

PERCY ST JOHN

Largely associated with Brisbane during the last two decades of his life, Percy St John's career as an Australian-based variety performer reached the upper levels of the industry during the mid-late 1880s. Over the course of the next decade he found engagements as both actor and writer with most of the leading variety managements in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, appearing in musical plays, burlesques, pantomimes and minstrel shows. As an entrepreneur, St John was associated with James Wilkinson, John Gourley, W. J. Wilson, and Thomas Delohery and Ted Holland, before establishing his own operations out of the Theatre Royal (Bris) in 1899. His Queensland Royal Burlesque and Specialty Company also made a number of tours throughout regional Queensland during early 1900s. In 1905 he leased the Theatre Royal to Ted Holland and in 1911 the pair opened the newly built Empire Theatre, running it together until Holland's death in 1914. St John died the following year. Their company continued to operate the Empire under the management of Fuller's Theatre until 1918 at which time it was officially taken over by Fullers' Theatres.

1889-1894

Little is yet known about the early life and career of Charles Percival St John-Smith. Known professionally as Percy St John his name has first been identified in advertising as early as 30 March 1889. At the time, he was engaged by Robert Brough and Dion Boucicault Jnr to appear in Charles Bradley's adaptation of *Bootles' Baby* (Bijou Theatre, Melbourne). The following year, J. S. Smith (proprietor) and Harry Friedman (manager) offered him a role in Lance Lenton's burlesque adaptation of *Black-Eyed Susan* (Gaiety Theatre, Melbourne). One of St John's fellow cast members, Slade Murray, engaged him to appear in Brisbane later that same year as a member of his Gaiety Burlesque Company (Liddy's Gaiety Theatre). While no record of St John's career prior to 1889 has yet been located, the fact that he 'coined, cribbed, adapted... locally treated' and directed Murray's Christmas pantomime *Cinderella* suggests that he had already amassed a good deal of professional experience.

Although *Cinderella* attracted good audiences following its Boxing Day premiere, Murray, St John, and Friedman controversially ended their season at the Gaiety on 5 January 1891, following the unexpected death of the lessee G. Liddy a few days earlier. Two public notices published in the *Brisbane Courier* on that day suggests that the trio were not prepared to continue their association with the theatre's manager, Charles B Hicks. While Murray, St John, and Friedman merely thanked the Brisbane public

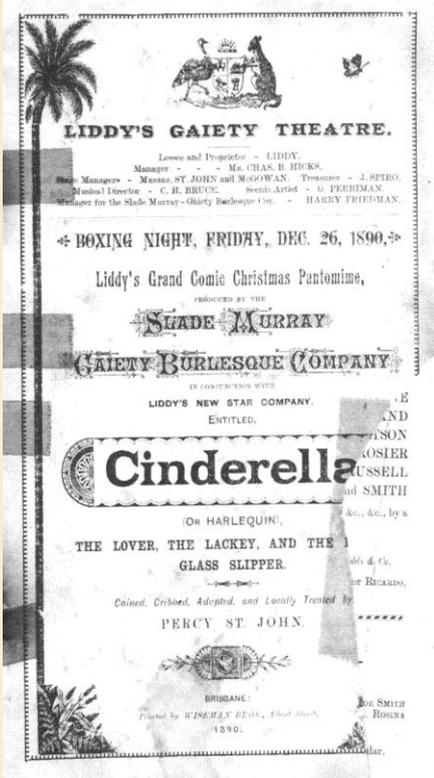
for its support and announced their intention to open that same night at the Theatre Royal, Hicks took exception to their cancellation. Responding in the same edition, he published a notice that states that they had no claims against him over door receipts, and denounced their conduct as "unprofessional" (5 Jan. 1891, 2).

In late 1891, St John joined Dan Tracey's Vaudeville, Minstrel and Specialty Company, which was then almost in its second year of operations at the School of Arts. Tracey produced one of St John's burlesque adaptations, *Black-Eyed Susan; Or, The Little Bill Up-to-Date*, beginning 21 November. Although St John was credited with putting the burlesque together, it was very likely adapted, localised, and contemporised from the production he had appeared in at the Melbourne's Gaiety Theatre in 1890. Among the other artists then under contract to the American entrepreneur and former specialty clog dancer were Frank York, Martyn Hagan, J. S. Whitworth, Ida Tauchert, Johnny Cowan, pianist Walter Rhodes (aka Professor Rhodes), Alf M. Hazlewood, and Bertha Fanning. St John remained with Tracey until early to mid-1892, at which time he and James Wilkinson formed a burlesque and vaudeville company that opened at the Theatre Royal, Brisbane, sometime around June or July.

