

1986—2004: FROM FIDDLER TO JEST AT THE WEST

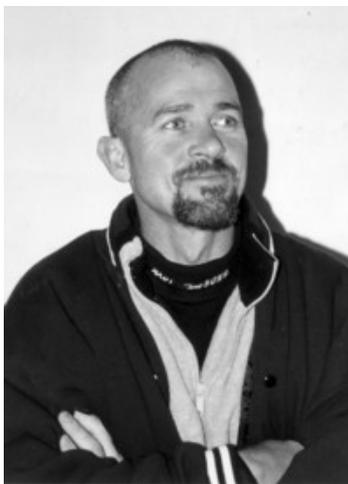
In 1986, Turaton became an incorporated company and with that came a small name change. The pedants got together and decided that “Turaton Music Company Inc.” was a better description of what we were than being a “musical” company; rather like botanic gardens is more correct than botanical gardens. Whatever the change in nomenclature, the format did not change immediately with Nancy Kinmond directing “Fiddler on the Roof” with Charles Hamilton directing the music. That, unfortunately, was the last big musical the Charles directed for us and it wasn’t long before we were casting around for a new direction and new leadership. Nancy Kinmond directed “Brigadoon” with John Ferguson music director and in 1988 Graham Pugh directed “The Drunkard” with Marilyn Banfield doing the music.

The following year was a sparse one for Turaton, with one concert program directed by Charles Hamilton and performed at St Augustine’s and St Mel’s. A big effort was made in 1990 to get back on track with the rather hideously titled “A Choral and Comedy Conglomeration” which was put together by Graham Pugh with music direction by Russell Burton. It was “a mixture of assorted musical items and unrelated comedy sketches” but the cerise program did nothing to instill confidence.



Tevey (Jim Murphy) explains life to Perchik (Grant Long) in “Fiddler on the Roof” in 1986.

Geoff Cabble took over in 1991 to do the stage direction and the music direction for what turned out to be our last big musical, “Camelot” and it was a huge success but soon we were back doing concerts at the Alex Rigg Theatre. Shirley Ferguson directed “Voice of Victory” to celebrate 50 years since the end of the war, and then “For the Love of Gilbert and Sullivan”, Marilyn Banfield, Joanne Roberts and Lindy Tennant all took a turn at directing but it wasn’t until 1998 that a new direction was established. “Murder at the Music Hall” was our first theatre-restaurant, staged at the Town Hall and combined the great talents of Don Nicolson and Geoff Cabble.



Don Nicolson

The next years we followed up with “Rome Sweet Rome” and “Ma Baker’s Tonic” and in May each year, Geoff got the opportunity to put together a concert of music chosen, arranged and played by him. That pattern has been running successfully since with Clem Furphy and Kieran Murphy taking over after the tragic loss of Don Nicolson.

With the death of Rudi Kuhnle and Eileen Hetherington around 1992 and Max Graham in 2003 this period has had its down times but, the show must go on, and Turaton has every intention of doing just that with the current concert looking back at music from the past 60 years.



Geoff Cabble



Left: Jeff Baker, Geoff Cabble, Denise Keen, Denise Robertson and Clem Furphy ponder production problems in the 2001 production “Mystery on the Orient Express”.

Right: Director Clem Furphy and Wild Bill (Jeff Baker) enjoying their work in “Jest at the West” in December 2003.

