

RESEARCH STATEMENT

Original Creative Work

Citation: *Djin Djin*, Live performances, Mackay, Friday 4 June and Saturday 5 June, 2005

Djin-Djin was arguably Australia's most famous piece of music theatre of the late 19th century. Devised by J.C. Williamson, with music by Leon Caron, the score of this work was lost in the early part of the 20th Century, due to theatre fires in South Africa and New Zealand, where the last known scores and orchestral parts were held. This project aimed to recover and restore the original work, using fragmentary orchestral material and a script in the archives of the Australian National Library, as well as material found in letters, programmes and other late 19th century sources.

Research background

Material recovered in the ANL allowed the almost complete restoration of the major part of the work. Using contemporary references of 19th century performances of the work, together with programmes of performances and letters by performers pertaining to the original work, a complete performing edition was created, enabling the first performance of this work since the First World War.

The research question was whether a major piece of lost Australian theatre could be recovered and reconstituted as a distance of one hundred years, and whether the performance and resurrection of such a work could be relevant to the contemporary Australian audience.

Research contribution

By adapting a fully orchestral work to a form that is more accessible to modern performance, a new performing edition was created from fragmentary historical material. This edition recast the work as a piano duo, in a professional performing edition, accessible to performers, historians and collectors.

Research significance

This performing edition was presented to live audiences, numbering around 300 in Mackay. A previously lost work was recorded, filmed and reviewed by ABC Radio National, both before and after performance.

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