

- 10 Musikverein, 16 October 1870, For the programme see *Neues Fremden-Blatt*, 16 October 1870, p. 13. (ANNO Online)
- 11 The programmes in question can be found in announcements in Vienna daily newspapers such as the *Fremden-Blatt* and *Neues Fremdenblatt*. For Eduard Strauss's 'Rossini Evening' see *Neues Fremden-Blatt*, 27 November 1870, p. 20. (ANNO Online)
- 12 *Erinnerungen*, p. 63.
- 13 *Fremden-Blatt*, 30 April 1878. See also Fritz Racek, *Katalog zur Ausstellung der Wiener Stadtbibliothek „Johann Strauss zum 150. Geburtstag“*, 1975, Nos. 369, 370, 371. *Fremden-Blatt*, 2 May 1878. See also Schönherr, *Ziehrer*, p. 283-4. Jäger-Sunstenau No. 227 (pp.271-6), No. 231 (p.283). *Erinnerungen*, p.63; BuD III/24-5.
- 14 BuD IV/319-27, especially p. 322.
- 15 Tony (Toni) Gerlich, 'Erinnerungen an Carl Michael Ziehrer', typescript, 1948, p. 23. (WB: B 146705). There is also another, revised version, possibly intended for publication as a book, edited by Riki Raab: 'C.M. Ziehrer. Nach Aufzeichnungen von Ziehrers Sekretärin Toni Gerlich', typescript, 1948. This is the text quoted in Schönherr, *Ziehrer*.
- 16 *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, 25 April 1903, p. 5.
- 17 R. Raab: 'C.M. Ziehrer. Nach Aufzeichnungen von Ziehrers Sekretärin Toni Gerlich', typescript 1948. Quoted from Schönherr, *Ziehrer*, p. 487.
- 18 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 29 December 1916. ANNO Online; Mailer ES Archive.
- 19 R. Raab: 'C.M. Ziehrer. Nach Aufzeichnungen von Ziehrers Sekretärin Toni Gerlich', typescript 1948. Quoted from Schönherr, *Ziehrer*, p. 518.

References:

ANNO Online = AustriaN Newspapers Online, the online archive of newspapers and periodicals of the Austrian National Library (www.anno.onb.ac.at) The pagination of the printed journals may differ from the online pagination.

BuD = Johann Strauss (Sohn): *Leben und Werk in Briefen und Dokumenten. Im Auftrag der Johann-Strauß Gesellschaft Wien gesammelt und kommentiert von Franz Mailer*, 10 Bde. (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1983-2007)

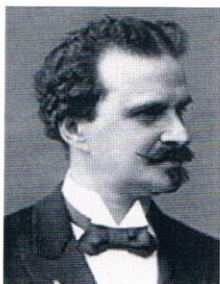
Concert-Repertoire der bestehenden Kapelle des Eduard Strauß, k.u.k. Hofball Musik-Director a.D. (in das Privatleben zurückgetreten im März 1901) (Wien: Buchdruckerei [Katholischer Schulverein] Wien I., Dorotheergasse 7). WB A-108.537.

Erinnerungen = Eduard Strauss, *Erinnerungen* (Leipzig-Wien: Deuticke, 1906).

Mailer ES Archive = The Eduard Strauss files in the material on the Strauss family collected by Franz Mailer and now deposited in the library of the Danube University at Krems in Austria.

Schönherr, *Ziehrer* = Max Schönherr, *Carl Michael Ziehrer: Sein Werk – Sein Leben – Seine Zeit* (Wien: ÖBV, 1974).

WB/WSLB = Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, formerly Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek (Vienna City Library).



