

APPENDIX F

SELECTED BIOGRAPHIES OF ARTISTS OF SIGNIFICANCE WHO WERE ASSOCIATED WITH HARRY CLAY'S COMPANY

NB: All artists in this appendix have had their entries updated and expanded for the 2005 Ph D thesis "What Oh Tonight). See Appendix D (<http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:107238>). The same artists' entries in the Australian Variety Theatre Archive are being updated whenever new information is identified. See <http://ozvta.com/> (or at Pandora: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-143747>)

The following biographies deal primarily with each individual's career during the period that Harry Clay operated his theatrical organisation – this being primarily the years 1900-1930. Only brief details relating to a person's career prior to or after this period are presented.

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The artists above represent a sample of performers who were highly popular during their careers, and who spent some time on Harry Clay's circuits. Even a brief survey of those considered to have had significant associations with Clay would take up considerably more space within this appendix that can be afforded. Some of the names of those who have had to be left out of this appendix, but who were as well known or just highly regarded as many of those presented could include the following:

Joe Archer	Elton Black	Fred Bluett	Peter Brooks	Brull and Hemsley	Harry Cash
Harry Coyle	Ernest Crawford	George Crotty	Bert Corrie	Maude Courtney	James Caldwell
Marshall Crosby	Joe Charles	Denis Carney	Eileen Capell	Vince Courtney	Carlton Chase
Carlton and Sutton	Billy Cass	Driscoll Bros	Bruce Drysdale	George Drew	Bert Dudley
Louie Duggan	Bert Desmond	George Edwards	Lulu Eugene	Arthur Elliott	Alf. Edwards
Eileen Fleury	Ford and Davis	Frank Gorman	Sadie Gale	Reg Greenwood	Ted Herbert
Frank Herbert	Nat Hanley	Trixie Ireland	Ida Jarvis	Essie Jennings	Clara Keating
Jack Kearns	Joe Lashwood	Ward Lear	Harry Little	Max Martin	Cass Mahomet
Billy Maloney	Carlton Max	Con Moreni	Ida Merton	"Hats" McKay	Charles Norman
Leonard Nelson	The Newmans	Hector Napier	Masie Posner	Ernest Pitcher	Maude Perman
Olga Pennington	Dinks Patterson	George Pagden	John Ralston	Jimmy Romaine	Will Rollow
The Rhodesburys	Will Raynor	Joe Rox	Harry Ross	Wal Rockley	Les Shipp
George Sharrett	Ted Stanley	The Three Starrs	Reg Thornton	Dan Thomas	Lyla Thompson
Tilton and West	Vaude and Verne	Lily Vockler	Ern Vockler	Redhead Wilson	George Ward
Will Wynand					

DELAVALE AND GILBERT

Ern M. Delavale and Will Gilbert: - sketch and comic patter team. Gilbert was renowned for his ultra thin and very lanky appearance, thus often billed the "Loose Legged Comedian," and "the Human Hairpin." He began working with Ern Delavale on the Harry Clay circuit sometime around 1909, the pair touring Queensland that year and again in 1912 and 1916. As a partnership they were one of the more successful touring Australia and New Zealand, and are known to have played engagements in India and New Zealand during their time together. In 1916 the pair parted ways, with Gilbert teaming up with his wife Dora. The Gilberts were a highly popular act on Clay's circuit (as well as for most of the other vaudeville organisations), working regularly for the company until around 1921. They are also recorded as appearing on the circuit as late as 1926. Ern Delavale, the "robust one" was for some time the Vice President of the Australian Variety Artists' Federation, and became a vaudeville entrepreneur with his own Sydney circuit ca.1914/15. Married to Lily Vockler, Delavale also worked a vaudeville turn with her, although arguably his greatest success in later years was his partnership with her brother Ern Vockler (renowned for his Charlie Chaplin impersonations). The three toured for the Fullers for three years, and spent some time on the Clay circuit before heading to South Africa and later the UK. Both Ern Delavale and Lily Vockler remained there for several years before returning to Australia in the mid-1920s to work a further two years on the Clay circuit, in addition to engagements with the Tivoli and Fuller companies.

As a vaudeville team, Will Gilbert and Ern Delavale were accorded star status during their reasonably long partnership. Although it is not yet known when they first started working together, it may well have been around the time of their first association with Harry Clay in 1909. Individually and as a duo they worked for all the major vaudeville organisations in the Australasian regions, with Will Gilbert creating merry havoc among audiences with his outrageous contortions and immensely comic physical shape. As the Theatre noted in 1909: "his twistings are simply marvellous, and he appeared more like a streak of India-rubber than a human being" (16 Mar. 1909, 3) Very often the headline act with the companies they were engaged by, the pair seldom performed without numerous recalls, and were without doubt one of the most popular attractions of Harry Clay's Queensland tours.

In 1913 Delavale and Gilbert toured Queensland as the headline Australian act for Sam Langford (the "Boston Tar Baby"). On that tour, too, was Lily Vockler, Ern Delavale's wife. In early 1914 the pair, by now billed as "Australia's Leading Comedy Merchants and Laughter Experts," accepted an engagement in India through Fullers. Upon their return to Australia in July, Delavale was forced to work solo for some time when his partner suffered a serious bout of acute sciatica and rheumatism. The following month Delavale resigned his position as Vice President of the A.V.A.F. and began running his own suburban circuit in Sydney, known as The Refined Vaudeville Entertainers, and which for a time became a serious competitor to Harry Clay's circuit. Delavale started off by taking a lease on the National Theatre at Balmain, where he proceeded to capture good audiences through his established reputation and extensive connections within the industry. His circuit later took in Redfern, Coogee, Randwick and Ashfield. Some of the artists he was able to engage were among the best available at the time, with names such as Denis Carney, Lulu Eugene, Bert Desmond, Olga Pennington, Ward Lear, Mark Erickson and The Two Rexos being just a sample. Also with regard to that year, Delavale and his wife lost a child in birth, with Lily being recorded as almost dying from the complications. Around this time, too, he formed an association with Arthur Tauchert. The pair played the Clay circuit for a short while. Although they announced plans to continue as a regular team this does not seem to have eventuated.

In 1915 Delavale and Gilbert were once again performing together, and made an extensive tour of New Zealand with George Stephenson's English Comedy Company. Interestingly they took out an advertisement in Australian Variety stating their intention to "quit vaudeville for the time being... owing to the extensive War Salaries being offered in vaudeville at the time" (11 Aug. 1915, 13). Stephenson apparently engaged the two comics to work their own specialty act throughout the tour. The following year the pair returned to Queensland for Harry Clay, being included in Clay's No 1 Musical Comedy Company touring the South-western line that month. They are also known to have been working on his circuit as late as September that year. After this time, however, there has been little found regarding the two working together.

By 1917 Gilbert had formed a partnership with his wife Dora, and began to attract significant engagements throughout Australia. During that year, too, he appeared in a locally made film, Is Manly Immodest?, which apparently ran for two weeks at a metropolitan cinema (AV: 6 June 1917, n. pag.). The Gilberts enjoyed a long association with Harry Clay's company (being known to have been still appearing on the Sydney circuit as late as 1926). This was in addition to regular appearances between 1917 and 1926 on all the major circuits, including those run by the Fullers and the Tivoli managements. During this period they also became recognised as leading pantomime performers, with Gilbert in particular renowned for his comic appearances - his lanky frame and hysterical gait guaranteeing him instant recognition and laughter with audiences across the country.

Ern Delavale is known to have teamed up with his wife as early as December 1916, with an engagement for Harry Sadler at the Princess Theatre (Syd) being one of the earliest dates found so far. By 1917, however, he had formed a partnership with his wife's brother, Ern Vockler, which was to last for several years, and which arguably matched his successful career with Will Gilbert. Known as The Delavale Brothers, they toured Australia and New Zealand for the Fullers, with Lily appearing in solo turns (and sometimes with her husband), while Ern Vockler began attract increasingly positive reviews for his Charlie Chaplin impersonations. In 1919 the pair was reportedly offered an engagement by Alexander Pantages to tour America, including a three week season in Honolulu. Whether or not this contract was taken up is not yet known. What is known is that Delavale, his wife and brother-in-law sailed for South Africa the following year (1920), where they played a season before heading to London. It seems that the Delavale Bros did not stay together long after their arrival, with reviews and reports indicating that Ern Delavale and Lily Vockler were touring as an act around this time. The couple spent several years in the United Kingdom, although it seems

that they found conditions there rather less fortunate than they had experienced in Australia. As Delavale and Vockler, they remained in the UK for an unknown period, but are believed to have returned to Australia sometime around 1923/24. By 1925 they were once again performing on the Harry Clay circuit (in addition to other organisations), with references to them being on Clay time recorded throughout 1926.

- Will Gilbert, who almost has to stoop to evade the top roof, was responsible for an uproar on his entrance, and was installed as the favourite of the evening. After his humorous rendition of "Come Out of It," he gave one of the greatest exhibitions of leg-screwing that has ever been witnessed in Toowoomba, and swept the stage with the whole length of his long legs. Until he did this one would have thought that the stage was free from dust (TC: 20 July 1909, 3).
- Delavale and Gilbert are both patriotic and original. Their naval scene, "Sydney Harbour, a view from a Battleship," [at the National Amphitheater] is beautifully arranged; and the whole turn is bright and topical (TT: Nov. 1909, 22)
- Ern Delavale, the successful suburban manager, placed before the audience a grand double bill, the equal of which has never been seen around the suburbs. Twenty-two performers took part in the entertainment.... Speaking to the proprietor, he assures me that all the members of the orchestra, staff and performers are unionists. Without a doubt, it is a city show with suburban prices (AV: 21 Oct. 1914, 7)
- Harry Clay has a grafter in Will Gilbert. He appears throughout the first part in the revue A Mix-up at Manly; does a lengthy turn with his wife in the second half; and is seen again in the farce, "The Telephonograph." Mr Gilbert is a source of laughter all the time he's on stage. He opens big, goes big, and closes big..... Has a bigger freak, or bigger shriek, than Will Gilbert ever been seen at the Bridge Theatre? (TT: May 1917, 44).

• **At Harry Clay's Newtown Bridge Theatre:-**

Mr Delavale (*handing Mr Gilbert a postcard*): That is "Venus in the Bath."

Mr Gilbert: (*taking the card, and looking at it*): Yes?

Mr Delavale: Of course you can see very little of her. The water is up to her neck.

Mr Gilbert continues looking at the picture, evidently with no thought of handing the card back to Mr Delavale.

Mr Delavale: (*reaching for it*): Give it to me.

Mr Gilbert: No, I'm waiting.

Mr Delavale: Waiting for what?

Mr Gilbert: Waiting for the water to run out.

(TT: Mar. 1916, 46)

- Will Gilbert [as Lord Helpus] in Red Riding Hood, another Fullers pantomime at the Newtown Majestic: Always admired as an eccentric comedian - he's over 6ft high, well on the thin side and sinuous as an eel - Mr Gilbert has opportunities as the companion of the dame which he so makes use of as to have the audiences in convulsions of laughter (TT: Mar. 1920, 9).

CHARLES "IKE" DELAVALLE

Comic/Hebrew and Chaplin characterisations/eccentric dancer/revue and pantomime actor/producer Clay's manager. "Ike," as he was most often called, was associated with Harry Clay for some eight years prior to joining the Fullers in 1928. In 1920 he began appearing in Perth with Paul Stanthorpe (ex American Burlesque Co, ca.1913), with the pair billed as "Spike and Ike." In that year, too, he married fellow vaudevillian Elvie Stagpoole. The two teamed up in 1921 to form the act Delavale and Stagpoole, playing with the Walter George Revue Company in addition to regular engagements with Harry Clay and the Fullers. Over the rest of the decade they worked every major circuit either as individuals or as a duo. By 1925 Delavale had become one of Harry Clay's major attractions, and the following year began producing his own revues and pantomimes for Clay's under the banner of the Ike Delavale Revue Co. Delavale left Clay's in 1928 taking up a long engagement producing revues with Fullers. Charles Delavale is not related to Ern Delavale.

While little is yet known about Charles Delavale's life and career prior to 1920, it has been recorded that he was not related to Ern M. Delavale. The first reviews of "Ike's" performances found during the research for this thesis occur in 1920 when he is mentioned as appearing at the Clay-run Gaiety Theatre with Chaplin makeup. A few months later he was recorded as appearing at the Shaftesbury Theatre in Perth (WA) in a programme which included Miss Elvie Stagpoole (daughter of Alec Stagpoole, Harry Clay's scenic artist and ex-performer), and whom he married in October that year. Miss Stagpoole had been a vaudeville dancer and singer (she also played the ukulele) since early childhood, and is said to have begun her stage career with her father and sisters. She is believed to have appeared on the Clay circuit as a solo artist around 1915/16. By the end of 1916 she was creating a great deal of interest with her solo dance in The Bunyip pantomime at the Grand Opera House, which also starred Nellie Kolle.

Soon after their marriage it seems that the couple began working on stage in the partnership, billed naturally enough as Delavale and Stagpoole, and which they first tried out on the Clay circuit. In early 1921 they accepted an engagement to appear with the

Walter George Revue Company, opening in Adelaide in May, and followed this with a contract on the Fuller circuit both as individual turns and as a duo. Their places in the Walter George troupe were taken by Jim Gerald and Essie Jennings. Fred Parsons records that around this time, and while working on the Fuller circuit, Charles Delavale had taken to wearing make-up of a very similar kind to that of Roy Rene. According to Parsons Mo was "explosively indignant." "The dirty mug has knocked off me make-up, pal," said the comic. "Strike me lucky, you'd think the mug could be original in something, wouldn't you?" (3)¹. Parsons records that in later years Rene reminded him of it whenever he had the chance. Parsons also notes that Delavale eventually developed into a good character actor instead of a third-rate comedian.

Delavale and Stagpoole continued to appear on the Clay circuit during 1921, and in 1922 they took up a brief engagement with Bert La Blanc's Revue Company. Both performers continued to attract an increasing popularity with Australian audiences, particularly on the Clay circuit where they worked regularly over the next few years. In 1924 Everyone's wrote of Delavale:

[He] is one of the most entertaining comedians playing around Sydney. His work has now reached such a standard that he could easily discard his ultra-eccentric make-up and work almost straight evening dress (10 Sept. 1924, 34).

Around 1925 Delavale's star quality was such that he began taking on managerial positions with Clay's, including producing. This in turn led him to put together his own troupe of performers, under the banner of Ike Delavale's Revue Company, which began playing the Clay circuit by 1926. That year, too, he put on Clay's highly successful pantomime The Old Woman Who Lived in the Shoe, which played around the circuit, including the Gaiety and Bridge Theatres. From this time on his revues became frequent attractions for Clay's and generally garnered much critical acclaim, as well as huge popularity around the circuit.

