

# SIGHT AND SOUND UPDATE

(No. 73 April 2020)

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Due to the COVID-19 regulations, it is with sadness and regret that I advise you that we have ceased most operations of AMMPT Western Region (Inc.)/Pictures in Motion.

Our activities at Sunset heritage precinct have ceased completely, including any tours.

The In-Focus meetings for 2020 have been cancelled. The Cygnet Cinema has closed due to Government directives, therefore the "Classics of the Silver Screen" will not be continuing.

A few members/volunteers are working from their homes individually, such as film library volunteers. Ken McKay will continue to upload articles to our Facebook page for your information and enjoyment. We will also keep issuing the 'Sight and Sound Update' with various film and television articles.

When restrictions are lifted we will advise you as to when and which activities will resume. In the meantime please stay safe and as healthy as possible

Agnes Foyster

## SUNSET MUSEUM

The shutdown of Sunset could not have come at a more inconvenient time according to the volunteers. The television boys were in the middle of installing the television studio equipment from Curtin University and the cinema guys were restoring a pair of Raycophone J3 projectors.

In the library, books were being catalogued and the film staff were busy reviewing our large film collection.

Plans were in place to turn the main hall back into an exhibition space so that tours could resume. All is now on hold until we return.



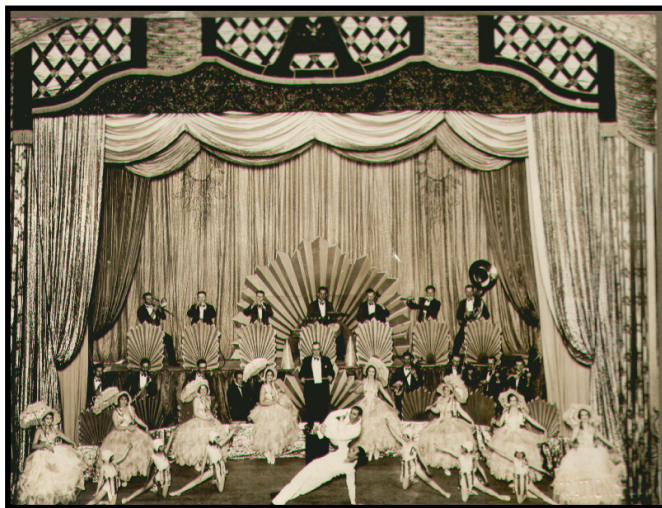


## CINEMAS OF YESTERYEAR

In the last days of Silent Pictures two Picture Palaces opened in Perth, the Ambassadors in 1928 and Capitol in 1929. Both theatres presented stage shows as part of their programmes with Ballet Dancers, Speciality Acts and Orchestras, and in the case of the Ambassadors, a Wurlitzer Organ. Within a few short years sound movies had taken over and stage presentations and orchestras were dispensed with.



Right: The Ambassadors Theatre



The Ambassadors was the last theatre in Perth to retain its orchestra, finally disbanding it in 1931.

Shown here are just two photos of the stage presentations from the Ambassadors and Capitol Theatres.

Left: The Capitol Theatre

## TV HISTORY-THE ERA OF VACUUM TUBE THERMIONIC VALVES

The earliest vacuum tubes evolved from incandescent light bulbs, containing a filament sealed in an evacuated glass envelope. Signal amplification by means of a vacuum tube became practical with Lee De Forest's 1907 invention of the three-terminal tube, which evolved into what became known as the triode.

The triode contained a cathode, an anode and a grid. Owing to deficiencies in these devices, further grids were introduced to minimise various issues. These tubes had a finite life as the filament heating the cathode may burn out, or other internal issues could develop, requiring a tube's replacement. This was a major reason for early TV sets to fail, where repairmen, known as valve jockeys, would quickly fix most problems by exchanging valves, until the set sprang back into life. More refined fault finding was employed by the TV stations, where preventative maintenance was the practice. Valve testers were employed to identify valves showing signs of deterioration, so that the likelihood of a fault developing on-air was minimised.



In the 1940s the invention of semiconductor devices made it possible to produce solid-state devices, which are smaller, more efficient, reliable and durable, and cheaper than thermionic tubes. From the mid-1960s, thermionic tubes were then being replaced with the transistor.

Left: John Quicke, the former Chief Engineer of TVW Channel 7 in Perth, and, to his right, one such valve tester that was employed by

a prominent TV and Radio repair company. This instrument was donated by Hills Telefix to our Museum.