Eduard Strauss

Carl Michael Ziehrer



The Alan Turner Opera Company

Andrew Lamb



Alan Turner

Fifty years ago, as first editor of the Society's magazine (then called *Tritsch-Tratsch*), I published in the fourth issue (August 1967) an article entitled 'Alan Turner: Pioneer of the 1930s'. The author was Leila S. Mackinlay, who described herself as 'Amateur Productions Critic'. Leila Antoinette Sterling Mackinlay (1910-96) was also, in fact, a romantic novelist of some note. Moreover, her father Malcolm Sterling Mackinlay (1876-1952) had been a bass singer and later teacher and lecturer who wrote several books. These included *Origin and Development of Light Opera* (1927), whose many illustrations include the title page of the original English edition of Johann Strauss's *Promenade Quadrille* (published in Vienna as *Festival-Quadrille*, op 341), showing Strauss conducting at Covent Garden in 1867. Another of Malcolm Sterling Mackinlay's books was a biography of his mother, the contralto Antoinette Sterling (1843?-1904), who had introduced Arthur Sullivan's song 'The Lost Chord' and A. H. Behrend's setting of Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar'.

Leila Mackinlay thus came from a distinguished line of musical practitioners. For her *Tritsch-Tratsch* article she used old press cuttings of her reviews in *Play Pictorial* and *Dancing Times* to detail a series of amateur productions of Johann Strauss operettas during the 1930s that saw three titles staged in London for the very first time. As background to this, it should be noted that very few Viennese operettas of Strauss's time were seen in London during his lifetime, since they were not then the general international currency that Viennese operettas would

become in the early twentieth century. Even after the death of Jacques Offenbach, French works by the likes of Charles Lecocq, Edmond Audran and Robert Planquette flourished in British theatres alongside the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan to the extent that both Audran and Planquette composed works specifically for London. By contrast, the nineteenth-century Viennese operettas that did achieve performance in London – by Suppè and Millöcker as well as by Strauss – were very much exceptions to the rule. Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* was produced at London's Alhambra Theatre in 1876, followed by *King Indigo* in 1877 and *The Merry War* in 1882. However, apart from a production of *Prince Methusalem* in 1883 that failed to complete its first week, that was apparently all. Even such works as *A Night in Venice* and *The Gipsy Baron* – nowadays ranked next in significance after *Die Fledermaus* – had to wait until well into the twentieth century for their first staging in Britain.

TWO MINUTES FROM BAKER ST. STATION

RUDOLF STEINER HALL 33, PARK RD., N.W.
 Managers: ALICE FREEDMAN
 Licence: N. WHEELER.

Under the Patronage of H.R.H. Prince Arthur of Connaught, K.G.

The Alan Turner Operatic Society
 (Associated with the House of Ernest Turner)

PRESENTS

**On WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
 January 31st and February 1st, 2nd & 3rd, 1934.**

Also Special Gala Performance on January 30th for the Middlesex Hospital
 seats at £2.0 and £1.0 only for this evening. See separate announcement.

7.45 P.M. **First Amateur Performances of** 7.45 P.M.

JOHANN STRAUSS

DIE FLEDERMAUS
 "The Bat" in English.
 Full Operatic version as produced at the International Opera Houses
 See Annex/Notes issued by this Society, to which application for production should be made.

To assist
 The Master Coachbuilders' Benevolent Institution.

Full Ballet, Chorus and Orchestra of 80
 AND LONDON'S LEADING AMATEUR PRINCIPALS, including:
 Gladys Bailey, George Sedrick, Dorcas Howard, Frank Hoyle, Cecilia Lawless, Charles Stonebridge, Rupert Stanley
 Management and Production: ALAN TURNER. Musical Director: HAROLD C. HIND, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., L.Mus.T.C.L.
 Mistress of the Ballet and Prima Ballerina: NORAH BOYLAN.

☞ The Ballet is being produced for the first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs. ☞

THE LONDON LIGHT THEATRE ORCHESTRA (Amateur)

Admission: 21/-, 15/-, 10/6, 7/6, 5/9, 3/6, 2/4 Inclusive. All Seats Reserved.

TICKETS FROM: The Alan Turner Operatic Society, Northdown House, Northdown St., King's Cross, N.1. Phone: Tottenham 6024-54
 The Rudolf Steiner Hall, Phone: Paddington 5219
 The Master Coachbuilders' Benevolent Institution, 112 Great Portland Street, W.1. Phone: Langham 1067, or
 from any member of the Executive Committee.

