Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0320

Tait, Viola

(1911 - 2002)

Born	19111101, Pressburg Austria-Hungary
Died	20020206
Occupation	Actor, Author, Philanthropist, Singer

Summary

Born in Pressburg, Austria-Hungary where her father was the manager of a branch of J P Coats thread mills. The family returned to Paisley, in Scotland, with the outbreak of World War I.
She enrolled in the in the Scottish National Academy of Music in Glasgow, then studied singing under Francis Harford before joining the Carl Rosa Opera Company in 1935 and played at the London Lyceum Theatre and touring South Africa.
In 1937 she joined the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company as a principal soprano, touring the English provinces and later America. In 1939 she was invited to join the Australian Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company as a principal for a year long tour of Australia and New Zealand.
She met and married Frank (later Sir Frank) Tait, the youngest of the five Tait brothers.
Her first book *A Family of Brothers* provides a history of the J C Williamson's theatre enterprise and the contribution of the Tait brothers to Australian theatre. This was followed by *Dames, Principal Boys…and all that: A history of Pantomime in Australia* in 2001.

(Source: *Farewell to a grand dame of light opera* by Elisabeth Kumm and *Grand lady of the stage* by Philip Jones)

Published resources

Illustration
Tait theatre drawings : 8 May - 8 June 1979, Tait, Viola (introduction by), 1979

Book
Dames, principal boys... and all that: a history of pantomime in Australia, Tait, Viola and Humphries, Barry (prologue by), 2001

A family of brothers : the Taits and J.C. Williamson : a theatre history, Tait, Viola, 1971

Newspaper Article
Farewell to a grand dame of light opera, Kumm, Elisabeth, 2002

Grand lady of the stage, Jones, Philip, 2002

Resource Section
Viola Wilson (1938-39), The D'Oyly Catre Opera Company, 2001,
http://math.boisestate.edu/gas/whowaswho/W/WilsonViola.htm

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of the Tait family, 1908-1990 [manuscript]

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Viola Tait interviewed by Michelle Potter [sound recording]

Author Details
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