By late 1928, and with Maurice Chenoweth having left Clay's for the Fullers camp, Delavale also took up the offer of a contract with that company. As Everyone's records, it was seen by many in the industry as a significant step up in Delavale's career:

Fullers look to have picked another winner for their circuit in comedian Ike Delavale, who lines up with the best of them in the Hebrew type of character work. He made his Sydney bow at Fullers' Theatre with his own revue after much success in Newcastle, Brisbane and Melbourne, and viewed together with a big house last Thursday afternoon there is no doubt of his popularity here also (17 Oct. 1928, n. pag.).

Delavale's revue company around this time included (apart from his wife) Lulla Fanning, the Dudleys, and Charles Megan. His productions were presented right across the Fullers circuit, and by all accounts continued to meet with much success. From 1928 onwards, however, and with there being less advertising and reviews published in the trade magazines (which began increasingly showing greater interest in films) there has been less information found concerning Delavale as part of this dissertation's research. It seems likely, however, that he continued his career into the 1930s as it is believed that he would not have been much past thirty years of age around this time.

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- Charlie Delavale was rather sore at a par in last week's issue of this religious sheet, wherein he was rebuked for leaving his "corner," on the Gaiety bill before the first part was little more than three-quarter way through, and failed to return. Charlie's explanation, a very sound one by the way, was to the effect that he had to appear early in the second act, and, as his Chaplin make-up takes some considerable time, his early departure from the first half of the bill was absolutely necessary (AV:18 Mar. 1920, 6).
 - Delavale and Stagpoole join the Walter George Revue Company... [They] should be a decided acquisition inasmuch as both are exceptionally versatile, and not afraid of hard work. Although only formed some months ago, the act of Delavale and Stagpoole has played most successful seasons in Perth and on the Clay circuit, so their [current] engagement should be marked with still further triumph (E: 11 May 1921, 16)
 - Charlie (Ike) Delavale is a very big favourite over the Clay circuit where, for nearly eight months he has been localising verses of the well-known song "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More." As an eccentric dancer, this young Australian is particularly agile (TT: Mar. 1925, n. pag.).
 - A hit all over the Clay circuit is Ike Delavale with his smart revue entertainers. He lately staged Lovey Dovey at the Gaiety in Oxford Street, and this piece, generally regarded in many quarters as the best in his repertoire, went as well as ever. The clever jokes and, above all, the delightful dancing of the Gaiety Girls all contributed to the general success of this well-built piece, a sample of revue that compares more than favourably with the imported article (TT: May 1926, 41).
 - Sherry and Bitters is the title of the revue this week at the Gaiety Theatre, Oxford Street. The principals are headed by the talented Ike Delavale, who is a show in himself. Mabelle Morgan, one of the best principal boys ever seen on our stage, is another important factor in these Delavale revues (JI: 9 Sept. 1926, 29).

¹ In "What Oh Tonight" (2005 Ph D thesis) I argue that Fred Parson's biography is highly suspect in relation to any of Roy Rene's career prior to his radio career. Parson's did not meet Rene until 1936 and numerous errors have been identified in Mo's Memoirs for the period leading up to that time – including his Stiffy and Mo years. Even this anecdote will require further research in order to verify its veracity.

- [Charles] Delavale instills individuality into his work, and has a trump card in the line of stepping that makes 'em laugh, laud and applaud. Thinking back this means something, as most comedy merchants playing this theatre of late have fed the customers well and consistently on choice tit-bits in the novelty dance line (E: 17 Oct. 1928, n. pag.).

MAUD FANNING

Coon impersonator/comic/contralto. Born in 1874 at Newcastle to Edward Charles and Catherine A. Fanning, she was the younger sister of Charles Fanning,² one of Australia's greatest ever minstrel comics and jubilee singers. Maud herself became a hugely popular minstrel performer right across the country. Her professional career began at the age of five and by the late 1880s was working with other members of her family, including a partnership with older sister Rosie as the Fanning Sisters. She later worked for all the major vaudeville organisations during her career, including Harry Rickards, the Fullers, and Harry Clay, in addition to engagements with Walter Bell, J.C. Williamson's, John F. Sheridan, William Cosgrove, and Holloway and Anderson, to name just a few. The Theatre said of her in 1913, while she was on the Tivoli circuit, that "there is not a vaudeville patron in Australia who has not seen her in one or other of Australia's vaudeville houses" (Aug. 1913, 33). Married to another well-known vaudevillian, Arthur Elliott (aka Arthur Hargrave), Fanning had several children all of whom worked with either her or their father. She is known to have continued performing in popular theatre until around the early 1920s.

Maud Fanning's career in minstrelsy and vaudeville was extraordinarily long and successful, beginning in the late 1870s and stretching on until the 1920s. She was to become arguably the most popular and influential Australian coon singer of her time, and in association with her husband Arthur Elliot, daughters, Violet, Lulla, Huia, and son Arthur, made an extensive contribution to variety theatre in this country. In his autobiography Roy Rene wrote of Fanning: "She was a very good coon singer, and the house used to rock when she came on. She would bring on her kids, she had a team of them and they used to pull the place down. She was the best coon singer of her day and very hardworking" (79).

Born in Newcastle NSW in 1874, Maud Fanning's association with the stage was very much a family affair from the start. Her father Edward Charles Fanning had a successful band in Newcastle for many years, while two sisters, Bertha and Florence were also involved in the industry. Bertha (who later became Mrs McKnight) was a popular contralto who made many concert appearances, including some with Phillip Newbury at the Sydney Town Hall. She later became a teacher of music in Mosman (Sydney). Florence R. (also known as Rosie) worked for some time with both John F. Sheridan and John Anderson (as did Maud), while it is known that another brother, Edward (who died ca.1908) was with George Rignold for several years as his dresser, and in addition played light character parts on the stage. It was older brother Charles, however, who matched career success with Maud over many years, he being one of the leading comics and singers to emerge from Australia, and who was associated on several occasions with Harry Clay during the 1880s and 1890s. Indeed, Fanning's reputation saw him perform in troupes with almost all the recognised minstrels to have toured or worked the country. He eventually moved to South Africa where he continued to perform, before dying of consumption in 1915.

Although Maud Fanning has claimed that she initially began performing at age five, the first record of her appearing on stage found during the course of this thesis was in 1890 at the Bondi Aquarium, where Charles Fanning's Popular Concert Company was advertised to appear. The company included, along with Charles and Maud, sister Bertha, J. Whitworth and Lorrie St. George among others. By 1894 both Maud and Rosie were appearing regularly at the Alhambra Music Hall, a venue that Maud continued to perform at for a number of years (although under different managements). In 1898 a reference to her appearing in Fun on the Bristol, with Henry's Dramatic Company has been found, as are further appearances at the Alhambra (under Percy St. John and W.J. Wilson). In 1900 she found engagements with John Sheridan's company, and later in the year appeared on the later leg of Walter Bell's Waxworks tour of Queensland, with the troupe including Harry Clay.

Fanning continued to perform around Australia and through New Zealand over the next decade, at some stage marrying Arthur Hargrave (aka Arthur Elliott), and over the course of the years giving birth to at least three girls and one boy. In a 1913 Theatre interview Fanning records that she had been for some time one of J.C. Williamson's ballet-girls and that she played Bella in Fun on the Bristol for William Cosgrove years before John Sheridan was seen in the same piece. She later joined the Anderson/Holloway theatrical company, and it was here, Fanning said, that she first did her coon act, which was in fact a pedestal dance and a song called "The Alabama Coon." Fanning also notes that while in New Zealand for the Fullers she was signed up by Harry Rickards who spotted her at a performance. She reportedly worked his circuit for some eight years (TT: Aug 1913, 33).

By 1910 both Maud and the rest of her family were enjoying much acclaim. As the Theatre notes in relation to an engagement at the National Amphitheatre, "What a delightful act is that put on by the Three Elliots! These dainty and clever children are Maud Fanning's, who has surely coached them with gentleness and love.... The trio are recalled again and again" (TT: Mar. 1910, 18). Around this time, too, the family is known to have been working the Clay circuit in Sydney.

² There remains some confusion as to whether Fanning or Fanning is the correct spelling. Each is used as often as the other throughout the careers of both Charles and Maud, as well as Maud's daughter, Lulla/Lalla (?). This thesis and "What Oh Tonight" (2005 Ph D thesis) have adopted the 'nn' spelling.

In 1912 Fanning, her husband and four children toured Queensland for Harry Clay, being with little doubt one of the company's leading attractions. By 1914, and with a new born infant added to the family's (on-stage) troupe the Fanning/Elliott family had indeed become an Australian institution. They continued to find engagements throughout the country and New Zealand, and are known to have worked for Clay's at least in 1915 and 1919. Lulla, Violet and Huia have also been recorded as working on the Clay circuit on occasions throughout the 1920s.

It is not been established when Fanning retired from the stage, with the last mention of her found to date being her appearance at the final programme at the Sydney Tivoli Theatre in October 1929, (believed to have been as an audience member only). Roy Rene has mentioned that Lulla Fanning and Violet Elliott had become successful in radio and in London pantomime respectively in late years. Maud Fanning died sometime in the early 1940s.

- It was in New Zealand that I first came under the notice of Mr Rickards. I was appearing there with the Fullers. I was singing a song that belonged to one of Mr Rickards imported comedians. I think Mr Rickards and the comedian were at the show together. At any rate, Mr Rickards came round to my dressing room and asked me to let him know when I would be finished with the Fullers... Later... I was told to open [for the Tivoli circuit] in West Australia. I remained for eight years with Mr Rickards... From time to time [he] got special scenes for me. I very much admired Mr Rickards. He was goodness itself to me. He was so genuine (TT: Aug. 1913, 33).

- Maud Fanning - well, if anybody ever earns a salary its Maud. I have never seen a harder trier in the business. She was a riot, and her three cleanest girls in vaudeville cleaned up with their raggy singing. Daddy Arthur Elliott has some punch in his comicalities, and it's a sure four he has to do before he can retire (TT: 24 Feb. 1915, 13).

- The volcanic Maud Fanning... got a rousing reception [at the National]. The point about this is that Miss Fanning is now being seen in Sydney for about the thousandth time. Has there ever been - or will there be - seen any other artist who could in such circumstances move an audience to the enthusiasm displayed in the case of Miss Fanning? Her record in this respect stands second to none (TT: May 1915, 41).

- Maud Fanning and her children are again proving a phenomenal draw with the Fullers in New Zealand. Of the many hundred acts on the circuit it is doubtful if any artists has so consistently retained her popularity as has Miss Fanning. One recalls the early days of the Fullers, when the late P.R. Dix was importing stars. During that period Miss Fanning played a record season of over seven months at the old Choral Hall, Wellington. Irene Franklin was on of the Dix stars. The dusky Maud, singing the same songs was easily the bigger favourite in the windy city (TT: May 1917, 41).

NELLE KOLLE

English descriptive vocalist/pianist/male impersonator. Born around 1892, Nellie Kolle first toured Australia in 1912 for the Fullers, returning on several occasions after that before eventually settling in the country on a more permanent basis. During her early days in the Australasian regions she was also associated with a number of other managements, including Dix-Baker, and Graham and Howard. By 1916 she was working almost exclusively on the Fuller circuit in both Australia and New Zealand, and was receiving much critical acclaim and popularity throughout both countries. Around this time, too, she became an established pantomime star, further cementing her position in Australia as one of the best-known performers on the variety stage. Kolle continued to tour throughout Australia and New Zealand up into the 1920s, and by 1922 was known to have secured regular engagements on Harry Clay's circuit. During the early to mid 1920s she was touring her own vaudeville show around Australia, playing many country towns including those of Western Australia. In 1927 she toured Queensland for Clay's as headline act, as is known to have remained on the Clay circuit over the next year or so. Kolle continued to perform into the 1930s, having been recorded as performing in pantomimes over this period, including a 1928-29 engagement with O'Donnell and Ray throughout Australia.

Born Nellie Frances Kolle in England ca.1892, she received a diploma from the London College of Music at age ten, with one report noting that she had been "endowed with a voice of wonderful tone and power [and] was gifted with a natural stage equipment" (AV: 2 Feb. 1916, n. pag.). After winning first prize in a competition for juveniles, the prize being a week's engagement at a suburban hall with a salary of £3, she became well known around the English provinces as the leader of the famous Dixie Dolls. Kolle was booked by Ben Fuller in London for a sixteen week engagement in 1912 - her first tour to the Antipodes. However, it was in the end to last some six years or more. In October of that year, too, she married Graham Herbert Penrose Hopkins in Wellington, New Zealand. Hopkins, a theatrical manager of Phair's Buildings in Melbourne, apparently sold his business and accompanied his new wife on her tour, having been promised that she would retire from the stage upon the conclusion of her contract six months later. With the success that she was achieving on the tour to that date Kolle, not surprisingly, changed her mind and accepted another contract.

By 1914 she had found other engagements (in addition to her regular appearances with the Fullers), with some of the companies including the Dix-Baker organisation based in Newcastle, and Frank Graham and Bert Howard's Sydney suburban circuit. Australian Variety records, however, that during these early years in vaudeville some of her efforts on the stage were rather

amateurish. The improvement in Kollé's act was seemingly quick, though, as reviews indicate that her appeal had begun to find greater critical support, to supplement her popularity with audiences, by 1915. Indeed, the reviews by then were constantly indicating the popularity she was being accorded by the public. Writing from Auckland to the Green Room in 1915, one bedazzled Fullers patron said of her: "No individual singer has left so deep a remembrance as Miss Kollé. Turns have come and gone - good turns; but a return visit by Miss Kollé would be more welcome in Auckland than any other artist we have seen here before" (1 Dec. 1918, n. pag.).

By all reports it would appear that by the end of 1915 Kollé had established herself as one of the leading principle boys and variety artists working in Australia. She starred in the Fullers' 1916 production of The Bunyip pantomime at the Grand Opera House, and followed this with a highly successful season for the company in Melbourne as a member of Nat Phillips' Revue Company. Reviews and critical comments published during the latter part of 1915 clearly indicate that she had by then become a major attraction on the Fullers circuit:

The applause hit of the bill at the National is, beyond doubt, Nellie Kollé, the clever young English male impersonator. Possessing an exceptionally powerful voice, with fine tone and quality, and rendering her songs with perfect enunciation, she was recalled a half dozen times at her opening on Saturday (AV: 26 Jan. 1916, n. pag.).

The Theatre noted, too, that she had "lost the rawness and raucousness" of her previous singing. The magazine's reviewer went on to say that "there is no art in Miss Kollé's work. But she has had experience.... [and she] lives every line she sings." He went on to say further: "It would make the average chorus-comedian die with envy to see what Miss Kollé so effortlessly accomplishes. Had it only been this gifted girl's luck to come under the right direction she might long ago have been one of the world's vaudeville stars" (Mar. 1916, 47).