The St John and Wilkinson Comedy and Burlesque Company repertoire comprised a selection of burlesques, farces, and comedies, in addition to variety-style performances. The week beginning 29 July 1892 included, for example, "The pleasing comedy entitled *The Admiral*, followed by a musical olio, [with] the whole to conclude with the world-famed farcical comedy *The Steeplechas*" (BC: 29 July 1892, 2). The company also revived J. C. Williamson's most famous creation, *Struck Oil* (for the 16 July production, St John appeared in the role of Deacon Skinner). *Struck Oil* was revived by St John and Wilkinson on a number of occasions through until 1893, at both the Gaiety Theatre and Theatre Royal.



Source: State Library of Queensland



Brisbane (1890)

Source: Queensland Performing Arts Trust
Treading the Boards (1999), 19.

artist and theatre manager W. J. Wilson. After taking over the lease of the Alhambra Theatre (formerly the Alhambra Music Hall and headquarters of Frank Smith), they presented St John and Wilson's Alabama Minstrels and Burlesque Company. The opening production, *Sinbad the Sailor*, ran for two weeks from 1 October. Comprising a number of leading Australian (or Australian-based) performers, notably John Coleman and Maud Fanning, the company was accorded good patronage throughout the season. The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted in this regard:

The Alhambra Theatre, once well-known to theatre-goers, was reopened on Saturday night. Messrs Percy St John and W. J. Wilson are the new lessees. Their object in opening this theatre was to tap a population that never comes to the city theatres. It is well-known that the people of George Street frequent their own quarter only. Messrs St John and Wilson have every reason to feel gratified at the success which on the opening night attended their venture. The house was crammed in every department. There was a minstrel and variety concert followed by a burlesque (3 Oct. 1898, 3). [See 'Historical Notes' section below for the *Bulletin's* view of Alhambra Theatre patrons.]

Among the other feature productions staged that year were St John's pantomime *Humpty Dumpty* (5-18 Nov.) and a burlesque of his *Cinderella* pantomime, entitled *Cinder-Ellen*. Wilson and St John ended their season at the Alhambra in early January 1899. The lease was subsequently taken up by R. and W. Whitfield.

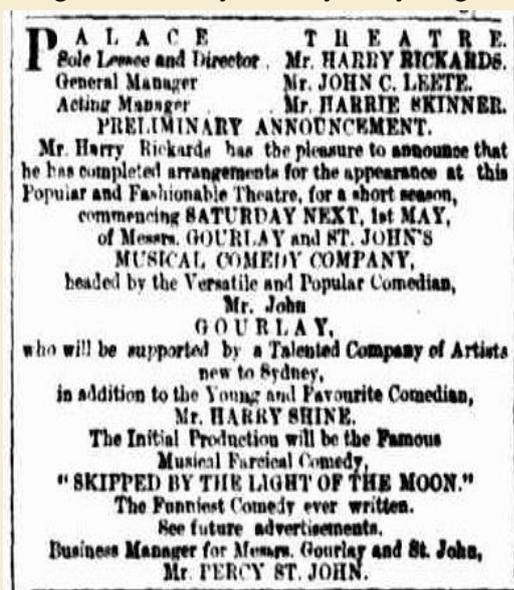
In mid-January 1899, St John returned to Brisbane to join Delohery, Bovis, and Deane's Elite Vaudeville Company at the Theatre Royal. One of the company's feature attractions was the 'Australian team' of dancers and comedians, Delohery, Craydon and Holland, who had been under St John and Wilson's management in Sydney late the previous year. He soon afterwards arranged with the management to organise a season of burlesque, with the premiere production, *Sinbad the Sailor*, opening on 11 February. Although *Sinbad* was given a very short rehearsal period, the *Brisbane Courier* suggests that its well-deserved success was in large part due to St John's supervision (13 Feb. 1899, 3). A week or so later, Charles Bovis and Sydney Deane departed Brisbane, requiring the Theatre Royal's lease to be restructured. Thomas Delohery, as senior manager was subsequently joined by St John and Ted Holland. St John's inclusion would have been mandatory, as Delohery, Craydon, and Holland had by then committed themselves to undertaking a regional Queensland tour with their own minstrel and variety troupe. In their absence (ca. March-early May), St John managed the theatre while also staging a series of second-part burlesques, including *Cinderella*, *Humpty Dumpty*, and *Dick Whittington*. Some, such as *Sinbad* and *Cinderella*, were given revivals during the year, such was their popularity with the Brisbane public.

