

**J S Battye Library of West Australian History**  
**Private Archives – Collection Listing**

MN 2093  
Acc. 5831A

**GUNNING, Coral Tottie**

Born August 1915, Perth, Western Australia. Died 1998, Perth, Western Australia. Coral Gunning was a self-taught cabaret performer who began her career at age 14. She had 5 distinct voices and many medical studies revealed her vocal chords to be much longer than those of the average man or woman. She came from a theatrical background – her Mother, Grandmother and Uncle were also stage performers.

Coral was a descendant (great great grand niece), through her father – Dudley John Gunning – of the infamous Gunning sisters (Elizabeth and Maria) of Castlecode Co. Roscommon, Ireland. In the mid 1700's, the sisters were introduced from obscurity to London society because of their exceptional beauty. Elizabeth Gunning then married James, the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Hamilton and became the Duchess of Hamilton and 7 years later, following the death of her husband, became the Duchess of Argyll. Maria Gunning married and became the Countess of Coventry.

In 1937, Coral won 3KZ's 'A & P Parade' in Melbourne, a talent quest for amateur performers, from thousands of entrants. The competition win launched Coral into a successful international entertainment career in the 1930's and 1940's where she performed extensively on the stage and in music halls in England, Scotland, Ireland, South Africa, India, Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, Egypt, Germany and France. Coral was renowned for her impersonation acts, singing range, whistling and piano, guitar and accordion playing.

Coral never married, but it is reputed she received over 25 marriage proposals during her life, some of them including wealthy businessmen and royalty. Instead, Coral spent much of her life caring for her mother, who traveled with her.

From 1969 until the mid 1980's, while living in Adelaide, South Australia, Coral started 'Music on Wheels', a non-profit business designed to teach people to find and polish hidden musical and entertainment talents. In the mid 1980's, Coral returned to Perth.

**The Papers**

The papers were donated to Battye Library by Coral Gunning, 20 February 1990.

Holdings = 0.84m

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### **Access**

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### **Summary of Classes**

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	<b>AGENDA</b>	
5831A/1	19 December 1939	
	'Queen's Theatre', Dublin – broadcast	
5831A/2	30 October – 10 November 1944	
	'ABC' – broadcast	
5831A/3	21 April 1947	
	'Henry Cochran & C.G.' – broadcast	
5831A/4	'Jack and the Beanstalk' – broadcast	
5831A/5	24 June 1948	
	'Gorgonzola Capers' – musical theatre	
5831A/6	<i>Unassigned</i>	
5831A/7	<i>Unassigned</i>	
5831A/8	<i>Unassigned</i>	
	<b>BUSINESS CARDS</b>	
5831A/9	Various – from India, Singapore.	
	<b>CARDS</b>	
5831A/10	n.d.	
	Various greeting cards	
	<b>CORRESPONDENCE</b>	
5831A/11	16 January 1932 – 25 April 1962	
	Various show business letters	
5831A/12	7 December 1965 – 20 May 1981	
	'Music on wheels' business letters	
	<b>DRAFTS</b>	
5831A/13	'Speech at 3AK Melbourne'	
5831A/14	'My Friend' (music notes)	
5831A/15	'Love's old sweet song' (music notes)	
5831A/16	'The three trees'	
5831A/17	'Leibersham'	
5831A/18	'Theatre theories'	
5831A/19	Kiss me again	
5831A/20	A night at the Coconut Grove	
5831A/21	A & P Parade	
5831A/22	Robison	
5831A/23	Gala premiere	
5831A/24	To the President and members of the committee of the National Organisation of women in Los Angeles	
5831A/25	To the President and members of the committee of the National Organisation of women in Los Angeles	
5831A/26	'Mrs Rex interview'	
5831A/27	'March of time in song'	