Over the next few years Kollé continued to draw both high praise from the critics and huge audiences. During the holiday period of 1917/18 she was again the principle boy in their pantomime, this being Robinson Crusoe. Australian Variety records in November of 1917 that her drawing potential was such that she had only been able to play three cities in an 18 month period, (the third city being Adelaide) "a record any artists would feel proud to claim in any part of the world" (23 Nov. 1917, n. pag.).

The following year Kollé was sued for divorce by her husband on the grounds of desertion. Hopkins claimed that Kollé had continually promised to give up the stage, but each time a contract finished she took up another one. The court was told that there were two children from the union but that "she would not give up the stage to live a domestic life, and would not live with him any longer." Kollé was further recorded as saying she would go to Perth for her next engagement despite her husband not giving her his consent, and that she "was sick and tired of living with him." Hopkins was awarded a decree nisi by the judge (GR: 1 Dec. 1918, n. pag.).

Kollé's star continued to climb during the early 1920s, having continued on the Fullers' circuit throughout Australia and New Zealand. In 1922 she took on what is believed to have been her first engagement with Harry Clay, an association which saw her generally perform as the headline act over his circuit. During the next few years she apparently formed her own company, touring throughout Australia, including many country areas. A 1925 par in the Theatre's, April issue for instance, indicates that she was "again" touring the towns of West Australia. The following month Kollé herself wrote to the magazine, informing them that:

I am touring the West with my own vaudeville show, using my own motor car. The combination has a fine reputation around the country towns visited. ... It is my intention to leave for the East next month, and will make the trip by car (May 1925, n. pag.).

In 1926 Kollé is again known to have been working the Clay circuit, an association which lasted through to the next year. During this period she continued to performing in pantomimes, with her appearance in Bert "Mugsy" Desmond's production of Puss in Boots being a feature attraction. Sometime during the early part of the year she came fifth in a song contest held by the Sydney Sun with her own composition, and later headlined Clay's return tour of Queensland under Wally Edwards' stewardship. Press reports indicate that as usual Kollé's appearance on stage brought forth thunderous applause, and that she could rarely escape without multiple recalls.

Kollé's movements after ending her contract with Clay's have become a little less clear - due mostly to the increasing lack of interest in vaudeville by the industry magazines. It is known, however, that she established an association of several years with the O'Donnell and Ray Company, who were noted for their pantomimes on the Fuller circuit around this time. Everyone's said of her engagement in 1928: "She is one of the reasons why the company is playing to phenomenal business throughout Australia." In a review of her role as Prince Rupert of Kingswood in Beauty and the Beast at the Melbourne Palace in January 1929 the same magazine issue records: "Nellie Kollé as principal boy proves that she can hold her own with the best of them. The manner in which she works the audience up to join her in the singing of choruses is a tribute to personality" (16 Jan. 1929, 40).

• During her several tours of Australasia, this young singer has earned unstinted praise and unlimited appreciation from Fullers audiences. In this latter connection, Miss Kollé has found it rather awkward to, at times, keep the stage waiting whilst she responded to the insistent demands for encores (AV: 2 Feb. 1916, n. pag.).

- Nellie Kolle is as popular in pantomime as she is in vaudeville. Her numerous admirers in the latter sphere will know what that means. Such is Miss Kolle's magnetic force, to say nothing of her personal, individual charm, that she has at the close of her songs to tear herself away from the demonstratively-applauding spectators (TT: Jan. 1917, 22).
- Nellie Kolle is one of the shining lights at the Gaiety Theatre, Oxford Street, this week, and the audiences never seem to grow tired of her varied repertory of songs, in the choruses of which many of the audience join. The Australian favourite is well to the fore in up-to-date ditties (JI: 23 Sept. 1926, 29).
- [Nellie Kolle's] mastery of the piano is perhaps her greatest talent. Her touch is sure and firm and the result of this all too rare gift is a clarity in the music which makes it a treat to listen to. She gave a very fine rendering of an impression of the intermezzo, *Cavaleria Rusticana*. Afterwards she played syncopated jazz, and accompaniments for her own monologues, and also gave a song "Sydney" written and composed by herself (TC: 19 Mar. 1927, 5).

BERT LE BLANC

Hebrew comic / musical comedy actor / singer / revue producer. Born Bert Cohen in Downeyville, California (USA) in 1889, he spent most of his life in showbiz. Le Blanc³ is first believed to have toured Australia in 1913 as a member of the American Musical Burlesque Company. He ended up staying in the country for the rest of his life. In 1914 he joined the Fuller organisation and by the following year was touring his own company around the circuit with box office-breaking success. He married fellow vaudevillian Winifred Knight on the 27th May 1916 and soon after toured New Zealand. In 1917 Le Blanc opened the Majestic Theatre at Newtown for the Fullers, and continued to work the Australasian regions for them up until around 1921. Sometime during the year he began appearing on Harry Clay's circuit, and the following year disbanded his revue company after a New Zealand tour, taking on an engagement with Jake Mack over Birch and Carroll's Queensland circuit. In 1922 Le Blanc is known to have again been working for Harry Clay in Sydney, an association which is believed to have lasted until around the end of the year. By 1925 he was once again on the Fuller circuit, playing pantomimes and musical tabloids (in partnership with George "Hermie" Ward).

Bert Le Blanc began to establish a considerable reputation in Australia right from the beginning of his first tour. Under the direction of William Anderson he came to this country as part of the American Burlesque Company which was presenting The Grafters and several other musical comedy burlesques. The tour, which had previously played the Pacific circuit (including China, Japan and the Philippines) also starred Paul Stanhope and Eugenie Le Blanc (no relation). The company's Australian leg opened in Melbourne on March 15th, and in Sydney on June 14th, later including the other capital cities in Australia and a hurried New Zealand tour. Le Blanc, one of the lead actors, had previously begun to carve out a name for himself in the USA playing musical comedies and performing as a Hebrew character actor. At one stage he reportedly worked with Al Jolson when the pair played a US minstrel circuit. In its 24 December issue of 1913 Australian Variety noted:

There is no Mistaking the Fact that Bert Le Blanc is an exceptionally fine Hebrew comedian. His work in the present production of A Day at the Races is particularly funny, thanks to the doleful yet expressive manner in which he utilises his face. For all-round success, Le Blanc has put up the best performance of any Jewish comedian we have yet seen (1).

Following the disbanding of the American Burlesquer Company sometime around September 1914, Le Blanc began an engagement on the Fuller circuit, an association which included vaudeville, pantomime and revue. It was suggested in some quarters, however, that his projection needed some work and that he "would score better in vaudeville if he had a feeder, but even alone he is an amusing comedian" (AV: 18 Nov. 1914, 3). By 1915 he was running his own company (The Musical Travesty Company) under the Fuller banner and began breaking box office records for the organisation in every city they played. During this period, too, he joined forces with another Hebrew comedian Jake Mack, creating a partnership which was to last for some time, and which became one of the more successful duos in Australian vaudeville. His commitments to the Fullers saw him tour right throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Le Blanc's popularity is borne out by the fact that on no less than four occasions during the two year period 1916-17, he appeared on the front cover of Australian Variety, in addition to a considerable coverage of his career and activities. The Fullers thought so highly of him that they signed his company to open their newly built Majestic Theatre at Newtown on June 2nd 1917, an engagement which according to the Theatre in August had "registered a run there of eight weeks, with a change of programme at every Saturday-afternoon matinee" (Aug. 1917, n. pag.). Even his wedding to Winnie Knight received a comparatively large coverage in the trade journals at the time. With regard to the Le Blanc and Mack partnership, the Theatre noted in June 1916, for instance:

Mr Le Blanc and Mr Mack are, in short, an ideal pair. As Hebrews they are entirely different. Mr Le Blanc is stiff and stolid - or rather those are the qualities he seeks to get out of his characterisation. On the other hand Mr Mack is as lissome as an eel, and as light-headed as a rabbit. Mr Le Blanc more or less acts the part of Mr

³ Cohen's stage name is variously spelled Le Blanc and La Blanc throughout much of his career. For the sake of consistency this thesis and the "What Oh Tonight" (2005 Ph D thesis) have adopted the Le Blanc spelling, which appears to be the more common usage.

Mack's feeder. Thus it is a generous arrangement from Mr Le Blanc's point of view, for Mr Mack is given every opportunity of scoring with the audience, even at the expense of Mr La Blanc. Evidently Mr Le Blanc is more concerned in the success of the show as a whole than in any individual personal triumph (40).

Le Blanc's Revue Company continued to find much critical and public support on the Fullers circuit over the next few years, and indeed up until the early 1920s. In 1917, the company contained a number of well-known artists including Carlton Chase, Essie Jennings (wife of Jim Gerald, who was away on war duties), and of course Mack. The following year Le Blanc and Co, which for some period also included Queenie Paul, toured throughout the Australian regional centres for the Fullers, covering areas such as Queensland, Northern NSW (including Broken Hill), Kalgoorlie, Perth (under the management of Harry Sadler), South Australia, Victoria and Southern NSW.

In early 1921 Le Blanc began appearing on Harry Clay's circuit in revues and as part of the vaudeville section, teaming up with Ted Stanley on a regular basis during the year. In early 1922, however, he and Jake Mack again toured New Zealand with the Travesty Company, but disbanded the troupe following their final season. Upon their return to Australia the duo toured Queensland for Birch and Carroll (ca. May/June). By August Le Blanc was again on the Clay circuit, where it is believed he continued to perform throughout the remainder of the year. By 1925 Le Blanc was back on Fuller time, appearing in revues and pantomimes. Everyone's notes in January of that year that he would shortly "go back on the vaudeville circuit, playing opposite George "Hermie" Ward in musical tabloids" (14 Jan. 1925, 36).

Research for this thesis has not uncovered much regarding Le Blanc's career after 1926, although according to several reports he continued on in the theatre in some manner after this for quite a few years. It is likely that the demise of vaudeville's popularity, and the increased interest in film kept him from continuing with the success that was metered out to him during the period 1913 to 1925. John West notes that when he was old enough to qualify for a pension Le Blanc "got himself naturalized [sic] and voted in his first election in his late sixties - a fact of which he was quietly proud" (121).

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- Mr Le Blanc holds that there is nothing wrong in presenting a member of his race from the stage in a light humorous manner. "The trouble is," he declares, "that some so burlesque the character as to make it offensive to members of the Jewish race. I avoid doing that..." His stage humour is of the dry kind. "My idea," he says, "is that a laugh got by something told in an easy, quiet, dry manner is worth three laughs secured by a performer as a result of his having to make a hard strained, noisy appeal to them" (TT: July 1913, 20).
 - (Bijou Theatre) Central 3251 was the new revue of Bert Le Blanc's Company, and it scored immense (sic) throughout with the customers. A bright, breezy combination of singing, dancing and gagging, it put the punch into the bill solid. Bert Le Blanc and Jake Mack have still a long vein of genuine humour, and they had the house any how with real laughs right through (AV: 28 July 1915, 13).
 - After the closing season [of the American Burlesque Co] I immediately went under the management of Ben J. Fuller, who put me in vaudeville, and later in [the] Babes in the Woods pantomime where I must candidly say I had the worst part I have ever had handed me in my theatrical career. At the close of the panto I was placed to produce the show now bearing my name, and which has been a record breaker everywhere. Within the past six months I have produced five shows and have thirty more on my list to turn out (AV: 5 Jan. 1916, n. pag).
 - Bert Le Blanc, even if as loud-voiced as ever, is a man whom the gods love (TT: June 1921, 17).
 - (Gaiety Theatre): - A rather clever travesty dealing with the mishaps of two woebegone sailors occupies the first half of the bill, the funmakers being Bert Le Blanc (sic) and Ted Stanley (E: 10 Aug. 1921, 15).
 - (Gaiety Theatre): - The tabloid offerings of Ted Stanley and Bert Le Blanc (sic) are greatly relished at this popular Oxford Street house (E: 7 Sept. 1921, 15)

ARTHUR MORLEY

Basso vocalist/comic/song writer/revue writer and producer/company manager/poet. Born Arthur M. Welch, and known to have spent much of his early life in Rockhampton. Morley began his career in the Queensland regional areas during the late 1800s/early 1900s. He worked as stage manager in Newcastle with the Dix-Baker firm for a period, and later partnered his wife Elsie Bates in an act known as Morley and Bates, before joining Harry Clay's company around 1915. His employment was initially as a performer, but soon afterwards he took on the additional roles of revue writer and producer. In mid 1917 Morley left Clay's and a few months later joined Harry Sadler's operations at the Princess Theatre, continuing on in the same roles. He rejoined Clay's the following year, staying with the company until 1919. Morley is known to have continued writing and performing up until at least 1928, at which time he was associated with Bert Howard's pantomime company.

The earliest recorded performance by Arthur Morley found to date was in 1911, when he presented a one-night season (by special request) in Rockhampton, along with his wife Elsie Bates. The Morning Bulletin noted that this concert was the first production in many years by Morley, and that he had grown up in the area. The pair was advertised on Harry Clay's return visit programme that year, too, but for some reason were unable to appear, forcing Clay to apologise to the audience (MB: 11 July 1911). In 1913, and described as "one of the old school" Morley began a six month engagement as stage manager for the Dix-Baker organisation (Newcastle). He is known to have been engaged two years later (1915) by Clay's, appearing with the Royal Musical Comedy Co, which he managed, along with his wife. Australian Variety wrote of one of his earliest productions:

The Royal Musical Comedy Co. opened and were responsible for the "House Full" signs being out long before the curtain was raised. The company was brilliant, and surpassed all previous expectations. The whole show was bright and catchy, and did not leave one dull moment. Each item was cleverly and effectively given with excellent business and comedy touches, and the strong talent was particularly good. The musical items are fresh and attractive, and has none of the hackneyed quality of many of the recent revues seen at other theatres lately. This revue was received with most marked manifestations of approval. As for the producing and the staging, it was excellent with original and artistic touches, and too much praise and credit cannot be given to Mr Arthur Morley, as he no doubt must have worked very hard to bring off such success. Arthur in his character, displayed ability and talent that has only been received from such experience that he has had (27 Oct. 1915, n. pag.).

During 1915, too, he presented one of the first known revues on the vaudeville stage, this being On the Sands at the NBT with Elsie Bates (in the principal lead female role), Amy Rochelle, Doris Baker and Ted Tutty. The show included a number of the women in "pretty bathing costumes and beach promenade dresses" (AV: 10 Nov. 1915, 13). Later in the year he also contributed an article to Australian Variety's Christmas issue.