In late 1892, St John branched out on his own, forming St John's Gaiety Theatre Company. Over the next four or five years, he alternated lengthy seasons in Brisbane with short tours through regional Queensland. Among his own creations from this period were the pantomimes *The Invisible Prince* (1892) and *Sinbad the Sailor* (1894). In 1894 he also undertook an extended tour of New Zealand, with the feature production being *Sinbad*.

1897-1899

By April 1897, St John had returned to Sydney and formed a new partnership with comedian/entrepreneur John Gourley. The new venture, billed as Gourley and St John's Musical Comedy Company, opened at Harry Rickards's Palace Theatre on 1 May, with Rickards overseeing the season as producer, his brother John C. (Jack) Leete as general manager, and Harrie Skinner as acting manager. Headed by Gourley and young comedian Harry Shine, the company staged "the famous musical farcical comedy *Skipped by the Light of the Moon*" (SMH: 24 Apr. 1897, 2). St John's position in the partnership appears to have been business manager.

In 1898, St John formed another theatrical partnership with well-known scenic



Sydney Morning Herald 24 Apr. (1897). 2.

From early July 1899, the Theatre Royal's lease was managed by Percy St John and Thomas Delohery in preparation for a change of entertainment policy. The previous minstrelsy/burlesque fare was replaced by a brief season of melodrama staged jointly by members of the Elite Vaudeville Company and the Woods-Williamson dramatic organisation. The season comprised two productions: *Hands Across the Sea* and *The Streets of London*. Alfred Woods and Maud Williamson were contracted to re-appear at the Royal in September, following a Queensland regional tour. Delohery and St John had meanwhile taken up the lease of another Brisbane theatre, the Opera House, where they arranged for Charles MacMahon's Lyceum Company to appear with several of its recent successes: F. A. Scudamore's "powerful sensation drama" *Flight for Life* and James Poole's Irish drama *The Kerry Gow*. Among the highlights staged during the remainder of the year were the Woods-Williamson return season (including *Called to Arms* and *The Kelly Gang*, Theatre Royal; ca. September) and M. L. Raphael's production of *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Theatre Royal; beginning 4 Nov.). By November, however, St John had taken a sole lease of both the Theatre Royal and the Opera House. At the Royal on 18 November, he instigated a series of People's Popular Concerts, and a week later presented a grand opening night at the Opera House with the Empire Variety and Specialty Company. One of the feature attractions at the Opera House over Christmas that year was the engagement of James C. Bain.

1900-1904

So as to continue operating the Theatre Royal and the Opera House without jeopardising both ventures, St John operated the latter as a variety venue, while the former staged theatrical works. Among the companies to play seasons at the Royal in early 1900 were the Ethel Grey Comedy Company, Dan Barry's Dramatic Company, and the Kate Howarde Vaudeville Combination. In late June, however, St John returned the Theatre Royal to a house of variety with his own Royal Burlesque and Specialty Company there. St John's vaudeville/minstrel entertainments invariably included various music theatre genres, while also featuring novelties such as the latest entertainment technologies (film and phonograph devices, etc.). St John also regularly brought international acts to Brisbane, with some of the biggest attractions during the first years of the twentieth century being The Great Blondin, Irene Franklin, and the Valderes. As one of Brisbane's more recognisable and leading figures, he found himself engaged in a number of community-based events and charities over the years, managing, for example, occasional entertainments and fireworks displays at the Woolloongabba Sports Ground. He also continued to send his own companies on tour through the major regional Queensland centres. Although it has not yet been established when he relinquished his lease on the Opera House, this may have possibly been towards the end of 1900.

