

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0559

Castles, Amy Eliza

(1880 - 1951)

Born	18800725, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Died	19511119, Fitzroy Victoria Australia
Occupation	Opera singer

Summary

Born into a musical family, soprano Amy Castles made her Melbourne, Victoria, debut at the annual meeting of the Austral Salon in 1899. She studied in Paris with Madame Marchesi and then Jacques Bouhy before appearing with Ada Crossley and Clara Butt at St James's Hall, London in 1901. After completing further study Castles sang at the Queen's Hall concerts in London and gave a command performance before King Edward VII in 1906. Castles then appeared in *Hamlet* at Cologne, Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Faust*. She also took part in the Harrison tours of Great Britain and sang with conductors Hans Richter, (Sir) Henry Wood and Landon Ronald. Following her tour of Australia for J & N Tait, in 1909, Castles performed in the Australian premiere of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* for J C Williamson before returning to Europe. At the outbreak of war Castles returned to Australia where she completed a tour of the capital cities. She made her American debut at Carnegie Hall, New York in 1917 as well as giving concerts for sick and wounded soldiers and opening her Manhattan home to visiting Australians. With the Williamson Grand Opera Company Castles toured Australia in 1919 and again in 1925 on a concert tour managed by her brother George and including her sister Eileen.

Events

1912 - 1912

Accepted an offer of a four-year contract from the Imperial Opera in Vienna and was appointed chamber singer to the Imperial Court

1915 - 1915

After the outbreak of war Castles was obliged to leave Austria and returned to Australia to tour the capital cities

1906 - 1906

Gave a command performance before King Edward VII

1917 - 1917

Made her American debut at Carnegie Hall, New York

1899 - 1899

Made her debut at the annual meeting of the Austral Salon, Melbourne

1907 - 1907

Made her European debut at Cologne in Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet*

1901 - 1901

Made her first London appearance at a St James's Hall concert with Ada Crossley and Clara Butt

1898 -

Performed in a local production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* directed by her teacher E Allan Bindley

1905 - 1905

Reappeared in London at Queen's Hall concerts

1909 - 1909

Returned to Australia for a four-and-a-half month tour of seventy-two towns for J & N Tait

1902 - 1902

Returned to Australia to tour for J C Williamson

1911 - 1911

Returned to London for a series of Chappell concerts

1925 - 1925

Returned to Sydney for a concert tour of Australasia which was managed by her brother George and included her sister Eileen

1919 - 1919

Toured Australia with the Williamson Grand Opera Company

1930 - 1931

Visited Hollywood to take part in a 'talkie'

Published resources

Resource Section

Castles, Amy Eliza (1880 - 1951), Radic, Maureen Therese, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070595b.htm>

Edited Book

Who's Who in Australia 1950, Alexander, Joseph A, 1950

Monash Biographical Dictionary of 20th Century Australia, Arnold, John and Morris, Deirdre, 1994

Book

"Footprints on the sands of time" : Bendigo's citizens, the 1909 Bendigonian annual and community history, Brownrigg, Jeff, 2002

A New Melba?: The Tragedy of Amy Castles, Brownrigg, Jeff, 2006

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of Victoria

Illuminated address, 1911 [manuscript].

National Library of Australia

[J.C. Williamson scrapbooks of music and theatre programmes, Sydney and Melbourne, 1905-1921] [microform]

[Biographical cuttings on Amy Castles, singer, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

Author Details

Anne Heywood

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