J. H. C. Potter, Printer, Stansted.

Die Fledermaus itself was seen again in London in other productions, including one under the title of *Nightbirds* in 1911. However, it took the amateur productions about which Leila Mackinlay wrote in our magazine for other works to reach Britain. Of the background to Alan Turner, the man behind them, Miss Mackinlay said nothing. He was not, it now transpires, the former operatic baritone of that name (born in Greenheys, Manchester, in 1871), as stated in Frank Hoffmann's *Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound* (2004), and as I was mistakenly led to state in my programme note for Opera della Luna's 2017 production of *The Queen's Lace Handkerchief*. Rather, his true identity is disclosed in a remarkable 2017 blog post by Mark Smith, archivist of the Derbyshire Record Office, detailing five volumes of Alan Turner's memorabilia deposited with the Derbyshire Record Office in the spring of 2017.¹

Alan Harman Spencer Turner was born in Highgate in 1902, the son of Joseph Ernest Turner (1871-1941), known as Ernest. Born in Stretford, Lancashire, Ernest was brother of Louisa Maria Turner, who was the mother of composer William Walton. Walton was thus Alan Turner's first cousin. Ernest Turner described himself in his 1911 census return as "motor

NEW ST. PANCRAS TOWN HALL THEATRE
 LONDON'S NEWEST LUXURY THEATRE
 Opposite St. Pancras and King's Cross Stations, Euston Road. ENTRANCE IN RUSBOROUGH STREET

Manager and Licence: A. POWELL COOK

FEBRUARY 2nd and 3rd, 1939, at 7.45 p.m.

PATRON THE RT. HON. LORD KENILWORTH C.B.E.

ALAN TURNER presents
THE ALAN TURNER OPERA COMPANY
 IN
 BRITISH PREMIÈRE
 (WORLD PREMIÈRE IN ENGLISH) of
 JOHANN STRAUSS' SPARKLING OPERETTA:

DER LUSTIGE KRIEG
 "WAR - FAIR"

Entire Production, Libretto and Lyrics by ALAN TURNER. Conductor - MARTIN BURKE
 Mistress of Ballet and Prima Dancer - FATMENA TAMAROVA

IN AID OF
 CHURCH OF ST. TERESA, PRINCES RISBOROUGH "THE UNIVERSE" CHARITIES
 MOTOR & CYCLE TRADES BENEVOLENT FUND COACHBUILDERS' BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION
 THE STONHURST and BARAT CLUBS FOR BOYS and GIRLS
 and PARISH SCHOOLS OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE, LIMEHOUSE

Full Chorus, Orchestra and Ballet of nearly 80 Performers
 including
 TREVOR OWEN, MARY BRIGAN, ALBERT BEALE, ALAN BOWDEN, ETHEL CUNDELL, DORIS GRAHAM-PARKER, ALAN TURNER
 ALAN TURNER'S YOUNG LADIES

Admission: 21/-, 15/-, 10/6, 7/6, 5/9, 3/6, 2/6, 1/6

TICKETS FROM: The Alan Turner Opera Co. (Rudolf Steiner) Northdown House, Northdown St., King's Cross, N.1. Phone: Tottenham 6024-54
 Motor and Cycle Trades: Rusborough Road, The Green, Portland Street, W.C.1. Phone: Euston 2207
 or from Keith Procter & Co. Ltd., 150 New Bond Street, W.1 and all branches.

PRESS NOTICES OF PREVIOUS ALAN TURNER STRAUSS PRODUCTIONS:
 1934 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1935 - DER ZIGEUNERBARON - "The Gipsy Baron" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1936 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1937 - DIE ZIGUNERBARON - "The Gipsy Baron" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1938 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1939 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1940 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1941 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1942 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1943 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1944 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1945 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1946 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1947 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1948 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1949 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1950 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1951 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1952 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1953 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1954 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1955 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1956 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1957 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1958 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1959 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1960 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1961 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1962 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1963 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1964 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1965 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1966 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1967 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1968 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1969 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1970 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1971 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1972 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1973 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1974 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1975 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1976 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1977 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1978 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1979 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1980 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1981 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1982 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1983 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1984 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1985 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1986 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1987 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1988 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1989 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1990 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1991 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1992 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1993 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1994 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1995 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1996 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1997 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1998 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 1999 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2000 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2001 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2002 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2003 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2004 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2005 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2006 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2007 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2008 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2009 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2010 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2011 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2012 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2013 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2014 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2015 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2016 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2017 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2018 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2019 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2020 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2021 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2022 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2023 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2024 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."
 2025 - DIE FLEDERMAUS - "The Bat" - "The first time in England, either professionally or by Amateurs."