While St John's attention was focusing increasingly on his management duties, he still found time to occasionally contribute his own original productions (even if they were often adapted from other works, including his own back catalogue of pantomimes and burlesques). He updated and abridged several of his previous works during this period, with some of the more popular being *Cinder-Ellen* and *Blue-Eyed Susan Up-To-Date*. Under St John's management, there was also a return to featuring the traditional minstrel afterpiece. These farces (often referred to as screaming absurdities) had for some time in Brisbane given way to the second-part burlesque.¹ In reviving some of the old favourites, St John helped lay the foundations for the later development of the Australian one-act musical comedy (revusical), by providing emerging practitioners with hands-on experience in producing short comedies, as well as allowing them the opportunity to work alongside performers whose careers dated back to the 1880s.

St John's Royal Burlesque and Specialty Company continued to feature at Brisbane's Theatre Royal until at least the end of 1902, providing the Australian performers with a permanent and viable base in Brisbane and regional Queensland that helped support the industry's consistently strong growth. In March 1902, St John's contribution was publicly acknowledged with a benefit that included Harry Rickards on stage (Rickards was in the city at the time to oversee arrangements for taking up a three-year lease of the Theatre Royal from St John). His Royal Burlesque company subsequently made its farewell performance at the Royal on Saturday the 22nd of March 1902, although a number of the company's members were part of a 'Rational Concert' staged at the theatre the following evening. [See *'Historical Notes'* below for further details of the St John/Rickards agreement]

1905-1910

Percy St John and Ted Holland began their decade-long association in March 1905, when Holland undertook a long-term sub-lease of the Theatre Royal. Holland had been presenting his New Vaudeville Entertainers at the Royal from December the previous year, but as a sub-lessee under Harry Rickards. During the six years that Holland leased the

¹ One of the often-revived farces of the later nineteenth century, *The Coming Man* (Theatre Royal, 29 Sept. 1900) dates back to the mid-1880s. Another popular farce, *Hurrah for Casey* (Theatre Royal, 6 Oct. 1900) is known to have been staged in Australia as early as 1894, while *Oysters* was possibly presented for the first time at the Alhambra Theatre, Sydney, in 1863. [For further information regarding farces staged in Australia between the 1870s and 1920s, see the AVTA pages "Genres" and "Research Lists."]

theatre, he established a virtual stranglehold on variety entertainment in Brisbane, with no other organisation (including Harry Rickards) able to undermine his operations. While St John appears to have taken a backseat position in terms of his industry visibility, the relationship between the two men must have been satisfactory, as they eventually formalised a business partnership in 1910, leading up to the opening of the Empire Theatre.

1911-1915

By 1910, Ted Holland's operations at the Theatre Royal were being hampered by both a lack of seating and the theatre's aging facilities, particularly the stage, dressing rooms, and other production areas. When it became known that a new purpose-built variety theatre was to be constructed in Albert Street (between Elizabeth and Queen Streets), the two entrepreneurs formed a partnership that traded as Holland and St John Pty Ltd, and announced that they would be vacating the Theatre Royal on 3 January 1911. The new theatre was promoted as "one of the coolest, best appointed and most thoroughly equipped theatres in the Commonwealth," with the claim being made that for its size, there was nothing to equal it in any other Australian state (BC: 7 Jan. 1911, 13). The Empire was not a small theatre, however, seating some 1600 people (ctd. TT: June 1913, 29). After an eleven-night transitional season at the city's Centennial Hall, Holland and St John opened the Empire Theatre on 14 January.

PALACE GARDENS.
Proprietors..... PALACE GARDENS LTD
 LOCATION.....
 THE CORNER OF THE NORTH QUAY AND ANN STREET.

THE FINEST PLACE OF OPEN AIR ENTERTAINMENT IN THE COMMONWEALTH!

