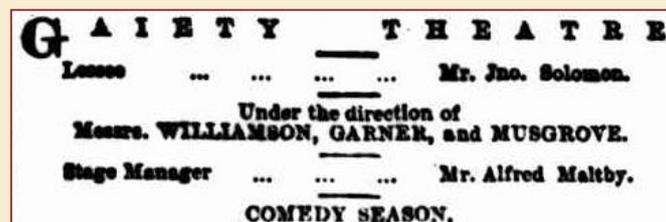


ALFRED MALTBY

Largely associated with English theatre, Alfred Maltby spent several years in Australia during the mid to late 1880s. Prior to his arrival 1886 he had established himself as an actor, writer/librettist and costume designer, being employed in the latter position at the Adelphi theatre (London) between 1873 and 1876. Among his known works prior to 1885 are: *Should This Meet the Eye* (Royal Lyceum, London, 1871); the comedietta *Two Flats and a Sharp*, described as 'an original domestic trio' (Globe Theatre, London, 1873); *Your Vote and Interest*, which was billed as 'an electioneering squib' (Royal Court Theatre, London, 1874); *Don Quixote* (Alhambra Theatre, London, 1876), with Harry Paulton (libretto) and Frederick Clay (music); the farce *Just My Luck* (1878); *Mefistofele II* (Bradford, 1881); and *Borrowed Plumes* (Adelphi Theatre, London, 1885).

At least one of his pieces, *Three Hats*, a comedy written with Owen Dove was produced in Australia prior to his arrival. Billed in the *South Australian Advertiser* as having played to crowded houses nightly at the Royalty and Avenue Theatres, London for over 200 nights, the Adelaide season was produced at the Theatre Royal under the management of Alison, Rignold and Chapman beginning 4 June 1885.

Maltby's time in Australia saw him almost exclusively in the employ of Williamson, Garner and Musgrove. He made his debut appearance as an actor alongside Harry St Maur in the company's 1886 production of *The Great Divorce Case* (New Opera House, Syd; 21 Apr.). His billing reported that he had been associated with the Criterion Theatre, London, for 12 years (SMH: 21 Aug., 2). His engagement also saw him employed as Stage Manager for a number of productions.



Sydney Morning Herald 11 Sept. (1886), 2.

He and St Muir made their debut Melbourne appearances at the Bijou Theatre on 9 October in *The Candidate* (Bijou Th). Maltby was cast as Barnabas Goodever, with St Muir playing Lord Lancelot Oldacre. On 23 October he presented his original character, Mr Dawson, in F. C. Burnand's *Betsy*, with Harry St Maur as Captain McManus. Three of his libretti for Williamson, Garner and Musgrove were *Sleeping Beauty* (1886), *Robinson Crusoe* (1887), and *Jack the Giant Killer* (1887). For the latter two productions, Maltby also designed the costumes.

Maltby returned to Britain in 1889, with one of his first known stage appearances being in a revival of the risqué comedy *Pink Dominos* at London's Comedy Theatre (SAC: 11 Jan. 1890, 6). In mid-1894 a number of reports were published throughout Australia indicating that Maltby was planning to return to Australia either later that same year or early in 1895 with the London (or English) Comedy Company. No tour has yet been located, however.

While little else is currently known about Maltby's life either prior to or after his Australian sojourn, he appears to have been still involved in the British theatre industry up until his death in 1901, with the *New York Dramatic Mirror* of 14 July 1900 recording that his collaboration with Frank Lindo, *The Silver Spoon*, had been recently tried with some success at Buxtonm Derbyshire (6). The pair's three-act comedy *The Soldier Boy*, first produced in London in 1899, is also known to have been staged in Brisbane in 1903 (BC: 21 Nov. 1903, 2).

Alfred Maltby died at Chipperfield, Hertfordshire (England) on 12 February 1901.

Sydney Morning Herald 30 June (1894), 9.