In 1916 Morley established himself as Harry Clay's leading revue producer, with his productions during the year including: A Kiss in the Dark, Who's the Liar, On the Sands, On Deck, Not a Word to the Wife, In Old Kentucky, and Saints and Sinner. The popularity of his works was such that Morley was forced to warn "pirates," through the trade journals that those revues and burlesques were his sole property and were fully copyrighted. Morley's revues produced during 1917 also included: Who's the Boss, Run for the Doctor, Not a Word to the Wife, Six O'clock Closing, and Everybody's Doing It. During the year, too, Morley was reportedly "in the course of preparation for a moving picture which will run into five reels," entitled The Power of Man. "Elsie Bates [would] play an important part in the production" noted Australian Variety (2 May 1917, 8). Morley continued to work for Clay's, his role being widely regarded during these years as one of great pressure, he being required to maintain a steady stream of revues along with the many other managerial duties required of him.

By August 1917 Morley had ended his association with Clay's, although he was reportedly engaged by Harry Clay to purchase some revues from America around that time. On his return to Australia Morley took up a role as producer/writer for Harry Sadler at the Princess Theatre (Syd). He and Bates then accepted an engagement with Sadler in Western Australia during the year, opening at the Shaftesbury Theatre, Perth, in what was a particularly successful season. It was, however, one which eventually became national news due to an off-stage situation involving himself, Harry Sadler and Phyllis Faye (the company's lead soubrette). In response to some libelous accusations levelled at Morley and Faye by Sadler, a bitter split in the troupe's loyalties saw the pair, and Bates, leave Sadler's company to join up with rival Perth entrepreneur and bookmaker Percy Dennis. The blow-up led eventually to Morley becoming embroiled in one of the most infamous court cases involving the vaudeville industry, when Harry Sadler was sued for libel by Phyllis Faye. The case, which was heard in 1918, revolved around Sadler's accusation that Morley was having an affair with Faye, having been apparently seen both coming of her room and in her bed, despite the fact that Elsie Bates was with him in Perth at the time of the apparent affair, (Faye's husband, Bruce Drysdale was away at the war). After a great deal of controversial evidence, much of it surrounding Sadler's past attempts to seduce Miss Faye, the court found in favour of the plaintiff and she was awarded both damages (£25) and costs (said to have been very high).

Following his Western Australian commitments Morley returned to Sydney, taking another engagement with Clay's, where he remained until sometime in 1919. One of his biggest successes during the period was Dockum Street, Woolloomooloo, (which was toured through Queensland). In 1920 he retired from the entertainment industry, returning to Rockhampton with his wife, who is believed to have had a milliner's establishment there.

By 1922, however, he had made a re-appearance on the stage, having been engaged by Reg Wykeham at the Hippodrome, Sydney. He was again utilised to produce, write and act in revues, one particularly successful production being Ship Ahoy, with Sadie Gale, George Whitehead, Bert Desmond and Will and Dora Gilbert. In 1928 Morley is known to have been touring for Bert Howard playing pantomimes (including Beauty and the Beast) in a troupe that also included Wal Rockley and Dan Thomas. Little else has been found concerning his or Elsie Bates' careers after this, however. Morley's writing career also includes the publication of several poems, a number of them in Australian Variety.

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- (Clay's Touring Company): - presenting On the Sands, reports good business despite adverse weather. A wire received from Arthur Morley last Saturday read: - "Three records - rain, enjoyment and record business. Stopped sale of tickets at 7.30. [Will] Rollow behaving himself; everybody happy" (AV: 4 Oct. 1916, n. pag.).

- (Bridge Theatre, Newtown): - Picking 'em Out was presented, and suffice to say that it was from the pen of Arthur Morley, and an undoubted success, with its good comedy, bright numbers, and novel ideas. [he] was [also] well to the front with a grand old war story, which brought down the house (AV: 13 Dec. 1916, n. pag.).
- For his sentimental and patriotic airs Arthur Morley is always enthusiastically recalled... [his and Will Rollow's] up-to-the-minute political puffs and topicalities given under the title of "I'll Do It" are original and entertaining, and constitute the brightest item in the musical comedy, A Kiss in the Dark (TT: Jan. 1917, 52).
- A word must not be forgotten for Arthur Morley (the writer of the revues, who also has been producer for the last three years), who during this time, has put on a new production each week, which in itself is a big record (AV: 23 May 1917).
- One evening last week Mr Arthur Morley (Harry Clay's producer) overheard a discussion outside the Bridge Theatre, Newtown, where it was stated that he (Arthur) had very little to attend to. "Oh yes," said deep-voiced Arthur, "very little to do, have I? Only to keep Mr Clay's companies supplied with a new musical production every week, very often play a part in the said production, work in a trio, play in a farce, do a single, make out a mile or so of publicity matter, and conduct rehearsals!" We wonder what Arthur does in his spare time? (AV: 18 July 1917, n. pag.).
- Arthur [Morley] deserves the encouragement handed out to him. He is a real hard worker, and it is no easy matter putting on a new revue each week at the Princess Theatre. At the rate he is going the management will have to fix Arthur up with a bed as he will not have time to leave the theatre (AV: 22 Feb. 1918, n. pag.)

PHILLIPS SISTERS

Duetists/dancers/impersonations. Eileen and Bessie Phillips, daughters of Mrs Norah Phillips of Brisbane, were raised in Kelvin Grove, Brisbane. They began performing around southwest Queensland ca.1911, and are believed to have toured New Zealand in late 1913, early 1914. Following this they began their association with Harry Clay, touring Queensland in 1914, (as well as in 1916 and 1917), eventually spending some seven years with his company. They would, however, find regular outside engagements, including the Fullers, Dix-Baker (Newcastle), the Tivoli organisation, and Weston and Hill among others. The duo briefly terminated their association with Clay in 1921, to take on an engagement in Perth with James Caldwell, Bessie's husband. The West Australian engagement lasted into 1922, and was followed by work with various other companies, including the Fullers. By 1924, the sisters were again on Clay time with engagements continuing up until at least 1927.

Not to be confused with Gertie and Hilda Phillips (who were also known as the Phillips Sisters, and who are believed to have been the Phillips Sisters who toured with Harry Clay in 1904), Eileen and Bessie Phillips were born and raised in Kelvin Grove (Brisbane). Their partnership act is thought to have lasted over twenty years, with their professional careers starting around 1911. It is known, for example, that they appeared on a bill with Julian Rose (the internationally known Hebrew comic) at Martoo's Olympia Theatre, Ipswich in March that year, billed as "Eileen Phillips and her Charming Little Sister" (QT: 16 Mar. 1911, 1). Sometime around the end of 1913, early 1914, they toured New Zealand with a company, and upon their return accepted an engagement with Harry Clay to tour Queensland. Returning to Sydney, Eileen and Bessie continued to find regular work with Clay at the Bridge Theatre, and established themselves as big favourites with the Newtown audiences over the next seven years. During that time they toured QLD twice (in 1916 and 1917) in addition to occasional engagements with a variety of leading managements, including the Fullers.

In 1917 Australian Variety said of the pair, they are "one of Australia's most versatile double acts. Their repertoire is an extensive one, and their work of a very high calibre. During the past two years they have been prominent on Harry Clay's circuit - a fact which speaks volumes for their ability" (17 Jan. 1917, n. pag.). Eileen often play the "boy" in their turns, and was said to have a voice remindful of Nellie Kolle in the volume of her delivery, and in appearance and manner of Effie Fellows (TT: May 1916, 51). She was also acknowledged for her "easy confident manner, and the way she captivates the audience" (TT: Jan. 1918, 37). In many respects Eileen was the one who received the most critical acclaim throughout their career. Despite the somewhat uneven nature of their reported talents, the two were undeniably popular with audiences around the country.

In 1921 the Phillips temporarily ended their seven year association with Harry Clay to take up an extended season at the Shaftesbury Theatre in Perth, leaving with James Caldwell (who had been married to Bessie since September 1919) along with Ivy Davis and Courtney Ford and the Paulastros. By 1924, however, the pair were back on Clay time, continuing regular engagements up until at least 1927.

- The Phillips Sisters, with attractive costumes, again performed exceedingly well together, and went very big; these two girls should make a hit on any bill, as their turn is well put over (AV: 13 Oct. 1915, 12).
- The Phillips Sisters are great favourites with the Harry Clay-ites at the Newtown Bridge Theatre. What a captivating manner has the darker one of the two (TT: Feb. 1917, 32).

- The Philips Sisters are still very popular. Eileen's smile and Bessie's pose will never fail. Always something new to offer, with artistic dressings, these two clever girls never fail to score (AV: 1 Mar. 1918).
- The Phillips sister who plays the girl could be much more expressive in face and gesture. Largely because of what she lacks in this direction may the success of the turn be said to rest wholly with the boy-attired sister. They had to give three numbers nightly at the Princess (Syd) during [last month]. Even then the audience would have had more of them if it could have got it (TT: Nov. 1918, 24).
- The Philips Sisters must be about the most popular pair of girls in Australian vaudeville.... the audience are aglow with appreciation all the time the duo are on the stage (TT: Oct. 1919 28).
- Bessie and Eileen Phillips had to respond to no less than three encores last Monday evening; they dress luxuriously in their quaint, old-fashioned minuets (E: 13 Apr. 1921, 15)

ROY RENE

Comic/revue and pantomime actor/singer/film and radio actor. Born Harry Van der Sluice (according to Rene) in Adelaide on the 15th February 1892, to Hyam (or Henry) a cigar manufacturer and Amelia (nee Barnett). Rene first appeared on the professional stage in a pantomime at age 13 and a few years later worked a solo acts as "Boy Roy the singing soprano." In 1912 he moved to Sydney and eventually secured an engagement with Harry Clay (including a Queensland tour) and with J. C. Bain. After being spotted by the Fullers he was signed to tour New Zealand. After returning to Australia he began his partnership with Nat Phillips as Stiffy and Mo. In 1917 Rene married actress Dorothy Claire Davis (they divorced in 1929). Meanwhile the Stiffy and Mo pairing was well on its way to becoming one of Australia's legendary comic teams, one which continued to enormous success until 1925, at which point it was said neither performer could continue working with the other. The following year Rene partnered Fred Bluett on the Tivoli circuit, but within twelve months had been persuaded to rejoin Phillips as Stiffy and Mo. It lasted only until 1928, however, with the pair breaking up while on tour in New Zealand. Rene returned to the Clay circuit in 1929. He and his new wife, Sadie Gale, toured northern Queensland only days after their wedding that year - and the tour is believed to have been under the management of Clay's. In early 1930 he almost died from peritonitis, but was able to return to the stage later that year. In 1931 he joined Connors and Paul, appearing regularly with one of his arch rivals for "the mob," Jim Gerald, and two years later made his only film Strike Me Lucky - a somewhat disappointing venture for him, as it failed to compare favourably with the efforts of another rival, George Wallace. Rene continued to perform on stage past the Second World War, and in 1946 signed a contract to appear on radio - where he presented his much acclaimed McCackie Mansion series. By 1950, he was being plagued by ill health, and died on the 22nd of November 1954.

The degree to which Roy Rene's career in particular, and the vaudeville era in general, has been under-examined is indicated both by the large biographical gaps and the significant inaccuracies accorded this most acclaimed Australian entertainer. For example, in all the references to Roy Rene's early career located as part of the research for this thesis, particularly with regard to his time in Sydney, none have mentioned his engagement with Harry Clay over the years 1913 and 1914. This despite Rene's own recall of the events which led to his employment on the circuit, and published in his autobiography Mo's Memoirs. [see Chapter 3 of this thesis for further details] Further to this it has been claimed in one account that it wasn't until the time of his first New Zealand tour with the Fullers around 1915 that he began using the name Roy Rene (Parsons and Chance, 485). Advertising and reviews which refer to him by that name during his appearances on the Clay circuit and throughout the section of the Queensland tour he appeared on in 1913 show this to be incorrect, however. While details of Rene's early career are not surprisingly sketchy, due to the fact that he was at this stage a relative newcomer to Sydney and Australian vaudeville, it has been possible to put together a brief account of his time with Harry Clay's company.

Roy Rene's first showbusiness success appears to have occurred at age ten when he won a singing competition in his home town of Adelaide. Three years later, and shortly before his family moved to Melbourne, he made his appearance on the professional stage as a juvenile in Sinbad the Sailor (Theatre Royal). Over the next few years he found occasional work on suburban vaudeville programmes as "Boy Roy the Singing Soprano," and when his voice broke as "Boy Roy." Although he secured an engagement with Frank M. Clark in Melbourne while aged 16, his career during his teens was largely unremarkable. In 1910, however, he was noticed by entrepreneur James Brennan who subsequently gave him an opportunity to appear in Sydney at the National Amphitheatre. It was around this time that he changed his stage name from Boy Roy to Roy Rene (after the famous French clown). He remained on Brennan's circuit through until at least late 1911, with the engagement also including seasons in Melbourne (Gaiety Theatre beginning 15 May) and in Brisbane with Brennan's touring Vaudeville Entertainers Company (Theatre Royal, 18 Sept.). Rene returned to Melbourne for around a year before accepting a minor role as stable hand and jockey in J. C. Williamson's production of The Whip. After the production closed in Sydney he decided to remain in the city as he thought "there was more scope for [him] there," but in fact "found things even more difficult than [he] had working in the Melbourne suburbs."

Despite his optimism Rene recalls in his autobiography that he "found things even more difficult that [he] had working in the Melbourne suburbs" (41-42). Further to this he tells of his attempts and eventual luck in getting a tryout with Harry Clay. Within a few months he had proved himself enough to be included on the return leg of Clay's Queensland tour. Billed as a comedian and impersonator, performance reviews of the shows he appeared in indicate that he was a popular addition to the touring company.

During this time, too, he would no doubt have gained the benefit of guidance from the experienced Clay comedians - particularly Ted Tutty. Others to have appeared on the tour with Rene were Ward Lear, and the up and coming team of Les Shipp and Jim Gaffney. The advertising on the tour also notes that his comic line was in the tradition of Julian Rose, a Hebrew comic who had toured Australia on several occasions, and who was renowned for his turn "Levinsky at the Wedding." Rene notes in his autobiography that until the time he was with Clay in Sydney he'd never done a Jewish act at all. "I'd never thought of being a Hebrew comic." He further records:

It just simply had never occurred to me. After Clay, I was working with Jim Bain at the Princess Theatre, the Sydney one, when the cast kidded me into doing some imitations of Jordan and Harvey, and the famous Julian Rose.... I was working as a cornerman, still black-face, but I had learnt one of their numbers, "Yiddle on your Fiddle, Play Some Ragtime," and did it. Then I did an imitation of Julian Rose in his act "Levinsky at the Wedding." It was supposed to be an imitation of Rose, but I was no more like him than a fly in the air, though somehow with a black-face the act was a riot. What started out as a joke in the first place turned out to be the most important thing that ever happened to me in my career. That piece of black-face fooling led to my eventually developing into a real comic (45-46).