THE GRAND OPENING NIGHT
HAS BEEN DEFINITELY FIXED TO TAKE PLACE ON
SATURDAY NEXT, AUG. 10,
When the Directors will present as a Special Attraction
 Mr. GEORGE STEPHENSON'S
 FAMOUS REFINED PIERROT COSTUME COMEDY COMPANY, THE

"WANDERERS,"

ASSISTED IN THE SECOND PART BY THE EMINENT WELSH RACONTEUR

Mr. SYDNEY BACH,

AND A SHORT SERIES OF ANIMATED PICTURES OF THE MOST UP-TO-DATE TYPE.

The Amusement presenting without exception the most ORIGINAL, the best dressed, and the most ARTISTIC Entertainment. Every Artist has a long record of great success; Refinement, Versatility, and Ability!
SONGS, CONCERTED DUETS, SCENAS, &c.

Comfortable Chairs and Seating have been made a speciality.
 POPULAR PRICES, 1 and 1. Reserved Chairs 2/6. The Box Plan will be in view at Palace's at 10 a.m. on Wednesday next.
LET YOUR ONLY ENGAGEMENT FOR SATURDAY, 10th AUGUST, BE "PALACE GARDENS."

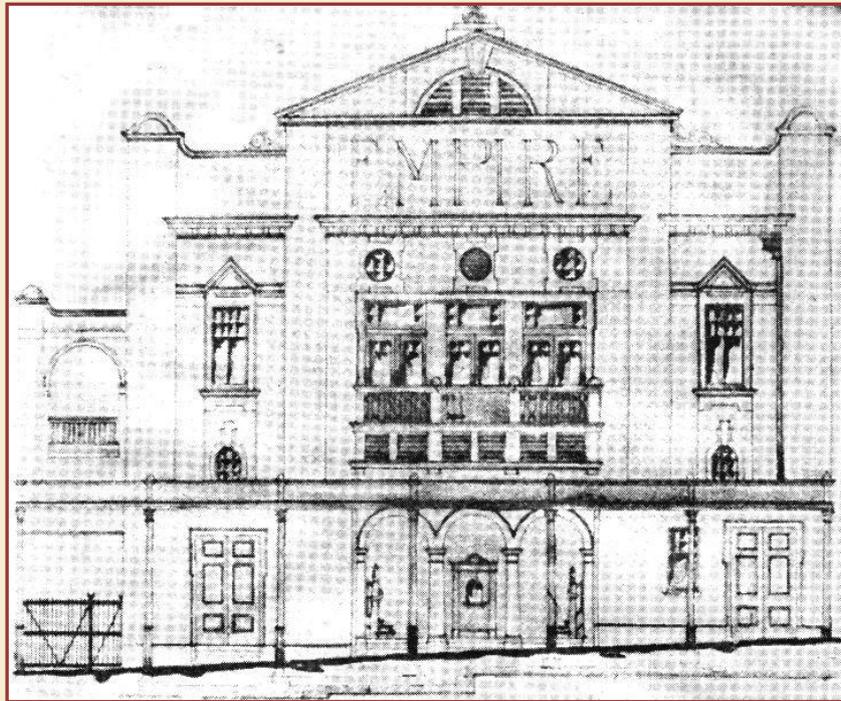
The Palace Gardens
Built for Holland and St John in 1912
Brisbane Courier 5 Aug. (1912), 2

Although the Empire Theatre venture helped re-confirmed their reputations as the city's leading variety managers, the next four years saw increasing attempts by other entrepreneurs to contest their domination of the entertainment market. Harry Clay's decision to by-pass the city during his company's annual Queensland tours was taken because the risk in competing against St John (1901-1904) and then Holland was too great. The Sydney-based entrepreneur had long been unwilling to compete for business on the agricultural show circuit for similar reasons. Clay's suspicion that Brisbane was not a two-show town were proved in part by Harry Rickards's inability to establish a permanent base there. The first significant challenge came shortly after the Empire opened, when James Brennan sent his Vaudeville Entertainers to the city. In an attempt to give himself some local credibility, Brennan hired Queensland comedic legend J. C. Bain to oversee the new venture, a matter that appears to have worried Holland and St John enough that they implored their regulars to continue supporting 'their' show (TT: Feb. 1911, 34).

