

# Conductor

## Eugene Goosens & the 'Witch' of Kings



National Geographic

Pornography, occult & erotica  
Rosaleen Norton - the Witch of Kings Cross

Renowned conductor **EUGENE GOOSENS** lived for a time in Willoughby. He studied music and played in orchestras as a violinist before becoming a conductor. Subsequently, he founded his own orchestra and ensemble. Goosens spent nine years in Sydney (1947 to 1956) where he conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He was also a director of the NSW State Conservatorium of Music. In 1956, he was forced to resign his position in Sydney after a major public scandal.

**Rosaleen Norton**, the so-called "Witch of Kings Cross" was known for her interest in the occult and erotica. Goosens met Norton in the early 1950s. He secretly shared her passions. They conducted an intense affair, exchanging a number of passionate letters. Although Goosens asked Norton to destroy all of them, she kept a bundle hidden behind a sofa.

Sydney Sun reporter Joe Morris had infiltrated Norton's 'coven'. He stole Goosens's letters from Norton's flat and made sure they fell into the hands of the Sydney Police.

### Conductor guilty

In 1956, Goosens visited Europe. Upon his return his bags were searched by Customs officials, who found a large amount of what was then considered pornographic material. The evidence of his affair with Norton left him open to the serious charge of "scandalous conduct". Goosens was forced to plead guilty to the pornography charges. The scandal ruined his reputation and forced him to resign from his positions. He returned to Europe.

News of the scandal surrounding his departure from Australia had reached Europe and he struggled to find regular work as a concert conductor.