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5831A/28	'She was too versatile'	
5831A/29	'Accordean'	
5831A/30	'The big broadcast'	
5831A/31	'Was it rain?'	
5831A/32	'Babes in the wood'	
5831A/33	'Janet's big chance'	
5831A/34	'George Burns & Gracie Allen'	
5831A/35	'Coral Gunning: this is your strife'	
5831A/36	'Sunny Australia'	
5831A/37	'The audition'	
5831A/38	'The dentist and his victim'	
5831A/39	'Fairy tales'	
5831A/40	'Waltzing Matilda'	
	<b>FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</b>	
5831A/41	30 June 1977	
	'Music on wheels'	
	<b>INVITATIONS</b>	
5831A/42	Various invitations	
<b>MISSING</b>		
	<b>LETTERS</b>	
5831A/43	12 April 1936 – 26 May 1989	
<b>MISSING</b>	Various personal letters	
	<b>LISTS</b>	
5831A/44	Various lists – Christmas cards, presents	
<b>MISSING</b>		
	<b>MANUSCRIPTS</b>	
5831A/45	'Three trees'	
<b>MISSING</b>		
5831A/46	'Life in rooms' by V.M. Gunning	
<b>MISSING</b>		
	<b>MUSIC SHEETS</b>	
5831A/47	Various music composed by Coral Gunning <i>Transferred to State Music Library</i>	
	<b>NEWSPAPERS</b>	
5831A/48	7 – 13 January 1945	
	'Radio Times: News Pictorial'. Coral Gunning	
	featured on pg. 2	
	<b>NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS</b>	
5831A/49	Various newspaper cuttings about Coral Gunning	Photocopy
5831A/50	17 September 1935	Photocopy

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	The Star' – 'Miss Victoria quest'	
5831A/51	31 May 1958	Photocopy
	'Here in Hong Kong'	
5831A/52	1 June 1958	Photocopy
	'Hong Kong Tiger Standard' – 'At Maxim...'	
5831A/53	7 February 1973	Photocopy
	'The News' – 'The wheels are alive'	
5831A/54	11 March 1973	Photocopy
	'Sunday Mail' – 'Music to charm the old folk'	
5831A/55	23 April 1985	Photocopy
	'Southern Gazette' – 'Mother Theresa of showbiz'	
5831A/56	30 July 1989	Photocopy
	'Sunday Times' – 'Coral a walking music hall of fame, fortune'	
	NOTEBOOKS	
5831A/57	Small black notebook containing addresses for venues, people and performance dates	
5831A/58	1974 – 1976	
	Tentative bookings	
5831A/59	January 1975 – June 1976	
	Telephone bookings	
5831A/60	1976	
	Telephone bookings	
	NOTES	
5831A/61	Song: 'You know good servants are hard to find...'	
5831A/62	Song: 'The world is a masquerade party...'	
5831A/63	Song?: 'Anam mehere jhan anam mehere jhan...'	
5831A/64	Song: 'Fish gotta swim...'	
5831A/65	Song: 'the week-end over, ...'	
5831A/66	Music notes: 'Whistler and his dog'	
5831A/67	Show act: 'And now, here's Miss Elizabeth Berger...'	
5831A/68	Song?: 'I've got sixpence...'	
5831A/69	ABC: radio show (Ted and Coral Gunning)	
5831A/70	Unnamed radio show, pg. 2-6 (Coral Gunning, Norm, Gracie, George)	
5831A/71	Song: 'There's a bundle hanging on the wall.'	
5831A/72	Song: 'Oh, the chirruping of the birdies...'	
5831A/73	Page of an unnamed radio show (Una, Hal, Coral Gunning)	
5831A/74	Stage notes (scene sets) to an unnamed play	
5831A/75	pg. 2 to unnamed agenda. Possibly during 'A &	