Reports published throughout the year appear to indicate that Holland and St John did not suffer any significant loss of custom, perhaps because Brisbane's population had grown sufficiently to support several variety establishments without undue pressure on each management. This is supported by the fact that Edward Branscombe also invested in the city that same year by opening up the Cremorne Garden Theatre on the opposite side of the Brisbane River. As his Costume Comedy Company offered a more refined entertainment, weighted more heavily in favour

of singing and dancing than broad comedy, it attracted a more affluent class of patron to Holland's clientele, and hence neither establishment effectively competed with each other.

Further evidence supporting the claim that Brisbane's population could support multiple venues comes from the relationship formed between Holland and St John, Branscombe and McCallum which saw them form a consortium to build the Palace Gardens in 1912. Situated at the riverside corner of Ann Street and North Quay, the open-air venue was initially managed by Holland and St John under the auspices of Palace Gardens Ltd. The following year Edward Branscombe Ltd bought the freehold property and from then on it was leased out to various concerns, including boxing promoter Snowy Baker (under his management it was briefly known as Baker's Stadium). The relationships forged between effectively competing entrepreneurs were quite typical of the times, due in part by the necessity to provide a steady supply of venues that encouraged and maintained the growth they required for their businesses. Brisbane being a small city, also meant that these men knew each other well, and often socialised together, thereby allowing them greater opportunities to create business and investment partnerships. Holland and St John, for example, later arranged with the Brennan-Fuller company (ca. Mar/Apr. 1913) to bring acts from their organisation to Brisbane on a type of leasing arrangement. The *Theatre Magazine* reported on this "amalgamation" in 1913, suggesting that it was an advantage to Holland and St John's patrons because it gave them the opportunity to see the 'best of the artists imported by the Brennan-Fuller firm' (June 1913, 29).



Empire Theatre, Brisbane

Artists impression of the facade, 1911

Source: Queensland Performing Arts Trust. *Treading the Boards* (1999), 40.

Although involved in the management of the Palace Gardens, the Empire was still Holland and St Johns' major hands-on venture. Among the better-known Australian performers engaged for the venue between 1911 and 1915 were Courtney Ford and Ivy Davis (as members of the Vagabond's troupe), Sharratt and Lang, Maurice Chenoweth, the Two Driscolls (aka the Driscoll Brothers), Will Raynor, Sadie Gale and her mother Myra (as Sadie and Gale), Carrie Moore, Alf Lawrence, Les Warton, and Ernest Pitcher. Hugh Huxham records, too, that his Serenaders company was formed in 1911 for an engagement under Holland and St John. The company's first contract was for fourteen weeks, followed by a nine-week tour of North Queensland on the Birch Carroll circuit by arrangement with the Empire Theatre's managers (TT: Oct. 1915, 44).

Perhaps the most significant factor to impinge on the reputations of Holland and St John during their Empire Theatre period was the legal action taken against them by a former manager, Charles Whaite, in May 1914. A former vaudeville performer who had been engaged by the firm as stage manager, Whaite claimed that he had been wrongfully dismissed and asked for £100 in owed salary. The situation is believed to have come about after the stage manager was accused by another of the company's employees of taking bribes from performers to have them placed in better positions on the Empire's programmes. Evidence given by Whaite before the court indicates that his complaint was directed largely at St John and not Holland, whom he described as a 'very considerate man' (BC: 22 May 1914, 4). Although the judge found in favour of the plaintiff, the amount he received was only £22/10, with the cost of the two-day trial paid by the defendants.

The court case and resulting publicity is believed to have created a great deal stress on Holland, resulting in several months of ill health followed by his greatly unexpected death. The Empire Theatre continued to operate for another year under Percy St John's management, but a little over a year later, on 8 October, he too died. With both partners deceased, Dan Carroll (of Birch and Carroll) temporarily looked after the Empire while arrangements were made with both men's families to have the company continue under new management. Holland and St John's leasing arrangement with the Fullers made the latter the obvious choice, and the transition went almost unnoticed. When the Holland and St John lease expired in early 1918, Fullers' Theatres took full control of the establishment, and it eventually came to be known as The Fullers' Empire Theatre. The Palace Gardens had in the meantime come under the control of John N. McCallum (in association with Edward Branscombe).