While Rene's account isolates this experience as being primarily responsible for his engagement with the Fullers soon after, it would appear (from both Rene and from reviews published in Queensland) that he first began to work a Hebrew line of act during his early engagement with Clay.

Roy Rene (as with most other performers) was not confined only to Harry Clay's circuit during his association with the entrepreneur. He is recorded, for example, as having appeared for other managements and venues, including the Melbourne Gaiety in November 1913, and the Lyric Theatre, Fitzroy in January 1914. He was also one of a select group of entertainers to perform at a special "smoke concert" for the Australian Terriers Society, a club for which his brother Albert Sluice (a prominent bookmaker) would later hold an executive position. Rene joined other established celebrities such as Leonard Nelson, Alf Edwards, and Levante in entertaining the large audience of members. There is no doubt, however, that he did work Clay's circuit fairly consistently during over this period, as indicated by the number of reviews found. By mid 1914 he was recognised as very much a senior attraction for Harry Clay, and as such his reputation and personality began to emerge enough that he was included in a "Can You Imagine" section of Australian Variety in its August 19th issue of that year. His inclusion simply asked "Can you imagine Roy Rene going to Church" (n. pag.).

Sometime between August and December of 1914, Rene undertook a brief engagement with J. C. Bain. It was while playing at the Princess Theatre for Bain that he came to the personal attention of Ben Fuller, who promptly signed him up. Although he indeed toured New Zealand for Fullers not long after starting with them (as several publications have noted), it would appear that he initially toured part of their Australian circuit, with reports of him appearing in Victoria (including Bendigo) during December of 1914 having been found. He returned to Sydney from New Zealand around November 1915, playing the Fullers National theatre in Sydney, and some twelve months later teamed up with Nat Phillips to form the iconic Stiffy and Mo - the rest being history.

Roy Rene and his fiancée Sadie Gale are believed to have begun their 1929 association with Clay's sometime in April, this being indicated by a reference in the May 8th issue of Everyone's to the fact that they "are now playing a starring engagement over the Clay circuit" (37). Previous to this Mo and his Merrymakers had been with Fullers, presenting a first part vaudeville and second part revue (with the company including at that time Mayo Hunter, the Hawaiian jazz band leader and multi instrumentalist). The Merry Monarchs, as they were also known, had been formed after the Rene and Phillips partnership had again broken up, this time in New Zealand during the 1928 tour. As with his Fullers' productions, Rene's company also provided the full show for Clay's.

According to an Everyone's par which highlighted the divorce proceedings against Rene, he and Gale received £70 per week on their present contract with Clay's. Referred to as Harry Vander Sluice, he apparently told the Registrar (in opposing the alimony increase from £10 to £15 which was being asked for by his former wife) that he held the fear "that when his Clay contract finished there would be difficulty in him securing remunerative employment because of the talkies" (31 July 1929, 39).

Almost immediately after he divorced his first wife Rene married Sadie Gale, and instead of a honeymoon the pair left for a north Queensland tour which was produced by Clay's. While the newspaper reviews of the tour found so far indicate that the tour was highly popular, Fred Parsons claims that "Mo was unfavourably compared with George Wallace, who had cut cane up there for a living." According to Parsons, "this rankled with Roy especially as George had been Sadie's first boy-friend" (27). [see *Chapter Five and Appendix C for further details on this tour*] Towards the end of the tour, too, Rene apparently began to showing the effects of an illness which eventually caused him to collapse on stage while playing in Clowns and Clover for Frank Neil in Melbourne shortly after the conclusion of the Clay tour. Although nearly dying, he eventually recovered and is known to have resumed his stage work some six months later.

While Roy Rene's association with Harry Clay and his company is relatively brief in comparison to his whole career, as he himself notes, his first period of engagement was in effect the start of his career as a professional comic - and an association which saw him adopt for the first time the Jewish persona that was to become his stock in trade. The influence of Harry Clay during these early days, and equally those of the experienced Clay comics, particularly Ted Tutty, Ward Lear, Arthur Elliott and Gilbert and Delavale to name but a few, was no doubt an important part of Rene's early development. The family atmosphere within the company - as Rene himself has described it - would more than likely have assisted in making the experience all the more positive

too. However, the fact that he was able to hold his own against the talents of the other Clay comics, and that he was also able to attract the attention of Ben Fuller so early in his career suggests that Rene's abilities as a comic entertainer were significantly advanced in comparison to many of his more experienced peers by that stage.

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- (Bridge Theatre, Newtown):- Roy Rene has established himself as a firm favourite, and does much to make the first part go; his songs are sure winners, and he has such a way with him on stage one has to look and laugh at him, which is a valuable asset to such a comedian (AV: 8 July 1914, 13)
 - (Bridge Theatre, Newtown): - Roy Rene does not get off under four songs nightly, which says well for this performer (AV: 15 July 1914, n. pag.).
 - (Bridge Theatre, Newtown):- Roy Rene and Ted Tutty share the applause for the first part - neither can be separated (AV: 22 July 1914, 6).
 - Roy Rene, the well-known akim-foo comedian and the originator of that beautiful phrase, "I haven't got a feather to fly with," left his end coat at home the other night. Being stuck up somewhat for the most desired article, he espied an old dummy used in farces hanging up on one of the flies. Promptly letting it down, he seized the bob-tail coat of the scarecrow and emerged triumphant, just as the rag went up. It fits him good, so he's hanging on to it (AV: 14 Oct. 1914, 7).
 - "Mo" will make his first appearance in Rockhampton. [He] has been credited with all kinds of gags, the same as car gags are hung on to Henry Ford and economic gags on to Harry Lauder. But "Mo" first and last, is a true humorist, and too clever to stoop to the vulgar gag. The fact of his starring for 15 years in all the principal theatres of Australia should be sufficient guarantee of "Mo's" entertaining abilities (MB: 17 Sept. 1929, 3).
 - The humour, though undeniably broad, was of the type on which these artists' reputations were gained, and was apparently expected by the crowd (MB: 23 Sept. 1929, 3)

AMY ROCHELLE

Soprano/ pantomime principal boy/child impersonations/pianist and musical comedy artist. Born on the 26 January 1898 in Sydney, Amy Rochelle is said to have received her early training at the NSW Conservatorium, and made her first appearance on the stage in 1912. Engaged by Harry Clay sometime around the end of 1914/early 1915, Rochelle continued working his circuit on a regular basis for the next four years, becoming one of the company's leading attractions. She toured Queensland with Clay's in 1915, and was selected for the finals of the 1916 Melba scholarship. During a Hugh D. Macintosh engagement at the Tivoli in 1918 Rochelle was spotted by the Fullers who then offered her the largest contract ever to an Australian principal boy to that date. Her last known engagement with Clay's was in January 1919. She remained with the Fullers until well into the 1920s as the company's leading Principal Boy. During that period Rochelle also expanded her vaudeville repertoire with child impersonations and as a pianist. When Roy Rene and Nat Phillips reformed the Stiffy and Mo act she rejoined their company, becoming one of its leading members for much of that period. She also toured New Zealand several times during the 1920s, and formed her own revue company in partnership with Stan Foley around 1929. Amy Rochelle is believed to have continued to perform into the 1930s. She was married to Harry R. Kitching, the editor of Australian Variety for many years.

Amy Rochelle's first known appearance on stage was at the Sydney Town Hall ca. 1912. By 1915 she had taken on an engagement with Harry Clay which also included a tour of Queensland that year. Her reception throughout the state was such that Clay sent her back the following year. In 1916 Rochelle was on the short list for a Melba Scholarship, but according to reports at the time her heavy schedule as one of Harry Clay's leading attractions meant that she was unable to make the selection finals. It was claimed in the trade journals that Madam Melba was contemplating a private audition to accommodate the new Australian "nightingale." By 1917 Rochelle was an integral part of Clay's No 1 Revue Co, if not one of the most popular acts playing the circuit. On the 9th of June that year, too, she married Harry R. Kitching, the Australian Variety editor, who also took on the role of her manager. Shortly after her marriage she became pregnant, but was found in the last stages of her pregnancy to be suffering from acute ptomaine poisoning the result being that she lost her baby a bare three days after it was born in February 1918. Reportedly having died several times, Rochelle spent some considerable period recuperating, finally returning to the stage in late 1918 with engagements with Clay's and later the Tivoli under Hugh D, MacIntosh's direction.

It was during her engagement on the Tivoli circuit that Rochelle was spotted by the Fullers. They immediately sought to engage her for their company and on the recommendation of Harry Clay she was offered the position of principal boy, with a contract said to have been the largest ever given to an Australian in that role to date. She began her career with the Fullers in their 1918/19 Christmas pantomime Babes in the Woods (replacing Queenie Paul in January of 1919), and following the end of the season played one final engagement with Harry Clay. During her time with Fullers, which lasted until around 1928, Rochelle rivalled Nellie Kolle as one of the company's leading Principal Boys, playing some eight or nine Christmas pantomimes in a row. She also became a major asset in the Stiffy and Mo Revue Co, while further expanding her solo repertoire with child impersonations and a

piano act. It was her singing, however, which made her the attraction she was. Indeed, she was seen by many critics of the day as the country's premier vaudeville soprano.

Rochelle retired from the stage for a brief time in 1920, returning to Fullers for their 1920/21 Melbourne pantomime season, in which she also wrote one of the production's songs. In August 1921 she began an engagement by John N. McCallum for his Town Topics company at the Cremorne Theatre in Brisbane (Bris). Given a welcome to the city by the Mayor and an enormous turn-out of people, her opening at the Cremorne saw an equally large number of people turned away from 3000 seat venue. The following year Rochelle again starred in a Fullers pantomime, this one being the Nat Phillips directed Mother Goose at the Hippodrome. She toured New Zealand in 1925 for the company, in addition to engagements with other managements.

In 1927 Rochelle joined the reformed Stiffy and Mo Revue Co, touring New Zealand with the troupe the following year. After the disbanding of that company she played the principal boy role in Little Red Riding Hood at the Empire (Syd), joined the Fullers Novellettes company (performing on their Australian circuit). 1927 also saw her form a partnership with Stan Foley that resulted in her opening at the Bridge Theatre, Newtown in revue. The theatre had been leased from Clay's by her husband. The last known performance found in the research for this thesis was her lead role in The Belle of New York at Her Majesty's (Syd) in March 1930.

* Queenie Paul as principal boy [Babes in the Woods, Fullers pantomime, Grand Opera House] was succeeded by Amy Rochelle, who is understood to have got the position on the recommendation of Harry Clay. With Mr Clay she had been a fixture for years. Miss Rochelle in age and appearance is still a mere girl. She has an attractive figure - tall and slight; and is distinctly good-looking. She speaks clearly, with full appreciation of the point in every line she utters and is easy and confident in all she does. Self-consciousness is unknown to her. But above all these recommendations is her singing. Her voice is remarkable for its pleasing quality, together with its range and power. Furthermore, her highest notes, flooding as it were the whole building, are taken without the least apparent effort. The use of her voice, however, is not free of certain vaudeville tricks; but except to the musically exacting her singing for this very reason must be all the more effective. While Miss Rochelle is to be congratulated on the chance she is getting with the Fullers the latter must similarly be congratulated on securing her services. For in her the firm named have an exceptionally fine principal boy. They might have sent to England or America without getting a performer to equal this Sydney-born girl. Certain it is that not within my memory has Australia seen a principal boy who in all-round qualifications for such a role can be said to surpass her (TT: Apr. 1919, 15).

- Amy Rochelle is no longer hidden in revue, but takes her place in Fuller vaudeville as a single performer. Miss Rochelle is a Sydney-sider with youth in her favour, and had her best opportunity to date in Fullers last pantomime at the Grand Opera House (TT: June 1920, 11).

- Amy Rochelle has all the qualifications for a successful principal boy - personality, presence, good looks, and a voice. But if she continues to let out her voice to its fullest extent - or to overwork it as she is now inclined to do - it will not always be the good servant it at present is to her (TT: Jan. 1922, 9).

- As a child impersonator, Miss Rochelle has no equal. If one closed their eyes and listened, you would think you were listening to a small child of tender years singing. She has all the mannerisms of a child, even to the child-like cough. Her child stories are of exceptional interest, as they are original, and it can easily be said they have never been heard before (TC: 15 Oct. 1924, n. pag.).

- Amy Rochelle is a great help to the show [Stiffy and Mo Revue, Fullers]. She sings many ballads in a charming manner. As playgoers all know, the versatile Amy is a musical comedy star with a powerful soprano voice, and her child impersonations are so life-like, that they have almost become classics. She received her musical education at the N.S.W. Conservatorium, and owes a lot to the advice of Antonia Dolores. One chronicles with pleasure her rise in the profession was due to merit and hard work, and a combination of vivacity and beauty, plus a voice of unusual beauty (JI: 2 July 1927, 28).

ART SLAVIN

Singer/comic/patter/song writer/revue and sketch writer/revue producer. Born in Sydney and a chemist by profession Slavin's association with Harry Clay was a significant one, lasting from around 1915 up until at least 1925. His first known engagements were for Harry Rickards (ca.1909), and with whom he stayed for some six years. Towards the end of his association with the Tivoli organisation he teamed up with fellow vaudevillian Lily Thompson to form an acts known as Slavin and Thompson. In 1915 the pair began working on Clay's Sydney suburban circuit, and later toured Queensland in 1917 and 1918, with Slavin acting as manager and producer on the latter tour. They stayed with Clay until 1919, and then began working for a variety of other organisations over the next four or five years, including the Fullers, eventually returning to the Clay circuit on a regular basis in 1924. Both Slavin and Thompson continued at Clay's into 1925. They are known to have a least one child, a son named Frank.

Little is known of Art Slavin's early career and background. It has been recorded that he was born in Sydney and that prior to entering the entertainment industry he was a chemist by profession. Around 1909 he began what was to be a six year engagement with Harry Rickards, which suggests that he had obtained some considerable experience and reputation leading up to his association with the Tivoli organisation. During his Rickards years, however, Slavin did work on other vaudeville circuits, one such occasion being in 1913 when he appeared in Newcastle for the Dix-Baker company. It is believed that sometime in 1914 he married Lily Thompson, a native of Melbourne and sister of Maisie Pollard. Thompson had herself appeared with the Pollard's Lilliputian company for many years, beginning as one of the children and ending as a member of Pollard's Juvenile Opera Co. She toured the East and through America with Mrs C.A. Chester, a daughter of Tom Sullivan (aka Tom Pollard), and later toured South Africa with the Harry Hall Lilliputian Opera Co. It appears that both Slavin and Thompson were on the Rickards circuit when they met.