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	P Parade'	
5831A/76	Scene from unnamed play	
5831A/77	Song: 'There's a story I've read...'	
5831A/78	Letter to Mr (Clark?) Gable	
5831A/79	Unnamed theatre show plan	
5831A/80	Unnamed play: Coral Gunning and Al	
5831A/81	Song: 'If you've never had to count a million sheep...'	
5831A/82	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/83	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/84	pg. 3-10 of letter. Unnamed addressee	
5831A/85	11 August 1977	
	Copy of letter to Don Dunstan, SA Premier	
5831A/86	'Random thoughts'	
5831A/87	pg. 3-9 – letter?	
5831A/88	'Musical therapy can benefit...'	
5831A/89	'Discrimination of the arts...'	
5831A/90	'Matilda' (play) – directions	
5831A/91	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/92	Radio show directions	
5831A/93	Music directions to unnamed play	
5831A/94	Music directions to unnamed play	
5831A/95	Music directions to unnamed play	
5831A/96	pg. 3-5 of letter?	
5831A/97	Unnamed radio show script	
5831A/98	Speech for a character in play (Cyril Fletcher)	
5831A/99	Song: 'Hello, how do you do...'	
5831A/100	Song: 'The farmer gets five bucks...'	
5831A/101	Song: 'The farmer gets five bucks...'	
5831A/102	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/103	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/104	Unnamed play dialogue?	
5831A/105	Thoughts on life at 40	
5831A/106	Song?: 'I'm going back to where I come from...'	
5831A/107	Song?: 'Oh, I know, all I owe, I owe. I owe...'	
5831A/108	Unnamed radio show scripts	
5831A/109	Unnamed show sketches	
5831A/110	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/111	Unnamed play scenes (Coral gunning, Frank and Pam)	
5831A/112	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/113	Song: 'Little man, you've had a busy day...'	
5831A/114	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/115	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/116	Various songs and music	
5831A/117	'Yankee doodle dandy'	
5831A/118	Various pages of words to songs	

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5831A/119	Various pages of words to songs	
5831A/120	‘Music on wheels’ notes	
5831A/121	Unnamed play directions	
5831A/122	Various pages of words to songs	
	<b>PHOTOGRAPHS</b>	
5831A/123	Various (sizes) unnamed photographs – Coral Gunning, family and friends?	
	<b>PLAYS</b>	
5831A/124	‘The restaurant episode’	
5831A/125	‘Comedy escapades’	
5831A/126	‘Gala premiere’	
5831A/127	30 November 1944	
	‘Snapshots’	
5831A/128	‘The audition’	
5831A/129	‘Impersonations’	
5831A/130	‘Murder in the foyer’	
5831A/131	‘Looking ahead’ – ‘All talkie’	
5831A/132	‘Looking ahead’ – dialogue synopsis	
5831A/133	‘Mirth and music’	
5831A/134	‘Storm at the windmill’	
5831A/135	Various pages of unnamed plays	
	<b>PRESS RELEASES</b>	
5831A/136	‘Babes in woods’ – publicity poster	
5831A/137	‘Music on wheels’ – various publicity material	
	<b>PROGRAMMES</b>	
5831A/138	‘Off the dole’	
5831A/139	‘G.O.H.’	
5831A/140	Tivoli theatre of varieties	
5831A/141	Concert in aid of the appeal fund of the Sydney Frankenberg branch British Legion	
5831A/142	The theatre paisley	
5831A/143	Variety entertainment in ‘The Orient cinema’	
5831A/144	Evening at 8 – ‘Anglo-American’ programme	
5831A/145	Palace theatre programme	
5831A/146	‘Cinderella’	
5831A/147	‘The babes in the wood’	
5831A/148	‘Laugh-it-off’	
5831A/149	‘Radio revels’	
5831A/150	New theatre Northampton	
5831A/151	The Majestic theatre	
5831A/152	Grand hotel – various programmes	
5831A/153	Birmingham empire programme	
5831A/154	The green hotel Christmas follies	