The large number of high-profile theatrical practitioners and business people who attended Percy St John's funeral is a testament to his position in the industry. In addition to local people, many mourners travelled from interstate, including fellow entrepreneurs Ben and John Fuller, E. J. Carroll, Dan Carroll and George Birch, and John N. McCallum. Little has yet been discovered about Percy St John's personal life and early career. There is no indication, for example, that he was survived by any children. It has been established, however, that his widow married John N. McCallum in 1916.

SEE ALSO

- [Empire Theatre](#) (Bris)
- [Palace Gardens](#) (Bris)
- [Holland and St John](#)
- [Theatre Royal](#) (Bris)
- [Wilson and St John](#)
- [Wilkinson and St John](#)

HISTORICAL NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

1. The *Bulletin* magazine's approach to variety entertainment, and Australian popular culture in general, was often condescending and derogatory during the late nineteenth century, thus making it a far from useful source for interrogating aspects of social and cultural behaviour and attitudes. The long-held belief that the *Bulletin* was widely read and promoted Australian values can no longer be sustained. Not only does the magazine exhibit strong bias against popular culture (largely city and suburban workers), but its circulation never rose above 3.23 percent of the population and, in fact, had decreased in percentage sales by 1901 to 2.65 percent, despite circulation increasing to 100,000 (Djubal "What oh Tonight," 176-179). An example of the *Bulletin's* views on variety entertainment can be seen in a report on Wilson and St John's 1898 Alhambra Music Hall season:

Percy St John with W. J. Wilson takes over the lease of the Alhambra Theatre down in the remote wastes of Brickfield Hill, Sydney (on Saturday previous) after an almost unbroken silence of years. The theory is that at the far end of George Street there is a population that wants to get to the city theatres, but knows it is no use trying because it would drink its eighteen-pence on the way, and that this population can be profitably reached by bringing the bones and the tambourine nigger and the interlocutor to its door (8 Oct. 1898, 8).

2. It is not known if Percy St John was related to several individuals with the same name who were also involved in the Australian variety industry during the late nineteenth century. One of these people was Herbert St John, a basso singer who appeared with the Alhambra Variety Company in Sydney in 1885. A Mr H. St John is also on the bill of a Bondi Aquarium show in 1890 (8 November). The other performer is Amy St John, who was a member of the St John-Wilkinson company ca. 1892 (see Theatre Royal, Brisbane). The following year, she joined F. Sylvio's Gaiety Pleasure Party (Gaiety Theatre, Sydney ca. July).
3. It has not yet been established if St John owned the Theatre Royal in Brisbane between ca. 1900 and 1905 or was simply the lessee. This uncertainty stems both from advertisements published in the *Brisbane Courier* during that period, and a reference in the same paper to Harry Rickards taking up a three-year lease of the theatre from St John in 1902. Theatre Royal advertisements published in the *Brisbane Courier* from late 1901 indicate that St John's association with the venue was as 'Sole Proprietor'. (He had previously been identified as the 'lessee'). While "sole proprietor" may have referred to his ownership of an established business at the theatre (rather than ownership of the building), the *Courier's* report on Harry Rickards' forthcoming lease of the building (published in its 22 March edition) does not help clarify the issue:

This evening's performance and the concert tomorrow evening will be the final performances of the Royal Burlesque and Specialty Company, as on Monday Mr Percy St John will lease the theatre to Mr Harry Rickards for a period of three years, a modified form of the original arrangement having been arrived at. By this agreement Mr St John will retain his interest in the theatre and will therefore remain in Brisbane (2).

If St John was only the lessee of the Theatre Royal, this would have made Rickards the sub-lessee. Ted Holland's occupation of the theatre under Rickards's lessee-ship (Dec. 1904- ca. Mar. 1905) would therefore have made him sub-sub-lessee. Such an arrangement would appear to be unlikely. The question also remains as to why St John is referred to in advertising from 1905 onwards as the "lessee" and not proprietor.

4. As with Harry Rickards, Hugh D. McIntosh also failed to gain a foothold in Brisbane after he took control of the Tivoli company in 1912. In Rickards's case, it is possible that a higher class of entertainment could not be sustained permanently in Brisbane prior to the 1910s, as the audience for variety was more heavily weighted towards the popular culture/lower-socio economic demographic. When the Sydney-based McIntosh attempted to corner the upper-level market in Brisbane, he had to go into direct competition with the locally run Cremorne Garden Theatre, a factor that he could never quite overcome, despite having a larger roster of performers (including international acts).