goods merchant", and since 1898 he had been engaged in supplying to the burgeoning motor industry. From that he would subsequently branch out into the equally burgeoning aviation industry, manufacturing such things as electrical instruments, with factories in King's Cross and High Wycombe. Alan Turner was thus able to further his interest in operetta and the stage from a background of some financial prosperity. His 1930s Strauss operetta productions were consistently advertised on the basis that profits went to charity – including motor-trade charities as well as hospitals.

Alan Turner's Strauss productions followed earlier ventures that included both straight plays and also works of Gilbert and Sullivan during the late-1920s and early-1930s. His Strauss series then began predictably enough with *Die Fledermaus* in January/February 1934 at the Rudolf Steiner Hall in Park Road, Marylebone. This was billed as that work's first amateur production and was conducted by Harold C. Hind, later prominent in brass band circles and the author of books on the orchestra and orchestral instruments. The pictorial weekly *The Sketch* published a full page of illustrations from the *Die Fledermaus* production, and its success may have been a factor in a professional production being mounted by the Carl Rosa Opera Company later that year. Certainly it was sufficient for Alan Turner to return in February 1935 with a more enterprising venture in the shape of the first British stage production of *The Gipsy Baron*, conducted this time by Charles Lambert. The English translation by Henrik Ege had already been used for a 1932 BBC radio broadcast conducted by Adrian Boult, and was then incorporated into the published German-English version of the vocal score. *Der Zigeunerbaron* eventually received its first British professional staging from the Carl Rosa Opera Company at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, on 10 March 1938.

Alan Turner's enterprise continued in January/February 1936 with *1001 Nights* (the Ernst Reiterer adaptation of *Indigo*), conducted by Michael Mudie – at that time of the Royal College

of Music and subsequently of Glyndebourne and Sadler's Wells Opera before being struck down by multiple sclerosis. This time Alan Turner had himself made the English adaptation. Then in February 1937 came *The Queen's Lace Handkerchief*, now conducted by James Robertson - again later of Sadler's Wells Opera Company. Alan Turner had again done his own English libretto from the 1931 version by Rudolf Österreicher and Julius Wilhelm, which used a completely new plot featuring a young lieutenant of hussars who is ordered to ride from Vienna to Munich carrying a lace handkerchief for a royal wedding. A reviewer in *The Times* rather gave away the fact that it was a Strauss adaptation rather than the original by referring to the score containing not only *Rosen aus dem Süden* but also *Wein, Weib und Gesang*. All the same, Leila Mackinlay considered that it was the best show the company had done - "a slight story ... but everywhere there is the sparkle of the Strauss music". *The Times* seemed to agree, declaring that, "The fun, in Mr. Alan Turner's English version, is only rarely allowed to seem dull or dated." Certainly the production was sufficiently successful for the BBC to broadcast a 75-minute radio adaptation of Turner's English version by V. C. Clinton-Baddeley on two evenings in December 1938, starring Derek Oldham and Hella Toros, with Stanford Robinson conducting.

In 1938 there was no Turner staging of a Strauss operetta in London. Instead, he put on his *1001 Nights in Penzance*, whilst - according to Miss Mackinlay - mounting a murder mystery in London. However, in 1939 he was back with his own version of *Der lustige Krieg* with the English sub-title of 'War-Fair'. Incorrectly described as "British Première (World Première in English)" - thereby ignoring the 1882 Alhambra Theatre production - it was staged this time not at the Rudolf Steiner Hall but at the new St Pancras Town Hall. Miss Mackinlay found "the plot complicated" and the piece "not particularly sparkling Strauss", and the *Times* reviewer again seemed to agree. More specifically, the latter declared that "the score contains fewer of those resilient and ingratiating waltzes that constitute the composer's chief claim to fame, and relies more on lively gallop and polka measures, with here and there a dash of the military colour that sometimes recalls Offenbach of *The Grand Duchess*". "No mention this time of orchestra or conductor," declared Miss Mackinlay of her own review. *The Times* named the orchestra as the Ernest Read Orchestra, and the conductor was Martin Burke.

