

IT'S OUR JUBILEE!

Canberra, 2-4 September 1987

THE
LIBRARY
BOARD

7 MAY 1987

OF W.A.

LAA 50 — all singing, all dancing

at last the 1937 show! The musical riches of 1937 will accompany the launching of the LAA 50th Jubilee celebrations in Canberra.

Canberra's pre-eminent musical theatre company, the Canberra Philharmonic, will recapture some of the wonderful sounds that Australians were humming in 1937.

In 1937 shows such as 'The Merry Widow' and 'The Maid of the Mountains' were being revived by J.C. Williamson's. They starred the reigning Australian star of musical theatre, Gladys Moncreiff. Gilbert & Sullivan operas were also a popular feature, starring another local songbird, Strella Wilson.

J.C. Williamson's mounted a touring company of 'White Horse Inn' which travelled from Melbourne to Cairns performing in 65 cities. The company travelled in its own train, one of its stops being at Yass — 22 April, 1937. Citizens of Canberra (no doubt including some of the city's librarians), answered the advertisements and flocked to the Giant Marquee to see 'the new revolving stage, 100 artists, 15 scenes, 27 astonishing features' (!).

1937 — J. C. Williamson's revivals, Gershwin music, the Lambeth Walk and the arrival of swing ...

Elsewhere the great American composer George Gershwin died in 1937, leaving a musical legacy of unparalleled richness in popular music. London was doing the Lambeth Walk with the arrival of 'Me and My Girl' in the West End.

The swing era had arrived and dance bands enjoyed enormous popularity at such legendary places as the Trocadero in Sydney. Jim Davidson's ABC Dance Band became a household word in Australia through the medium of radio.

Albert Hall, the venue for the opening night celebrations for LAA 50 witnessed some of this musical activity. It was also the location for the first meeting of the fledgling Institute of Australian Librarians.

For many years Albert Hall was the only venue in Canberra for such theatrical events and for large-scale meetings. The Canberra Philharmonic first performed there in 1951. All orchestral concerts and solo recitals were held in the Albert Hall. It is one of Canberra's major surviving public buildings dating from 1928 — a year after Parliament House. The local legends of audiences having to take hot water bottles to winter performances are no longer true. Sympathetic refurbishment and restoration (plus central heating) have en-



sured a warm, continuing life for this gracious and comfortable hall.

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The Canberra Philharmonic is Canberra's oldest musical theatre company. It grew out of the bush capital's need to develop its own local entertainment. The growth and lasting strength of the amateur theatre movement in Canberra is unique amongst Australia's capital cities. For over 35 years the Canberra Philharmonic has presented productions of professional standard covering a repertoire of operetta, Gilbert & Sullivan, Broadway and West End musicals.

a feast of melodious nostalgia ...

It is most fitting that the Philharmonic will provide musical entertainment at the opening night celebrations in the Albert Hall. Participants at LAA 50 will be served a feast of melodious nostalgia on 2 September performed by Canberra's leading singers.

Richard Stone



LAA 50 Saturday Optional Tour
Program see page 9

Looking back and looking ahead

The 50th Anniversary celebrations of the LAA will be held in Canberra from 2-4 September, 1987. The organising committee has prepared festivities which will look back with nostalgia, and look forward with hope and change.

The historical aspect will be covered in papers presented by Professor Jean Whyte, who will discuss the history of the Australian Institute of Librarians, and Professor Boyd Rayward, who will talk about the contribution to Australian librarianship of John Metcalfe.

Older librarians will be asked to participate in the afternoon session on the first day. Jean Arnot, Wilma Radford and Sir Harold White are some who will share their reminiscences of the early days. Others in the audience may add their own tales.

At the end of day one, Harrison Bryan, Jean Conochie, Ted Flowers, Jane La Scala, Margaret Munro and Margaret Trask will discuss the major achievement of the Association. Finally, at night, the formal dinner and inaugural Harold White Oration will be held at Canberra's Lakeside Hotel.

The second full day of the conference will cover the future of the LAA. The broad topics are 'Learning from the Past; Objectives for the Future' and 'The Individual Member and the Future'. Speakers come from various areas of the profession and all states.



Photo: (left to right) Jenny Gleeson, Richard Stone and Pauline Haldane examine J. C. Williamson musical theatre programs for 1937 as part of planning for the LAA 50 celebrations.

The committee hopes many librarians will travel to Canberra to participate in these celebrations. The committee believes that the festivities will be informative, entertaining and well worth travelling to Canberra in the springtime! We look forward to seeing you there.

Jenny Gleeson
Convener