

THE LORNETTE: JOURNAL OF AMUSEMENTS

A four page program published by theatrical agent J.J. Liddy, *The Lorgnette* was circulated around Melbourne theatres between 1876 and 1898. Each theatre would have its own special edition, with the front page featuring a cast list for its current production. The rest of the playbill comprised a mix of theatrical news and advertisements.



Melbourne theatrical agent and entrepreneur John J. Liddy (mostly referred to as simply Liddy), started *The Lorgnette* in 1876. It initially included the *New Idea* and *Figaro*, and from sometime in the 1880s incorporated the *Theatrical Courier*. Liddy is also known to have published it with a free two-page supplement. The playbill, which promoted itself as "The Only Authorised and Correct Programme Circulated in the Theatre Royal, Opera House, Academy of Music, Princess' Theatre, St George's Hall, Town Hall &c.," was made available at most of the leading theatres in Melbourne. Each venue would have its own special edition, with the front page featuring a cast list for its current production. The rest of the playbill comprised a mix of theatrical news and advertisements.

LIDDY'S THEATRICAL AGENCY, office of "the "Lorgnette" (Theatrical journal), 108 Bourke-street east, Melbourne, Victoria. Correspondent English, American, and Australian newspapers. References may be made to any theatrical manager, or to any star who has visited Australia.

Argus 12 Nov. 1877, 8.

Liddy's attempt to enter the Melbourne theatrical publicity industry was seen as threat to his major opposition, the printing company operating as Azzopardi, Hildreth and Co, which published its own playbill entitled, *L'Entr'Acte*. In early 1877 Joseph Alfred Hildreth attempted to have Liddy stopped by having him summoned to court for "keeping a printing press and types for printing without having delivered to the registrar-general the notice in writing and received from him the certificate required by the Printers and Newspapers Registration Statute 1864." Although the *Argus* reports that initial court case was dismissed when the Registrar-General failed to appear for the plaintiff,¹ the New Zealand newspaper *Press* records some three weeks later that Liddy had been fined £5 and £2.2s costs for having the unregistered press and types in his possession.²

LIDDY'S "LORNETTE" Playbill is the only programme recognised by the management. W. S. Lyster, Opera-house.

Argus 12 Mar. 1877, 8.

The Lorgnette continued to be published through until 1898, although how long it did so under Liddy's proprietorship is unclear. He is known to have been engaged in Sydney in 1880 as business manager for R.B. Lewis' Georgia Jubilee Singers and by 1890 was living in Brisbane where he ran the [Gaiety Theatre](#). Liddy died in Brisbane in January 1891.

SEE ALSO

- [J.J. Liddy](#)

¹ [Editorial] 28 Mar. 1877, 5. Column. 2

² "Australian News [Per Easby, via Wellington] Melbourne April 10." 18 Apr. 1877, 2.



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Musical Director, Mr. W. R. FURLONG. Manager, Mr. W. F. DIXON.

Eighth Programme--Monday, July 1st,
SEPARATION DAY!

- PART 1.**
 ORGAN SOLO--"Pastoral March"--J. C. Doncker.....Mr. CHARLES SYKES
 NATIONAL QUARTETTE--"Hail to Victoria"--Meyer.....Mrs. FERRATON, Miss C. THOMPSON, Messrs. BRACY & FURLONG
 SOLO--"Nobody knows as I know"--P. Czaj.....Miss CLARA THOMPSON
 SOLO--"They ask me why I love her"--Arndt.....Mr. H. BRACY
 SOLO--"Kathleen Macreanna"--Coyne.....Mrs. FERRATON
 DUET--"Flow gently, Dora"--Zerry.....Messrs. H. BRACY & W. R. FURLONG
 SOLO--"Mia malle"--Lerzi.....Signor ROSNATI
 PIANO SOLO--"Barber of Seville"--Graziopoli.....Master EXIBILLI
 DUO--"The handkerchief fellow"--by request--(Perichini)--Offenbach.....Mrs. FERRATON, Miss CLARA THOMPSON, Messrs. H. BRACY & W. R. FURLONG

INTERVAL OF TWENTY MINUTES FOR PROMENADE.
 During which there is a selection of music will be performed by
MR. CHARLES SYKES on the GRAND ORGAN.
 NOTICE--The entire space beneath the balcony has been reserved for those who are appointed during the interval. Persons from the balcony will please keep their seats for the same purpose in this portion of the Hall.

- PART 2.**
 SEVEN PIANO OVERTURE--"Pavane"--Boschetti.....Six YOUNG LADIES on TWO GRAND PIANOS--Pavane of HERK MAYER
 DUET--"The moon has risen"--Jolly of Kilianoff.....Signor ROSNATI & Mr. W. R. FURLONG
 SOLO--"Clocchio"--Molloy.....Miss CLARA THOMPSON
 SOLO--"Elton Abnath"--Boschetti.....Signor ROSNATI
 SOLO--"The Queen's letter"--Meyer.....Mrs. FERRATON
 SEVEN SOLO--"Jack of Hazzard"--Meyer.....Mr. W. R. FURLONG
 SOLO--"My sweetest when a boy"--Meyer.....Mr. H. BRACY
 ORGAN SOLO--"God save the Queen"--Meyer.....Mr. C. SYKES

THE COMMITTEE have the honor to announce that on MONDAY NEXT SIGNOR ROSNATI will take his FAREWELL BENEFIT, prior to his departure for America when he will be assisted by the principal artists in Victoria (Italian and English), who have most generously given their services to make this a Great Musical Event. This being the first Benefit rendered by SIGNOR ROSNATI (the first Italian operatic tenor) during his stay of six years in the colony, the kind patronage of the Melbourne public is solicited. The plan of the balcony is now open at Dixon & Co., Music Warehouse, 37, Elizabeth street, where seats can be reserved. Tickets can be obtained at all the Music Warehouses.

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 Tickets for all seats of the Principal Music Expenses, (Time of Delivery at W. F. Dixon & Co.)
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