

[Page 78 - Kieran Ballah Remembers M.J.](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 48](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1988/6/1

ii'j'fliiilpMtiiffitaitttM He liked to produce shows. You know, he wished--to? day- -he was very much ahead of his time, I think. He produced a lot. of operet? tas , a lot of stage shows. Ones, oh--"The Count of Monte Cristo"--which was a big stage produc? tion, probably the biggest one ever pro? duced- -that and the Pas? sion Play. And j operettas like ' "Sunbonnet Sue" and "The Wishing Well." And some "Scouter's Variety Shows"--would be the big production shows in Sydney in the '40s, during the war. And they were big produc? tions. They were all held at the Lyceum. They'd be like,the stage shows--without the girlies--of La' Vegas, with all the back? drops , and the fancy glitter and every? thing. He only did a couple of those. They were done by a lot of different people, and every couple of years they'd give a new di? rector a chance to put on his show. He did two of them. They were big productions. Did a lot of minstrel shows in those days. '30s and '40s. He didn't act in them. He sang in them--he used to always sing a num? ber in the second part, maybe in the caba? ret part of the show. But he directed them, and directed the music. And staged the pro? duction. He was very much his own man. He wanted to do things himself. That's what the Ballahs are all like--very stubborn. m"". you know! But he felt he knew what he want? ed, and knew what he should have on the stage. He liked glitter, he liked lights, he liked spotlights. The Passion Play--it was a big production. I always thought it was one of his best things. The Passion Play was done always on Good Friday. Did it for about four years. He bought all the clothes for it, all the costumes. All the staging, he owned. He ran himself into debt. You know, he was only making very little money as a choir direc? tor and teaching voice. But he'd borrow money to put this production on. And big production. The very first Christ that I remember as a little boy was Edgar Fortune, a school- teacher--he's dead, now. And the show was so heavily done, and so well done. It was the whole scene--the stations of the cross--right from Pilot's court, the con- STOP AT DINO'S fresh baked goods * souvenirs magazines * film * charcoal gifts * novels * camp fuel * ice Ingonish STAY AT One Stop Store & Restaurant DINO'S Trailer Park Laundromat * close to the National Park * Ingonish 1' ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK No Admission Charge 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Year Round 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. July 1 to Sept. 30 Open 7 Days a Week BELL THE MAN * BELL THE EXPERIMENTER * HYDROFOIL HALL Beautiful, hitelUgent and Peaceful BADDECK, N. S. 75 km. west of Sydney on Route 105 Children Can Build & Fly a Bell Kite Special Evening Presentations Inquire 295-2069 for Times GUIDE SERVICE AVAILABLE CanadS