Shortly after teaming up Slavin and Thompson began working for a number of other organisations including Bert Howard, J.C. Bain, Jackie Landow, the Fullers, and return engagements on the Tivoli circuit, with this situation lasting until sometime in mid 1915. Around that time they began their association with Harry Clay on his suburban circuit. The duo were well regarded for their comic songs and patter, and as such found a good deal of work with Clay, who in 1916 began expanding his circuit into regional NSW. Around this time, too, the revue began to emerge as a popular variety attraction, and in Art Slavin it found an enthusiastic writer. Indeed, over the 1916-18 period only Arthur Morley could be said to have perhaps written and produced more revues for Harry Clay than Art Slavin.

In 1917 Slavin and Thompson made their first tour of Queensland for Clay. The following year - which in fact became the last by the company for almost a decade - Slavin took on the role of Producer and Tour Manager, presenting several of his own revues, including the highly popular Casey's Ashes. The 1918 tour was also run with the assistance of Wally Edwards, who acted as Business Manager. The extent to which Slavin was regarded in the industry can be seen in an Australian Variety reflection, published in August of that year:

An Energetic Producer: - Art Slavin is a paragon of excellence in stage management, and the manner in which he conducts rehearsals. There is no time lost in idling around, but he gets to work right away. Furthermore, he uses no aggressive methods, but gets more done by his genteel methods (30 Aug. 1918, 7).

Sometime around 1919/1920 Slavin and Thompson left Harry Clay's circuit and while there remains a significant gap in their careers as far as the research for this thesis is concerned, they are believed to have continued playing throughout Australia and New Zealand during the first half of the 1920s, much of it apparently on the Fullers circuit.

In 1924 the pair returned to Clay's, with Slavin being known to have produced a number of revues for the company that year, including The Winning Ticket (ca. Sept/Oct), and in November he again presented one of his most popular pieces, Casey's Ashes across the circuit. Slavin continued to present shows for Clay's during the following year, although it is believed that at some stage during 1925 he found work in other areas.

As is the case with a number of other performers presented in this Appendix there has not been a great deal located with regard to Slavin and Thompson after 1925, although it is unlikely that Slavin in particular retired. However, it may well be possible that with a profession behind him that he could have returned to that, as the situation financially for variety artists during the last years of vaudeville certainly resulted in many leaving the industry.

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- (Dockum Street, Woolloomooloo): - As comedy waiters, Messrs Art Slavin and Bert Desmond caused endless amusement by their many interludes and quaint sayings, as an Irishman and as a Jew, and their topical song "1999," was most humorous. Mr Slavin's "cards" were responsible for a deal of laughter and interest... Slavin and Thompson (old Toowoomba favourites) had the audience with them the whole time they were on the stage, and blended patter, gags and paradoxical fragments harmoniously (TC: 2 July 1917, 7).
 - Slavin and Thompson, good people at all times; excellent work in the revue, and later on the programme is strengthened by their turn; good cross patter, and original vocal numbers, with added praise for the parodies from Art Slavin (AV: 18 Jan. 1918, n. pag.).
 - The features of the first part revue, Three Thousand Miles a Minute, are Art Slavin's staggersome make-up as a spiritualist, with big goggle eyes and a profusion of red, curly hair.... Mr Slavin is the life and soul of the revue (TT: Feb. 1918, 41).
 - The first portion of the evening's entertainment was devoted to an extremely funny revue [by Art Slavin] which provided a constant simmer of merriment.... Slavin and Thompson's comedy patter work was another feature of the performance (NM: 26 June 1918, 3).

Slavin's Spasm

Everybody's got the "Flu"
At-choo! At-choo! At-choo!
I'm trying to write this verse for -
At-choo! At-choo! At-choo!
Don't miss Clay's laughter show this week
If you're feeling sad or blue
It's no darned good, I can't write more,
At-choo! At-choo! At-choo!

(AV: 11 Oct. 1918, 17)

- Slavin and Thompson are a riot nightly; the former's parodies are with out doubt, excellent; and the latter is a dainty and polished artist, who always renders assistance towards making the turn a success (AV: 18 Oct. 1918, 11).
- Besides writing a lot of the Slavin-Thompson songs and patter, Mr Slavin was, at the time these lines were written, supplying Mr Clay with a second-half revue that made in all seventeen for that manager, from his clever, resourceful pen (TT: Feb. 1919, n. pag).
- Some original Slavin Patter:

Life is like a game of cards. We all take a hand in the game. The barber cuts, the shopkeeper deals, and the old maid goes alone. She tries to get a partner; but nobody will prop; and she's euchred every time. The butcher plays a plucky game. He plays for a good stake, and never loses his block. A baker never plays for fun, he always needs the dough. The navy plays spades, and the sport plays clubs. The lover plays hearts; but he often has to use diamonds to take a trick. A little baby always reminds me of cards. The baby's the little joker, and his mother's the queen of trumps. If the little joker plays a crook game his mother takes him up, puts him across her lap, raises the right bower, and trumps the ace (TT: Feb. 1919, n. pag.).
- (Fullers): - Slavin and Thompson, a very pleasing lady and smart comedian put over a fine offering. The lady sings ballads, which the comedian himself wrote (TT: Oct. 1923, 18).
- The revue Casey's Ashes is entrusted to Art Slavin's direction, and he and his many lady and gentlemen confederates supply plenty of amusement in song, dance and jokelet. A word of praise is due to the careful manner in which these revues are mounted (TT: Dec. 1924, 17).
- (Princess Theatre): - Art Slavin's revue company is going strong with plenty of variety in The Wags (TT: Mar. 1925, 17).

GEORGE SORLIE

Theatre entrepreneur, dancer, singer, trick cycling, baton twirler, actor, comic. Born George Brown Sorlie on 7 February 1885 in Liverpool, England. Having grown up in Melbourne and Kalgoorlie Sorlie moved to Sydney ca 1903 looking to find work as a professional variety performer. One of his earliest engagements was with Harry Clay (ca.1903). Over the next decade he was associated with Harry Rickards (ca.1905), James Brennan (ca.1907), J. C. Bain (1912-14), Bert Howard (ca.1915), and was the elected president of the Australian Vaudeville Artists Federation (1913-14). Sorlie found much success in a partnership with Billy C. Brown (ex-Hugo's Buffalo Minstrels) on the Fullers circuit between 1914 and 1917. He married Grace Florence Stewart in 1915. Following Brown's return to America in 1916 Sorlie went back to performing a solo act, finding regular work with Beck and Howard and later just Bert Howard for much of 1917. During the years 1918 and 1919 Sorlie worked largely on Harry Clay's Sydney circuit, but from the early 1920s onwards he concentrated on touring his own companies under canvas. Over the next two decades established himself as Australia's "Tent Show King," staging musical comedies, pantomimes, vaudeville and drama productions around the country year in and year out. His entrepreneurial activities also included city-based operations. During his career, Sorlie contributed regularly to a number of theatre magazines, as correspondent, anecdotist and industry observer. He also recorded a number of songs for the Parlophone label in the later 1920s. George Sorlie died on the 19th June 1948, leaving behind his wife, who continued to tour (with Bobby Le Brun).

In an industry which required of its work force the ability to multitask, George Sorlie was with little doubt one of the most versatile. In addition to his principal comedy routine he could perform with expertise almost anything that was required. Dancing, acting, singing and juggling were just part of his overall repertoire of skills. He was also a noted trick cyclists and held three gold medals for "manipulating the baton," an act he did to great applause in the Anzac Day march of 1918 (27 Apr. 1918, n. pag). Sorlie's historical status today is largely that of Australia's leading tent showman. As with others of his era, those like Nat Phillips, Jim Gerald, Stanley McKay and George Wallace, George Sorlie's considerable reputation and achievements during his lifetime

have found very little recognition from historians. Even that which currently passes as an historical account requires further investigation as much of it erroneous.

The son of Frederick Sorlie and Sarah Jane (nee Rodick) Sorlie was of West Indian ancestry. The family migrated to Australia, settling first in Melbourne, and following the death of his father, Perth. By 1896 Sorlie was supporting his mother by singing in bars, halls and on the streets of Kalgoorlie during that district's goldrush period. In 1903 he moved to Sydney where he is believed to have made his professional start in that city with Harry Clay. It is not known how long Sorlie's initial engagement with Harry Clay (around 1903) lasted, although as he did not tour Queensland in 1904 he would have most likely been looking for, or have found, other work prior to the Clay closing down his Sydney operations in mid February. Brian Carroll, in his Australian Stage Album presents a record of Sorlie's initial engagement with Harry Clay:

In 1903, 18 year old George Sorlie faced the acid test of a one-night stand before the audience of Harry Clay's Newtown Theatre, where those who paid sixpence to sit in the gods had an unerring aim as they dispatched soft tomatoes and overripe eggs towards performers who failed to please them. When he had finished and no missiles came, veteran trouper Ted Tutty told him; "Boy you have been accepted by the most critical audience in Australia" (88).

Charles Norman, in When Vaudeville Was King also records that his "old friend Mr George Sorlie," (or the 'white Rajah' as he was often called), had joined Clay's when he first got to Sydney. However, Norman mentions the Bridge Theatre as the place where Sorlie first opened, a claim which is incorrect as Clay did not build his theatre until 1913.

Two years after joining Clay's Sorlie began his association with the Tivoli circuit, and over the next decade he appeared on the bills of other leading organisations, including James Brennan (ca.1907), J. C. Bain (1912-14), Fullers Theatre (1914-17) and Bert Howard (ca. 1915). In 1914, while also acting as President of the Australian Variety Artists Federation, he teamed up with Billy C. Brown, who'd previously been a member of Hugo's Buffalo Minstrels. The duo soon began to earn considerable critical praise and popularity, playing starring engagements on the Fuller circuit in both Australia and New Zealand. It was during this period, too, that Sorlie married Grace Florence Stewart (1915), the woman who would play an integral part in his later career as a travelling tent showman. Sorlie also reportedly operated a fruit shop in the city area of Sydney around 1916. Early in 1917 Brown was forced to return to America due to war repatriation orders, and Sorlie was subsequently left to continue performing as a solo act.

Sometime during 1917 Sorlie and his wife purchased Phillip Lytton's travelling tent theatre. However the expense of buying out Lytton was such that Sorlie was forced to take on work with other managements until he could afford to begin his own theatrical venture. He is believed to have initially played engagements on the Ike Beck and Bert Howard circuit around the middle of the year, followed by a contract with Howard after the pair ended their business relationship. This engagement lasted almost eight months. After ending his association with Howard sometime in late January 1918 Sorlie returned to Clay's. Although he remained with Clay throughout most of the year, he also returned briefly to play Bert Howard's circuit.

The reputation and experience Sorlie had by then gained was obviously appreciated by Harry Clay. A number of references indicate, for example, that he often acted in a de facto producer role, assisting less experienced performers and involving himself in many facets of the operation. The Theatre records, for instance that "at times his help towards the show is of a general nature, and he frequently assists a weak offering in a quiet but effective manner" (June 1919, 25). Australian Variety noted, too, that "besides being a very bit hit on the programme [Sorlie] is a great help to the artists in their numbers. Often when a turn is falling flat, George comes along with a little comedy during the song, which turns the number from failure, to one of the successes of the bill" (16 Aug. 1918, 11). His appeal was not always overwhelmingly appreciated, on the other hand, as the following review suggests:

George Sorlie ("The Chocolate Soldier") is over-confident. He thinks he has the audience captivated before he opens his lips, or without doing anything to first win their approval. Mr Sorlie is a good performer. But he is by no means so great that he can affect the cocksure attitude he took the night I heard him (TT: Mar. 1918, 33).

Reviews during this period suggest on the whole, however, that he was one of the circuit's star attractions. Indeed, he was often referred to as the "first part hit." By December of 1918 he had reportedly worked for Clay for fifty weeks straight, playing alternately the Princess and Newtown Bridge Theatres (TT: Dec. 1918, 32).

Sorlie is believed to have left Clay's company sometime during mid-1919. Having raised enough money to begin his own operations he and his wife finally put together a company that was initially known as George Sorlie's Musical and Dramatic Company. One of its earliest recorded seasons was in the North Queensland town of Mackay where it presented The Vendetta. Over the next twenty years Sorlie established his reputation as "King of the Road" with his musical comedies, pantomimes, vaudeville and drama productions crisscrossing the country year after year. He did not, however, contain his activities to the country areas only, as he is known to have been running shows from Balmain in 1924 (ca. Oct). Sorlie died on 19 June 1948, leaving behind his wife, who continued to tour (with Bobby Le Brun) for the next decade or so. During his career, Sorlie contributed regularly to a number of theatre magazines, as correspondent, anecdotist and industry observer, one of the earliest being, for example, his involvement in the first Australian Variety Christmas issue in 1915. In the late 1920s and early 1930s he espoused his views on numerous occasions in magazines, particularly Everyone's. It is known, too, that from the early 1920s onwards Sorlie made several recordings of his songs.

* The Era Comedy Four will be minus Billy Brown at the expiration of their present contract with the Fuller-Brennan management. The comedian will double up with George Sorlie, and if indications are anything, these boys are going to clean up with several routines of new and original business (AV: 8 July 1914, 7).

• Brown and Sorlie the coloured deliverers of the best essence of laughology are a scream this week, and during the whole time these two dandy performers are on view, the house is completely broken up from start to finish. As a double, you must hand it to these two boys as one of the best ever that has played Melbourne (AV: 24 Nov. 1915, 12).

• George Sorlie of Brown and Sorlie is now a partner in the fine and up-to-date fruit shop at the corner of Elizabeth and King Streets. He will probably confine himself to the industry now that Bill Brown is going back to America (AV: 13 Dec. 1916, n. pag.).

• (Bridge Theatre, Newtown): - George Sorlie is "some swell" in his evening dress, and his rendering of "Gungapin" [sic] was an eye-opener to many, who never thought George could do it to such big success. His number, "How I Beat Jack Johnson" (written by Ralph Weekes – Clay's drummer and arranger) was a winner (AV: 26 Oct. 1917, n. pag.).

• George Sorlie created quite a sensation on Anzac Day. He was leading the Musician's band. Dressed in full uniform, he cut a dashing figure, and his work with the baton was of great interest to all who witnessed his performance (AV: 3 May 1918, 4).

• George Sorlie is easily the first part hit at the princess (Railway Square). He had to sing five songs on April 20. A tuneful voice and an invigorating style are the means - or mostly so - through which Mr Sorlie succeeds in doing the trick (TT: May 1918, 33).

