

1976-85

TURATON MUSICAL COMPANY - A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME



By 1976 the name Tatura Male Choir and Ladies Chorus was seeming cumbersome and out of date. Something more appropriate was sought that would reflect the composition of the membership more accurately since a good proportion of the singers now came from Shepparton and performances were now staged at the recently built Town Hall.

Turaton was chosen as being the last part of Tatura and of Shepparton and it endures although such names do not resonate with the public as belonging to a particular place. Similarly, Hill Top is not readily identified as Tatura's golf club and suffers accordingly.

Certainly Turaton's performances did not suffer as this was the era of big musicals with star singers, lavish costumes and sets brilliantly designed and constructed. Eileen Hetherington had just come to town and she captivated everyone - men and women of the cast, men and women of the audience; they all wished they could have been in her school class in Nagambie. Not only did she have a voice to die for but she had a personality that won people over in an instant. She starred in "The Desert Song", "The New Moon", "Land of Smiles", "The Gondoliers", and "The Merry Widow" in 1980 for which she won a Georgy Award. Unfortunately she



Eileen Hetherington and Jim Murphy



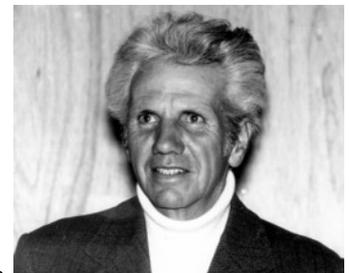
Sue Woodall and Jim Murphy

transferred to Castlemaine in 1980 but she had done much to enhance Turaton's reputation.

Jim Murphy, the boy from Ireland (just out of Dublin) was in his prime and filling the theatre with his stirring voice. Ray Phillips was there to vie for top-billing in every show, Alan Every was there to star with Eileen when Jim didn't get the chance and there was talent to burn for the lesser parts and to make the chorus ring. David Vibert and Bert Gale had been with the company for 15 years and both had, and have, deep resonant voices that would grace any stage. Joan and Warwick Hannah were in their prime too adding depth to the singing and the humour of their roles and Sue Woodall well, just listen to her in "Naughty Marietta" as she soars above the chorus.

Charles Hamilton began as a singer in the Male Choir in 1959, took over as conductor in 1962 and led the way from that time, producing singing of top quality show after show..

Nancy Kinmond arrived in 1982 and she directed some of Turaton's top productions. Arthur Lilley and the Shepparton Symphony Orchestra provided excellent backing for productions at this time and their contribution is often overlooked. Not long after this period, the big musical productions started to flag as the company struggled to keep the personnel necessary for such efforts. It was a time of great voices and great talents to utilize those voices and produce something truly memorable. Everyone associated with them certainly does.



Ray Phillips



ABOVE: John Weight was a fine singer but also a great designer of sets along with Graham Pugh and Foster Adem at this time.



Left, Arthur Lilley, above Wendy Oakes, Kerri Beare, Maurie Fairchild, who came from Melbourne each year to play for us, and wife.