

ALLAN WILKIE IN AUSTRALIA THE WORK OF A
SHAKESPEAREAN ACTOR-MANAGER

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This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except when due reference is made in the text or in the footnotes.

Signed L. J. Warrington _____

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the work of Allan Wilkie (1878-1970), actor-manager, with particular reference to his efforts to maintain a permanent Shakespeare company in Australia during the 1920s. It concentrates on Wilkie's productions of Shakespeare's plays, giving details of stage business, settings, costumes and individual performances, and also discusses their reception by critics and by the public. In addition, Wilkie's work is compared with other attempts to stage Shakespeare in Australia in the years 1900-1931.

Chapter I deals with Wilkie's upbringing in England, and illustrates his growing interest in the theatre (and particularly in the plays of Shakespeare), his theatre training, and the early influences - Irving, Tree, Greet, Benson - which were to colour his own productions of Shakespeare's plays. Chapter II follows Wilkie's early experiences as an actor-manager, on tour through the British Isles and Asia.

Chapters III-V trace Wilkie's career in Australia and New Zealand, which falls into three distinct phases. 1915-1920, when he toured for George Marlow at the head of the George Marlow Grand Shakespearean Company (chapter III); 1920-1926, the formation and touring years of the Allan Wilkie Shakespearean Company, disrupted by a disastrous fire (chapter IV); 1927-1931, the years of struggling to maintain a theatre company in the

face of economic depression - a task which finally proved impossible (chapter V). Wilkie's departure from Australia in 1931 virtually signalled the end of his career as an actor-manager.

Appendices A and B provide check-lists of plays by Shakespeare performed in Australia in the years 1900-1931. Appendix A deals specifically with performances by the Allan Wilkie company, while Appendix B lists plays performed in Sydney and Melbourne by other companies and individuals. In most instances, performances given in these cities would later tour to other centres in Australia and New Zealand. Venues, dates of first performance and names of principal actors are provided for each entry. Appendix C lists materials consulted in the preparation of the thesis, including manuscripts and private correspondence, interviews, newspapers and magazines, and collections of theatre programmes.