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5831A/155	Tivoli circuit – ‘The radio roundup’	
5831A/156	Melbourne town hall – ‘Radio roundup’	
5831A/157	‘A high-class vaudeville and specialty show’ programme	
5831A/158	Gaiety music hall	
5831A/159	‘Roundabout’	
5831A/160	The Gaiety theatre Ayr	
5831A/161	Tivoli theatre of varieties	
5831A/162	The new Raffles ballroom’ – Singapore	
5831A/163	‘Hits and highlights’	
5831A/164	‘Up and atom girls’	
5831A/165	Grand concert by the Veteran’s ex-servicemen’s band	
5831A/166	The pavilion	
5831A/167	Cremorne theatre	
5831A/168	Hotel Marina	
5831A/169	‘Fun marches on’	
5831A/170	‘Largs entertainers’	
5831A/171	‘The windmill’ – tea gardens	
5831A/172	Swiss hotel Delhi	
5831A/173	‘The dark angel’	
5831A/174	‘Roberta’	
5831A/175	‘New York follies’	
5831A/176	‘Red, blonde and brunette’	
5831A/177	30 August 1936	
	Grand invitation concert	
5831A/178	12 November 1936	
	Radio round-up	
5831A/179	‘The crazy show of 19 “naughty” 8’	
5831A/180	6 March 1938	
	‘Grand all-star radio concert’	
5831A/181	1938-39	
	Season of Sunday concerts	
5831A/182	1939	
	‘Gaiety whirl’	
5831A/183	15 June 1941	
	Theatre Royal	
5831A/184	7 May 1942	
	‘Anchors up’	
5831A/185	4 January 1946	
	‘Hello 1946’	
5831A/186	1 February 1946	
	Artists and models, 1946’	
5831A/187	15 February 1946	
	‘Hanky panky’	
5831A/188	1 March 1946	
	‘Best bib and tucker’	

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5831A/189	1949	
	Independence gala at hotel Imperial	
5831A/190	24 December 1949	
	'The green hotel' programme	
5831A/191	21 June 1972	
	'The fabulous golden years'	
5831A/192	'The fabulous golden years'	
	RECEIPTS	
5831A/193	9 November 1975 – 20 September 1978	
	'Music on wheels'	
	SCRAPBOOKS	
5831A/194 OSM	Contains various newspaper cuttings	
5831A/195	Contains various photographs	
5831A/196	Contains various photographs, letters and postcards	
5831A/197	Contains various photographs, letters and postcards	
5831A/198	Contains various photographs, letters and postcards	
5831A/199	Contains various newspaper cuttings	
5831A/200	Contains programmes for plays and productions where Coral Gunning appeared	
	SERIALS	
5831A/202	1 July 1950	
	'Roundabout: the town tattler'. Features Coral Gunning pg. 10-11	
	SONGS	
5831A/203	'Aboriginal love song'	
5831A/204	'Medley'	
5831A/205	'Beloved', 'Paper moon', 'Dusty shoes', 'Blue Prelude'	
5831A/206	'Ma curly headed baby'	
5831A/207	'Give me a kiss' – (Spanish?)	
5831A/208	'Chappell-Morris Songster No. 2' book, includes various songs	
5831A/209	'Wheels'	
5831A/210	'Pretty butterfly'	
5831A/211	'Melody cruise'	
5831A/212	'The streets of Laredo'	
5831A/213	'The gypsy'	
5831A/214	'Amor'	

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	<b>SPEECHES</b>	
5831A/215	‘Protest for equality of justice’ Chart	
	<b>TALKS</b>	
5831A/216	Unnamed radio interview including Coral Gunning,	
	Nicola and the answers to some letters. (Top badly damaged)	
5831A/217	Mack’s radio party – ‘The voice of youth’	
5831A/218	‘Radio Times session 3AK Melbourne’	
5831A/219	‘The radio programme of a century’	
5831A/220	The Charles E. Blanks recording studios – ‘Australian artists on parade’	
5831A/221	‘A & P Parade’	
	<b>TELEGRAMS</b>	
5831A/222	12 November 1936 – 24 February 1978	
	Various good wishes and business telegrams	
	<b>VINYL GRAMOPHONE RECORDS</b>	
5831A/223	Various recordings of Coral Gunning and other artists	Transferred to State Music Library
5831A/201	Various vinyl gramophone records including Coral Gunning	Transferred to State Music Library
	<b>WAGES BOOKS</b>	
5831A/224	25 January 1974 – 17 February 1978	
	‘Music on wheels’	

14 August 2003