• Harry Clay and George Sorlie made quite a hit at the Princess Theatre last Saturday, when they did a double dance (AV: 10 May 1918, 3)

• "If you can stand it I'll sing it!" It was the retort of George Sorlie to a crowded house that clamoured for "Four and Nine" after he had already responded to no less than three recalls. "We're used to it," interposed someone in the audience. Said Mr Sorlie, "You ought to be." After a pause he added. "If there's anybody here who hasn't heard me sing it will he please stand up?" For a joke someone did, because for so long has Mr Sorlie been giving "Four and Nine" that it's inconceivable there is among Harry Clay's thousands of Sydney patrons one who hasn't heard of George's rendering of it - again and again. To the person standing up Mr Sorlie remarked amidst laughter, "There's a medal for you in the office." The song has assuredly never had in Australia the equal of Mr S. as a singer of it. Hence his sensational success in the clever, tuneful, humorous lines (TT: Feb. 1919, 27).

• For some time, George Sorlie has bet various sums that he could stand in his shop and tell the destination of various trams long before they got within his direct line of vision. At times he almost cleared the rent, as well as cleaning out his friends. But the secret is out. George sees the reflection of the destination-board in the shop opposite his, so now a fine source of revenue is no more! (AV: 1 Aug. 1919, 2).

ARTHUR TAUCHERT

Endman/comic/singer /acrobat/film actor. Born Arthur John McCormack Tauchert in 1877 at Waterloo (Syd) to Frederick and Norah Tauchert. Brother of Ida Tauchert, well-known minstrel singer who worked with Harry Clay during the 1890s (and wife of Jack "Porky" Kearns). Arthur Tauchert is first known to have worked with Harry Clay in 1914, and is believed to have continued with the company on a regular basis until around 1919. He toured Queensland for Clay's in 1915. Tauchert mostly worked solo, but at various times during his career he teamed up with other comics, including Bert Corrie and Ern Delavale. In 1919 he was the lead actor in The Sentimental Bloke, an Australian film based on the poems by C.J. Dennis. It was a role which made him a star across Australia. He followed this with a number of films over the next decade, including one based on another Dennis character Ginger Mick.

Arthur Tauchert was another vaudeville performer who successfully moved into other areas in the entertainment industry, becoming one of Australia's first film stars. His early minstrel career saw him work with virtually all the vaudeville managements operating at the time around Australia. Renowned mainly for his comic turns and singing as an Irish-style tenor (including divers ditties), he was also known to perform acrobatics, including neck and shoulder somersaults. Australian Variety records Tauchert's stage presence in a 1914 review: "Arthur Tauchert, the man in the black suit, brown suit, white suit, and not forgetting the purple vest, simply holds the theatre as he likes. By the way he is received, it looks as if he is going to be a landmark at Clay's for some considerable time" (20 May 1914, n. pag.).

In addition to engagements with Harry Clay's company during 1914 he is also known to have worked with Dix-Baker (Newcastle), as well forming, around the end of the year, his own Refined Vaudeville Company. The troupe included Lyla Thompson, Pearle Smaile, Sutton and Jamieson and Maud Stewart. During the earlier part of the year he also formed a brief partnership with Ernie

Delavale, following the latter's break from longtime partner Will Gilbert. Australian Variety records that "Tauchert has had a varied career with several partners, but this is the first time he has entered into a legitimate partnership" (8 July 1914, 13).

In 1915 Tauchert toured Queensland for Harry Clay, with Australian Variety noting that he was "the riot of each town [with] his class of business having caught on" (28 Apr. 1915, 3). During the year he also teamed up with Bert Corrie in a patter act. Although there has been no record yet found of Tauchert working with Clay's during the 1916-18 period, it is more than likely that he found work at some stage with the company during those years. He is known to have worked for Bert Howard in 1916, as well as running his own vaudeville company for a while. By May 1916 Tauchert had already become involved in the rapidly emerging Australian film industry, accepting a prominent role in a Jack Galvin film (during which he broke a finger while in a scene with Walter Jamieson, when the latter was required to throw Tauchert's character out of a showground). Australian Variety records that "Tauchert was so enthusiastic over the movie business, and put up such a showing that it is quite likely he will forsake vaudeville for the films" (3 May 1916, n. pag).

Arthur Tauchert's big opportunity came in 1918 when Raymond Longford cast him in the lead role of The Sentimental Bloke, with the film being shot during the middle of the year. The film was released in early 1919, with one preview suggesting that "Tauchert's acting in the locally-made movie is a revelation" and that a "fabulous amount has been offered by a leading theatrical firm for the rights of the said film" (AV: 3 Jan. 1919, 4). By the end of the year the entertainer's star was well and truly on the rise with his performance in the film roundly praised. The success of the venture saw Longford begin production on a second film during the year, with Tauchert again in the lead role. Based on C.J. Dennis' poem "The Moods of Ginger Mick," it was to be another huge success for a man now known by one and all as "the sentimental bloke." Tauchert continued to perform in vaudeville theatres during this period, working for several months on Frank Reis's circuit. In 1920 he joined Reg. Thornton's (the Kangarooosta) company the K-Nuts', playing the Blue Mountains before opening in Melbourne sometime around May.

Arthur Tauchert made a number of films over his career as well as his on-going commitment to vaudeville. These include: Films include: The Sentimental Bloke (1919), Ginger Mick (1920), Jackeroo (1920), The Dinkum Bloke (1923), The Digger Earl (1924), The Moth of Moombi (1926), Odds On (1928), Fellers (1930) and Showgirl's Luck (1932) aka Talkie Mad. It seems, however, that in the end his career (as with vaudeville) faltered, and he was apparently left destitute.

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- Arthur Tauchert... was the usual riot; as a knock-about endman he stands alone, some of his falls being almost real (AV: 21 Oct 1914, n. pag.).
 - (Bridge Theatre, Newtown):- Ted Tutty and Arthur Tauchert (John McCormick) again supplied the comedy and were the usual scream of the bill (AV: 17 Feb. 1915, 3).
 - (Toowoomba):- Arthur Tauchert is a tower of strength in the company. Clever and experienced, his "Pilgrims of the Night," in the first part (with encore) and contributory aid in the second session were heartily enjoyed (TC: 6 Apr. 1915, 6).
 - (Ipswich):- Comedian Arthur Tauchert in his original song "Jig-a-Jig" simply brought the house down. He certainly enhanced his already fine reputation (QT: 12 Apr. 1915, 7).
 - (Princess Theatre):- Arthur Tauchert with a taking makeup is good in his offering in the first part. As a supposed wild Indian, he greatly helps along the concluding farce (TT: June 1919, 25).

TED TUTTY

Cornerman/blackface act/singer/eccentric comedian. Born 15 May 1876 in Melbourne (Vic), Tutty was without doubt Harry Clay's most enduring artist, as well as being one of his most popular comedians. Although he found engagements with a variety of managements between 1905 and 1925, including the Fullers, the Tivoli circuit, Bert Howard, J.C. Bain, Harry Sadler, Frank Reis, Dix-Baker (Newcastle) and Jacky Landow, Tutty's career was dominated by his association with Clay's company, including seven QLD tours. Tutty toured the northern state in 1905-07, 1909-10, 1913 and 1915. Often referred to as "the simple chap" or the "tired comedian," he was very much an institution with Newtown audiences, and there was perhaps no more popular comic on Clay's QLD tours. He married Kate Cahill, another Clay artist (and who worked for many years under the stage name of Muriel Eskbank), in 1902 at Port Pierre (SA). He died on the 13th of April 1951 at Coogee, NSW. Jim McDonald wrote of Tutty's contribution and place in Australian vaudeville in Sydney's Daily Mirror:

Ted Tutty died a few weeks ago, and his passing severs the last link in the long chain of Australian born "black-face" comedians. These gentry comprised the bones and tamborine brigade of old-time minstrel show and music hall entertainment. In show virtuosity Will Whitburn and Charlie Fanning helped the native-born comics who worked under the banners of Harry Rickards and Ben and John Fuller. Ted Tutty was for many years the star cornerman on the circuit controlled by the late Harry Clay. He also worked the "Bigger Time" of Rickards and Fuller managements. He was about 80 when he died. I remember him as a quaint comic whose style was modelled on that of Whitburn, and like that old master Ted was also well to the fore in the side-

splitting farces which were a special feature of old time black-face comedy. His dry, croaking humour was well suited to this robust form of mirth-making. Tutty was the last of the great cornermen of the gay nineties. Pope, Sayles, Fanning, Whitburn, Wharton, Kearns, McKisson and Co. have long since passed. Now old Ted has joined them (Apr. 1951, n.pag.).

Ted Tutty began his career in Victoria and South Australia during the last years of the 19th century, developing a unique stage persona. Charles Norman recalls Tutty as having a broad voice, full of humour, and comparing him to Syd Beck (63). It was, he said in an interview for this thesis, a "most peculiar Aussie delivery," and one which "people used to mock" (Appendix H, 163). The Theatre in its May 1916 issue described his turn as "giving a first impression through his physique and style of a sick lizard smothered in charcoal through his unique makeup" (49).

Ted Tutty most often worked solo, but is also known to have formed several partnerships during his career at Clay's, including both Harry Clay and Maurice Chenoweth, the latter working with Tutty regularly during the years 1917 and 1918. He also worked for many years with his wife, billed either as the Tuttys or the Two Tuttys. Throughout his twenty or so year career with Harry Clay he regularly found engagements with other companies, having no trouble securing work with the larger organisations run by Harry Rickards and the Fullers, for example. His friendship with Clay, however, saw him return year after year to the Sydney and NSW circuits, as well as his quite regular tours of Queensland. In that state there was perhaps no bigger name in the blackface end-man business than Tutty. Billed as "everybody's favourite" he was "the one" so far as Toowoomba audiences [were] concerned," wrote one reviewer for the Toowoomba Chronicle in 1910, "and his rendering of 'You're The One' met with a wild reception, as did his encore, 'Robin Red Breast'" (TC: 15 Mar. 1910, 3).

In 1913 Tutty was included in a Theatre list of Sydney's "best-known stars" along with Con Moreni, Jack Kearns, George Sorlie, Joe Charles and Joe Rox, and around the same time he is known to have held an executive position with the Australian Variety Artists Federation. In 1913, too, Australian Variety, in a review of a Clay's Bridge Theatre show, reported that Tutty and a young Roy Rene both shared the applause for the first part - neither being able to be separated (22 July 1914, 6). By 1914 Tutty's reputation was such that Australian Variety wrote of him in relation to his appearances at the Newtown Bridge Theatre:

Ted Tutty is, without doubt, the biggest draw card that Harry Clay has ever had, and a sure riot every week; he has now broken all records, being in his 16th week, which speaks for itself as to his drawing power. He can always be depended upon for something original each week, and to do this requires some thinking out. Judging by the way he is going at the present time it is hard to say when he will get his ticket, but the War is certain to be over before he finishes (14 Oct. 1914, 7).

In 1916 Tutty joined the long list of vaudeville artists to have attempted the management game, taking over the Daceyville Theatre, with shows every Monday night. Tutty advertised that he took acts through Joe Lashwood's agency, and that he presented a "first-class vaudeville show." Australian Variety seemed to agree, noting in regard to the the initial production that the fine program resulted in a packed house (16 Aug. 1916, n. pag.). Tutty continued working around Sydney and other centres such as Melbourne and Newcastle over the next few years, also continuing to establish records for unbroken engagements with Harry Clay during the period. In 1917 he and his wife toured New Zealand for the Fullers. A reviewer, writing for Australian Variety wrote of a Wellington appearance:

In the vaudeville first part, The Tuttys appeared for the first time in a stereotyped act of cross-talk and patter. The writer got rather a shock for a minute or so, and had to rub his eyes, as the appearance of Mr Tutty brought back the bad old days of nigger minstrels. However, the artists managed to go over fairly well, and should become very popular (AV: June 1917, n. pag.).

On his return to Sydney, and Clay's, it is recorded that Tutty's on-stage reception was met with several minutes of applause. By November he had begun a partnership with both Charles Waite and Maurice Chenoweth, the latter to last several years to great success. "They have," wrote Australian Variety "established themselves as firm favourites as a double act, and nightly it is some time before they are allowed to leave the stage" (15 Feb. 1918, n. pag). By this stage, too, Tutty had become widely known around Australia and New Zealand through his engagements with other vaudeville establishments including, as previously mentioned, the Fullers' and Tivoli circuits, as well as through Bert Howard, Jacky Landow, Dix-Baker (Newcastle), Paddy King and Frank Reis, several of these managers having been associated with Tutty over the previous decade. Sometime during the 1918-19 period he again began running his own variety combination around the Newcastle area, made up in part by members of his family. As Australian Variety records: "Melvin, a Tutty offspring, who has a nice voice and appearance is the making of a good performer" (14 Feb. 1919, n. pag.). This venture was to create for Tutty his longest absence from Harry Clay's company, being almost a year in duration.

Tutty continued to work for Clays until around the time of Harry Clay's death, mixing his engagements with other managements, as had been the case throughout most of his career, including J.C. Bain (ca.1924). He also continued to work in partnership with his wife, and his daughters. Although he retired from the stage some years later, he was regularly called back to display his considerable talents up until his death in 1951, being known to have performed at Sammy Lee's Theatre Restaurant ca.1950 - his age being then some seventy years.

