe**; Or, Harlequin Friday and the King of the Sugee [pantomime]
1875: **Snow White**; Or, Harlequin King Kok-a-Hoop and the Damsel Who Never Saw a Glass [pantomime]
1876: **The Gay Masquerade** [musical sketch] • **Off to War** [musical sketch] • **Alpine Apples**; Harlequin Intelligence and Swiss ABC [pantomime] • **Twinkle Twinkle Little Star** [pantomime]

OTHER WORKS

- 1876:** **Ruby** (drama) [written for Nell, the Californian Diamond]
1877: **Town And Country** (sketch)
n/e: **Hit Grease; Or, The Short Roan** [a burlesque on J. C. Williamson's *Struck Oil*]
Fritz in Ireland [written for J. K. Emmett]
1899: **A Tale of the Transvaal** (drama)

HISTORICAL NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

1. Scott's daughter, Ada Florence Scott (later Glenister) was born in Leichhart, Sydney, in 1886.
2. In 1894 Scott contributed the lyrics to the song, "All in All" (music composed by W. August Juncker).
3. In March 1881, Scott took legal action against a man named Carl Fisher, who he claimed had used insulting language towards him in the old Exhibition Building at Alfred Park (in the inner-city suburb of Surry Hills). The words attributed to the defendant, "You low, dirty, filthy, blackguard," were spoken during a concert by the Austrian Strauss Band. The cause of the ruckus appears to have been brought on by comments Scott made at a toast some five weeks previous, in which he suggested that "the representatives of newspapers ought to wear trousers." It was revealed in court that Fisher's wife was the *Sydney Morning Herald's* music critic, and had taken exception to the comments. Scott was able to call William Charles Windeyer (a judge of the Supreme Court) as a witness to the altercation, a factor which no doubt helped persuade the Central Police Court magistrates, Alexander, Bull and Fraser to find against the defendant. He was fined 21 shillings plus costs (CRE: 15 Mar. 1881, 2).

3.

IN the SUPREME COURT of QUEENSLAND: IN INSOLVENCY.—In the Insolvent Estate of EDWIN LEWIS SCOTT, of Brisbane, Comedian.—Whereas the said Edwin Lewis Scott was, on the 29th day of August, A.D. 1873, adjudged to be an Insolvent, I hereby appoint a First Public Sitting of the Court to be holden before me, at the Supreme Court-house, Brisbane, on MONDAY, the 8th day of September, A.D. 1873, to commence at 11 o'clock, for the Proof of Debts against the said Estate, and for the election of a Creditors' Assignee, if required, and also to determine whether any or what allowance for support shall be made to the Insolvent up to the time of passing his last examination, and whether any and what tools and wearing apparel shall be allowed to the Insolvent; and a Second Public Sitting of the Court, at the same place, on MONDAY, the 20th day of October, A.D. 1873, to commence at 11 o'clock, for the Proof of Debts against the said Estate, and for such other matters connected with the Estate as may be required to be brought before the Court.—Dated at Brisbane, the 6th day of September, A.D. 1873.

A. J. P. LUTWYCHE, Judge.
Official Assignee—HENRY J. WHITLEY. 2716

Brisbane Courier 6 Sept. (1873), 2.

4.

ARE AUSTRALIANS DRUNKARDS?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

Sir.—Exaggeration is the most dangerous type of untruth, and when one of your correspondents says that the majority of our men degrade their homes, wives, families, and themselves by drunkenness he exaggerates.

Let me please speak from several sound standpoints. Until I was 45 I never tasted stimulants, save in temperance drinks. As a lecturer in favour of total abstinence in public and in Darlinghurst Gaol on Saturday afternoons, and in forming bands of hope in Yorkshire, Queensland, and elsewhere, I saw and knew only one side.

Next, as general secretary of the United Licensed Victuallers' Association, I learnt how eager the hotel-keepers were to suppress all and sundry who were disreputable. So, coming back to the query of my caption, I unhesitatingly say that not one-fourth of young Australians are drinkers to-day, compared with their number 30 years ago.

As to our alleged drink bill, the late Mr. James Powell, Collector of Customs, himself an abstemious man, told me that the Rev. Mr. Boyce never deducted from the total value of imports and manufacture the amount of the exports, and never asked the Customs-house folk for the figures to enable him so to do.

Be fair, my masters, and we will respect you; otherwise—well, otherwise.

I am, etc,

E. LEWIS SCOTT.

Sydney Morning Herald 1 Sept. (1910), 4.

5.

THE LATE E. LEWIS SCOTT,

A well-known Sydney identity, who died last week, aged 77 years. He was for many years a draughtsman in the N.S.W. Lands Department, and was a familiar figure in literary and theatrical circles. His death recalls one of the most tragic events in the history of the stage. His dramatisation of "The Silence of Dean Maitland" was produced on a Saturday night at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, the principal parts being taken by Arthur Dacre and his wife, Miss Amy Rozelle, who was a distinguished English actress, and the following day Dacre (whose real name was Doctor James) shot his wife in a boarding-house, and then cut his throat. The play was immediately withdrawn. Mr. Scott during his career edited various publications, and was for many years the Australian theatrical correspondent of the London "Era."

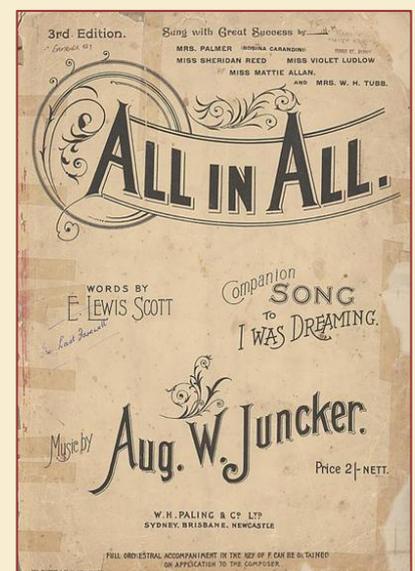
Sydney Mail 4 May (1921), 4.

FURTHER REFERENCE

- "[Amusements: The Lewis Scott Testimonial.](#)" SMH: 23 Nov. (1909), 4.
 "Concert Engagements." SMH: 17 Nov. (1909), 14.
 "[Late E. Lewis Scott, The.](#)" SYM: 4 May (1921), 4.
 Knowles, Sheridan. "Music and Drama." SMH: 2 Dec. (1876), 13.
 "[Music and Drama.](#)" SMH: 30 Apr (1921), 8.
 "[Musical Criticism: A Quarrel at Alfred Park.](#)" CRE: 15 Mar. (1881), 2.

See also:

T&C: 13 Dec. (1873), 28 [re: marriage]



Source: National Library of Australia

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