

The Australian Musical



BALLARAT

*This is the story of the songs they sang
Songs that through the goldfields rang
Of rebellion and the price they paid
The flag they made and their stockade*

The story of

EUREKA STOCKADE

BALLAARAT is a colourful tale of a turbulent time.

The gold rushes of the 1850's, the Eureka Stockade, the events that caused it and the aftermath, have long since passed into Australian folklore. However, their impact on the country's psyche remains. Almost 150 years later, the miners' Eureka flag still stirs emotion and stands as a symbol of resistance against oppression by authority. The conflict that took place at Ballaarat and the subsequent support by the population for the miners became the beginning of the end for traditional Colonial rule. The vote was consequently opened to a wider section of the community and this led ultimately to universal adult suffrage and the democracy of today.

BALLAARAT is the stirring story of those events from the excitement of the discovery of gold near Clunes to the triumph of the miners in the courts of Melbourne. It is also a tribute to a rowdy, fascinating time as seen through the eyes of the narrator, Henry Seekamp, who was the editor of the Ballaarat Times, the most influential newspaper of the goldfields. Henry was in a position to see both sides of the story. He was ultimately gaoled for sedition for his newspaper's support of the miners' cause. It is also a true-life love story between Peter Lalor, who led the miners' resistance and his dearest Alicia, a love that spanned the world and five decades.

How to spell **B**ALLAARAT

Ballaarat is a word of the Kulin Aboriginal people meaning either "reclining on an elbow" or "good place to rest". Somehow, the pronunciation was shortened by the early settlers and in the 1850's both spellings were in use. Of course, the less lyrical and more pedestrian Ballarat spelling has survived as the name of the modern city.

*B*ALLAARAT

Extracts from songs of

*In the wake of the rush of '49
When the gold ran out in the Yankee mines
Men came to search for gold downunder
And tore a way of life asunder*

*We are the men of Ballaarat
From every land on earth we come
We break our backs we strive and toil
To tear her treasure from her soil
The gold of Ballaarat*

*My dearest Alicia
These arms long to hold you
These eyes long to gaze into your eyes
And all this body needs is to
Love you forever
There's an aching in this lonely heart that cries
For my dearest Alicia*

*Dip your lids to Jimmy boy
Lift your glass and doff your hat
Jimmy Esmond's made a find
Struck gold at Ballaarat*

*From near and far they come
To find a golden dream
The peeler men the speiler men
The hurdy gurdy girls
The publicans the pugilists
From all around the world*

*And what will be the price of freedom
Who hears the digger's cry
When he asks what it was for
Where is justice
Tell me now what will be
The price of freedom*

For further information about Ballaarat, contact Ron Thomas

*Fax: International 61-2-9907 9997 Australia 02-9907 9997
Phone: International 61-2-9907 9788 Australia 02-9907 9788
Email: ron_thomas@anitech.com.au*

The *B*ALLAARAT Story

The turmoil, the commotion, the clamour of the gold rush down under is a great setting for a real historical Australian musical show. It was a boisterous, noisy, exciting time that was made the more fascinating by the many larger-than-life characters involved. The Eureka Stockade story is well worth the telling. The more we studied the romantic golden years of the 1850's, the more we concluded that the gold and the men and women who came to Australia to find it have formed the core stock of the "Aussie" character for the next hundred years or more. Ballaarat is about the thrill and excitement of gold discovery, the colour and spectacle of the greatest gold rush of all and the raw emotion of the collision between a bungling colonial government and a community of miners determined to have a say in their future. The miners' protest meetings were the first grand scale multicultural events in Australia's history and ample proof of the ability of a diverse people to cooperate when circumstance dictates necessity. Not too surprisingly, it is apparent that many of the problems that led to the Eureka combatants' distrust of each other haven't changed all that much in the last 150 years and the story has a ring of ironic relevance that still strikes a familiar chord today. For all these reasons we wrote Ballaarat.

Ron Thomas & Wayne Gardner