- (Ipswich):- Mr Ted Tutty, without whom - in the estimation of Ipswichians, at any rate - Clay's Waxwork's would be incomplete, broke out in a fresh place, in "You're the One," his reception proving that in the delighted hearers, he was "the one." He had to give a treble encore (QT: 23 Mar. 1910, 5).
- (Ipswich):- The appearance of the most favoured member of the company, Mr Ted Tutty, was the signal for an outburst, which grew in volume as he sang "I'll Put On My Coat" and "Sandy McIntosh." In the latter Ted appeared in a highly exaggerated Highland costume, and to a vocal imitation of the bag-pipe danced, in his own inimitable style, what was probably meant for the highland fling (QT: 27 July 1910, 7).
- Ted Tutty, a bigger riot than the war, causes more sensation and his cross talk with Harry Clay is a feature of the programme (AV: 12 Aug. 1914, 4).
- Ted Tutty is to Harry Clay what Irving Sayles was to Harry Rickards. Mr Tutty is with Clay patrons just the favourite Mr Sayles was with Rickards patrons (TT: Oct. 1914, 35).
- Ted Tutty, as usual, was the riot of the programme, and, without doubt, he is a drawing-card for the box-office (TT: 28 Oct. 1914, 6).
- During the week April 1-7 Ted Tutty at the Newtown Bridge Theatre had to strain hard to make a go of his song "You Wouldn't Believe." But what an effort it must be for a performer to get new songs practically every week the whole year round! Besides, in his succeeding number, "She Was Only Seventeen," he more than made up for any disappointment with "You Wouldn't Believe." Indescribably funny was his working of the second song. Besides the originality with which he sang it there was a touch of genius in the business with which he accompanied it. Mr Tutty is quite an institution with Newtown audiences. It is sufficient for him to come on the stage to set the whole house rocking with laughter. But his make-up, it should be added is always a treat in itself. Such are his physique and style that the first impression he gives you is that of a sick lizard smothered in charcoal. Mr Tutty has been so long with Mr Clay - and is evidently so well treated by that manager - that he doesn't appear to have ever had the least wish to try his luck under any other management. So patrons of other houses are thus deprived of the hearty laughs he simply couldn't help giving them. Years ago Mr Clay included Mr Tutty in the Tom-Dawson-Fred Bluett category of Australian performers. He is all that, and if anything a trifle more (TT: May 1916, 49).
- Was there ever a greater hit with Clay patrons than Ted Tutty, in his black-faced specialties, and as THE comedian in the finales? His reception at the Newtown Bridge Theatre during the week November 10-16 proved that he had merely to show himself to set the house in screams (TT: Dec. 1917, 45).
- Chenoweth and Tutty held the stage for quite a while with their bright and bidding fair to outdo Crawford and routine of patter, and their duets - eh; Caldwell (AV: 1 Mar. 1918).
- (Bridge Theatre):- Maurice Chenoweth and Ted Tutty are the hit of the bill. The screams of laughter they get set aside any doubt on that point (TT; Feb. 1918, 41).
- Ted Tutty's vein of comedy shows no signs of exhaustion; and his make-up as usual, is a feature of the turns with which he never fails to convulse the audience (TT; Apr. 1919, 28).
- Billy Cass is a very close second to Ted Tutty as the best man in the burnt-cork line in Australia. Both have instinctively that nigger comedy so rarely possessed by those who nowadays affect the minstrel make-up (TT; Nov. 1919, 28).
- The following is an extract from one of Ted Tutty's most popular songs, "She's Only Seventeen," and was published in the May issue of Theatre in 1916, 52.

I love a girl
 A dear little girl
 And she's only seventeen;
 I love a girl
 The same little girl -
 And she's only seventeen!
 I love her dearly -
 I don't want her pelf.
 I'd do anything
 For her little self;
 I'd lay down my life for her.
 But I want it myself -

And she's only seventeen
 Only seventeen
 Only seventeen
 She said, "I'll love you all my life.
 Indeed you are my dream" -
 And she's only seventeen
 I love a girl
 And she's only seventeen
 I'm sorry to say
 That I married this girl -
 When she was only seventeen.

GEORGE WALLACE

Comedian revue producer and writer, musician, songwriter, singer, film actor, dancer, sketch writer, artist. Born on 4 June 1895 in Aberdeen, NSW, George Wallace was one of Australia's most popular variety and revues comedians of the 1920s, and went on to establish an equally impressive film and radio career during the 1930s and 1940s. He began his professional career in his early twenties after having spent a number of years in North Queensland as a farmhand and cane cutter. He initially toured with a small time variety troupe and spent some time in Brisbane before moving to Sydney around 1919 where he secured his first major vaudeville contract with Harry Clay. In early 1920 Wallace teamed up with Jack 'Dinks' Patterson to form Dinks and Oncus. Wallace moved from Clay's to the Fullers in 1924 following the break-up of the Dinks and Oncus partnership. Within a short time he established himself as one of that company's top draw cards, touring both Australia and New Zealand constantly up until the late 1920s. Although surrounded by a quality ensemble of comedians and singers, Wallace naturally dominated the troupe, not only as principle comedian, but also as writer, occasional songwriter and director. After the Fuller's company folded Wallace moved to the Tivoli circuit (earning around £120 per week). His versatility saw him take up opportunities in a number of different entertainment fields from the 1930s onwards, including musical comedies, film and radio. He appeared in several high profile musicals in the early 1930s and later starred in five popular comedy films. One of his greatest successes was the original composition – the classic war-time song "A Brown Slouch Hat." He appeared in minor roles in two dramatic films, one of these being *The Rats of Tobruk* (1944), and in 1949 was given his own weekly radio series on the Macquarie network. Wallace retired in 1957 and died in 1960 in Sydney. He was survived by his son, George Wallace Jnr.

George Wallace is a one of the great examples of vaudevillian versatility, perhaps not in the same league as George Sorlie, but there would have been few who would have wished to separate them during their careers. Wallace, along with Sorlie, Roy Rene, and Jim Gerald, completes the quartet of leading Australian performers to have worked this country's stages during the great era of vaudeville and revue. Isadore Brodsky in *The Streets of Sydney* records one of Wallace's early engagements, most likely around the time he was a cane cutter in north Queensland and aged about sixteen.

Wallace has told the story of how he worked his way into a troupe self-described as the "greatest show on earth." The company consisted of Happy Harry Salmon, his wife and two others. It was at Walkerstown in Queensland. George had a pal named Jock McFarlane who engineered the engagement by this piece of strategy. "Can any of the fellows in your show dance?" he asked Happy Harry, with George discreetly hidden. "My oath," [replied Harry]. "I know a pal here who will dance any of your crowd for a quid," was Jock's rejoinder. "Trot him out. I take you." declared Happy Harry. George came out of hiding, clambering onto the boards and "thanks to heavy boots and a good sounding stage" won the bet for his friend and a job for himself - a pound a week and keep (130).

Only 5'5" (1.63m) tall (in his later years it was said that he was nearly as wide) Wallace was renowned for his physical humour - being able to fall better than almost anyone else in the business. Further to this, his comedy was acknowledged as being rather less sophisticated than many of his peers. His technique lay in presenting a more innocent type of persona and taking full advantage of his expressive eyes and his country sayings.

George Wallace began his life on stage at age three in a family song and dance act. His father, also George Stevenson Wallace, (and known professionally as Bronco Wallace) was a painter who turned to minstrel entertainment as a comic and equilibrist. Broncho eventually established a successful act with George Scott around the turn of the century. Although George Jnr's act (not to be confused with his own son Wee Georgie Wallace – later known as George Wallace Jnr) was very much a country character, much of his youth was spent in Sydney, where he often busked on the Pyrmont waterfront. He later moved to Manly when his mother remarried. After spending some four years in his stepfather's ink factory Wallace went back to the country, a period which saw him work as a cane-cutter amongst other jobs. It has been said that "the dry wit of the outback nurtured his comic sense and timing" (Parsons and Chance 628), and indeed his stage appearance - often consisting of checked shirt and old battered hat - was very much an image cultivated from his bush experiences. His topics were not, however, entirely devoted to the country - with some of his most popular exploiting urban and foreign subjects.

Wallace married Margarita Edith Emma Nicholas in Brisbane in 1917 (they separated in 1924) and the following year moved back to Sydney where he eventually found an engagement on Harry Clay's circuit. He was apparently given the opportunity after an unpaid trial of acrobatic clog-dancing at the Bridge Theatre in early 1919. During his early days he worked on stage with his wife, as one of the earliest references found to date shows. The double act with his wife did not last long, however, although his son, Wee Georgie Wallace, made semi-regular appearances on the stage with him over the next five or so years, and in later years worked an act of his own. In June 1919 the Theatre described Wallace's "clever clog-dancing as... reminiscent of the days of Dan Tracey" (25), and the following year wrote: "His female impersonations have the house in shrieks all the time he's on the stage" (TT: Jan. 1920, 26). A few months later, however, Wallace joined forces with another Clay comedian, Jack Patterson, to create the most famous of the company's home grown acts. Indeed, as Katherine Brisbane notes, they had no equal in being "so well remembered purely from appearances there" (178).

There has been some confusion regarding the exact date that Dinks and Oncus first teamed up, with it being suggested, for example, that they formed in 1919 (Parsons and Chance 191; and Sayers 365). As Chapter Four of this thesis has noted, however, an Australian Variety review dated 27 May 1920 indicates that they had only been together a few weeks at that stage.

[Wallace] has doubled up with Dinks Patterson, and went a riot. As they have only been together a couple of weeks, we hate to think what they will give patrons in, say, a couple of months. No bigger laugh has ever appeared on the Clay time (8).

Within a year Dinks and Oncus had become Clay's biggest attraction, playing to packed houses and rivalling Stiffy and Mo for the "mob's" favoritism. Pint-sized Wallace was in marked contrast to the incredibly tall and skinny Patterson, and combined with their knock-about comedy, containing lots of falling around, drunken antics, and outrageous boxing displays, helped create many hilarious routines.

Charles Norman recalls the Wallace and Patterson partnership in his book When Vaudeville Was King:

When George was beginning to be talked about as an excellent comic he was teamed with another comedian, a man from the First World War, Dinks Patterson. Dinks was a tall, very thin comedian with a nose that somehow got in the way of a breach loader gun, or so it seemed. But he was one of the most likable blokes you'd meet from here to the Cape. This tall and self-effacing character was a gifted funny man. He had a voice that tended to rise to falsetto when aroused in blow-up comedy situations. "What's the matter with you?" he'd call. They were a perfect foil for each other, screamingly funny and seemed destined to become a world famous comedy team (105).

Patterson and Wallace continued to fill the theatres for Harry Clay up until the end of their partnership sometime in 1924. It seems, however, that Jack Patterson's role in the team had been gradually reduced during the two or so years prior to their splitting up. By around mid 1922, for instance, Clay had begun advertising "Oncus and his Merry Company," (TT: June 1922, 17) no doubt due to Wallace's increasingly influence on the writing of material, and as a developing revue director. This would have no doubt rankled Patterson, and may well have contributed to his decision to split up the team after what Charles Norman describes as a minor misunderstanding over a practical joke. [see Chapter Four pages 89-90 for further details] After the pair ended their partnership, Patterson formed an act with his wife, Trixie Ireland, and worked for several years over in the United Kingdom before returning to Australia. He also became a revue producer and carved out a successful career in variety and revues, occasionally partnering other comedians in acts. He was not, however, able to match the success that his old partner found, and unfortunately there has been little found to date regarding his career past the early 1930s.

During his final years with Harry Clay's company, George Wallace developed his skills in the area of revue directing, experiences through which he found much success in later years on the Fullers' circuit. At some stage, too, his younger sister, Babe, worked on the circuit - she being known to have done the occasional act with Charles Norman while he was on Clay time. It has not been determined when he eventually left Clay's, although reviews in Everyone's over September 1924 indicate that George Wallace's Revue Company had been appearing at the Fullers' Majestic in Newtown since at least August.

Although Wallace left Clay's for the more lucrative offerings under the Fuller regime – his initial contract for a tour of New Zealand was £20 per week. He soon began to rival Roy Rene and Jim Gerald in the comedy stakes, however. Interestingly, Fred Parsons, in A Man Called Mo claims that Wallace was in 1929 "a very minor comedian, half of a comedy act called, of all things, Dinks and Oncus" (7). His recall here (as with most of details regarding Roy Rene's career prior to 1936) is highly questionable in light of the fact that not only had the Dinks and Oncus act been dissolved for some four or so years, but that Wallace was far from being a "very minor" comic.⁴ That George Wallace's reputation was by then considerably well-established is indicated by the strength of his company during his early Fullers' days, when the troupe included among others the highly respected Marshall Crosby. Further to this he is known to have taken the troupe across to New Zealand in October of 1924 where they were accorded much acclaim.

With vaudeville's popularity declining in the late 1920s Wallace's versatility allowed him the opportunity to enter a number of new fields, including musicals. He was cast, for example, in Collits' Inn opposite Gladys Moncrieff in 1933 and also had a major role in The Beloved Vagabond (1934). As a lead actor he appeared in several successful films during that decade and in the 1940s worked on the Tivoli circuit (earning around £120 per week), while also appearing in two dramatic films. George Wallace's filmography is: His Royal Highness (1932), Harmony Row (1934), Let George Do It (1938) Gone to the Dogs (1939), The Rats of Tobruk (1944) and Wherever She Goes (1951). As a song writer, one of his most successful tunes was "A Brown Slouch Hat." By 1949 Wallace also had a weekly radio series on the Macquarie network. He retired in 1957 and died in 1960 in Sydney. He was survived by his son.

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- The Two Wallaces very inexperienced, bad routine and mixed up turn (AV: 24 Jan. 1919, n. pag.).
 - George Wallace is gaining applause for his smart dancing and good comic songs. Since his opening, he has made rapid strides towards success (AV: 11 Dec. 1919, n. pag.).

⁴ See Footnote 1, page 124.

- Dinks Patterson, who is one of the tallest members of the vaudeville profession, did a couple of new songs in the first part, and also put on a laughable sketch in the second, and which went over "good-oh" (AV: 12 Feb. 1920, 12).
- George Wallace: Yes, I'm acquainted with your wife, old man. I knew her before you married her.
Dinks Patterson: Ah, that's where you had the advantage of me - I didn't (AV: 24 June 1920, 5).
- Dinks and Oncus stopped the show in their inebriate sketch at the Gaiety and had to take no less than four bows before the pleased patrons would allow them to retire (AV: 17 Sept. 1920, n. pag).
- George Wallace says he has a century of the best to say that his partner, Dinky Patterson, can get a decision over Sid Godfrey in a twenty-round route, or he will have a four spar with him any night at the Gaiety just for old times sake (AV: 22 July 1920, 21).
- Dinks and Oncus ("The Two Drunks") never once become dull. They go from laugh to laugh, and get an exceedingly good reception (TT: Aug. 1920, 9)
- George Wallace must have made a fine impression throughout New Zealand, as visitors from the dominion, when referring to Fuller shows, never fail to mention the success the little comedian made in their country, where his style of comedy was so much appreciated (E: 12 Nov. 1924, 39).
- (Fuller Theatre):- The first appearance of the George ("Onkus") Wallace revue company at this theatre revived memories of the business done by Stiffy and Mo, inasmuch as both houses last Saturday played to capacity... As an entertainer Wallace is of the highly eccentric order, and with his extraordinary dancing and acrobatics, vies with the best revue company at present on the circuit; and this is saying something in view of some exceptionally talented performers (E: 4 Mar. 1925, 30).
- George Wallace Jnr, five year old son of the comedian at the Fuller Theatre, was another small-sized riot at the Hippodrome last Saturday. For his years he is a mental and professional marvel. Three generations of Wallaces have now made history in Australian vaudeville, i.e. "Broncho," "Oncus," and now "Wee George" (E: 18 Mar. 1925, 36).
- George Wallace has immense personality. In addition, he is refined and, last but not least, has a delicious sense of humour. Only one thing he lacks; he has not yet, as it were, "found himself." At the present moment his style of humour is nondescript - his fun is spontaneous without being individual. In other words, he has not as yet had a sufficiently wide experience to adopt a brand of humour which is distinct enough to be imitated. That time has yet to come, however, Remember these words and watch... George Wallace is undoubtedly a gold mine for the Fuller firm (TT: Apr. 1925, 15).