"This, then," Miss Mackinlay continued, "was the last of Alan Turner's splendid Strauss adventures, for the war came shortly afterwards, taking him from London". Turner's six-year enterprise on behalf of Strauss operettas had been a remarkable one, introducing three Strauss works to the British stage for the first time, albeit two of them in extensive adaptations. Perhaps the biggest surprise is that he never mounted *A Night in Venice*, though this did not have to wait much longer for its first British staging, being presented professionally at London's Cambridge Theatre in 1944 in the Marischka/Korngold version with Daria Bayan as Annina and Dennis Noble as Caramello.

Miss Mackinlay ended her 1967 article for the Society's magazine by writing of Alan-Turner, "What became of him afterwards I never heard, and sadly conclude he lost his interest in operetta." Though *Der lustige Krieg* was indeed the last of his London operetta productions, the suggestion that he lost his interest in operetta is very far from the truth. In fact, after World War II, the Alan Turner Opera Company went on to even greater

things - not in London, but in Derby, where Turner had by then succeeded his father as Managing Director of the Ernest Turner Group. By 1933 the Group had acquired Derby's Phoenix Mills, to which they added the Spa Lane Mills during the 1940s. These produced not only such things as furnishings and ladies' wear but, more particularly, upholstery for motor and aviation seating. What's more, the mills provided a loyal workforce from which Alan Turner could swell the number of participants in his more lavish productions on the much larger stage of Derby's Grand Theatre.

In Derby, Alan Turner re-staged *1001 Nights* in 1946, *The Queen's Lace Handkerchief* in 1947 and *Die Fledermaus* in 1948. Those 1947 performances of *Das Spitzentuch der Königin* would seem to have been the last in Britain until the first professional production in 2017 by Opera della Luna, using Strauss's original version for the first time in Britain. Following the 1948 *Die Fledermaus*, Turner departed from Johann Strauss in 1949 by mounting Frederic Norton's *Chu Chin Chow*. With this he raised his enterprise onto a yet greater scale, since his production ran for two weeks and featured not only a large number of participants from his workforce but also an elephant, a dromedary and a waterfall. To accommodate the elephant the stage of the Grand Theatre apparently had to be specially strengthened. The conductor in these early post-War days was John Pritchard - later Sir John Pritchard - who was at that time conductor of the Derby String Orchestra.

Franz Lehár's *The Land of Smiles* followed in 1950, but in December of that year Derby's Grand Theatre closed its doors, its façade surviving today as frontage of a Chinese restaurant. However, Alan Turner's interests did not stop at live theatre. In post-War years Derby's Spa Lane Mills were also the home for the Ernest Turner Film Unit, which produced 16mm sound films of relevance to the group's business interests and which had its own cinema. The films included one entitled *Family Affair*, indicating Alan Turner's enlightened interest in the welfare of his workers. The five albums recently deposited in the Derbyshire Record Office detail his attachment to the idea of "the Christian factory", running his business in a way that incorporated organised worship as well as more general concern for the welfare of his workers. This led to him receiving a papal knighthood from Pope Pius XII in 1956.

Alan Turner died in the Isle of Wight in late-1965, aged 63. His Johann Strauss productions of the 1930s, noteworthy though they were, were only a small part of the activities of what was obviously a very remarkable man. It might be added that, following his marriage in 1928, he went on to father nine children. His eldest son, Bruno Turner, is a musicologist noted for his work on early music and as frequent conductor of Pro Cantione Antiqua. It was his youngest child, Hugh Turner, who was responsible for depositing his father's albums with the Derbyshire Record Office in the spring of 2017, thereby helping provide the background information on the Alan Turner Opera Company in this article.

Footnotes

- 1 Mark Smith: The Alan Turner Opera Company's Eye-Catching Archives, <https://recordoffice.wordpress.com/2017/04/17/the-alan-turner-opera-companys-eye-catching-archives/>. I am extremely grateful to Mark Smith, as well as to Hugh Turner, Alan Turner's youngest child, for their considerable help with this article and for permission to reproduce the accompanying illustrations.