ENGAGEMENTS CHRONOLOGY

- 1889:** [HARRY ST MAUR Co](#) (Bijou Th, Melb; 30 Mar. > Lse/Mngr. Brough & Boucicault)
- 1890:** [J. S. SMITH Co](#) (Gaiety Th, Melb; 28 Aug. > Mngr. Harry Friedman) ► [BONDI AQUAROOM](#) (Syd; 8 Nov. > Possibly Herbert St John) ► [SLADE MURRAY'S GAIETY BURLESQUE Co](#) (Gaiety Th, Bris; 17 Nov. > Lse. J. Liddy)

- 1891:** SLADE MURRAY'S GAIETY BURLESQUE Co (Gaiety Th, Bris; 1 Jan.) ► DAN TRACEY MINSTREL Co (S of A, Syd; 17 Oct. - Dec. *)
- 1892:** DAN TRACEY SPECIALTY Co (S of A, Syd; 1 Jan.) ► ST JOHN & WILKINSON BURLESQUE Co (Gaiety Th, Bris; 16 July - Dec. *)
- 1893:** ST JOHN & WILKINSON BURLESQUE Co (Gaiety Th, Bris; 1 Jan. - *)
- 1894:** ST JOHN'S GAIETY THEATRE Co (Qld regional tour; ca. Jan/Feb. * > Incl. Th Royal, Charters Towers; 12 Feb.) • (New Zealand tour; ca. Apr. - Aug. *)
- NB: New Zealand tour incl. (Napier, ca. Apr. *) • (Wellington, ca. 30 Apr. - ca. May *) • (Timaru/Gladstone, ca. May/June) • (Dunedin, ca. June *) • (Christchurch ca. July/Aug. *)
- 1897:** GOURLAY & ST JOHN'S MUSICAL COMEDY Co (Palace Th, Syd; 1 May - * > John Gourlay; Lse. Harry Rickards)
- 1898:** PERCY ST JOHN & W. J. WILSON (Alhambra MH, Syd; 1 Oct. - 31 Dec.)
- 1899:** PERCY ST JOHN & W. J. WILSON (Alhambra MH, Syd; 1 Jan - ca. 10 Jan.) ► DC&H ELITE VARIETY BURLESQUE Co (Qld regional tour; ca. Feb/Mar. * > Incl. Gympie: 22 Feb.) • DELOHERY, ST JOHN & HOLLAND'S ELITE Co (Th Royal, Bris; 20 May - *) ► DELOHERY & ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; ca. 8 July *) • (Op House, Bris; 17 June - ca. Nov.) ► PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; ca. 2 Sept. - ca. Dec. *) • (Op House, Bris; ca. 23-31 Dec.)
- 1900:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > as Proprietor) • (Opera House, Bris; 1 Jan.) • Woolloongabba Sports Ground, Bris; 31 Oct. > as Lessee)
- 1901:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. to Dec. > As Proprietor) ► PERCY ST JOHN ROYAL BURLESQUE & SPECIALTY Co (Qld regional tour; ca. Mar/Apr. *) • PERCY ST JOHN'S CINDERELLA & BURLESQUE Co (Qld regional tour; ca. July/Aug. *)
- NB 1: Queensland Burlesque Co tour incl. (Charters Towers, Th Royal; 18 Mar.) • (Rockhampton; Th Royal; 12 Apr. * > last night)
- NB 2: Queensland *Cinderella* tour incl. (Bundaburg 23 July) • Rockhampton; ca. July) • (Cairns, Divisional Board Hall; 6 Aug.)
- 1902:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > Lse. Percy St John)
- 1903:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > Lse. Percy St John)
- 1904:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > Lse. Percy St John; Sub-Lse. Ted Holland from 26 Dec.)
- 1905:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > Lse. Percy St John; Sub-Lse. Ted Holland)
- 1906:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > Lse. Percy St John; Sub-Lse. Ted Holland)
- 1907:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > Lse. Percy St John; Sub-Lse. Ted Holland)
- 1908:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > Lse. Percy St John; Sub-Lse. Ted Holland)
- 1909:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > Lse. Percy St John; Sub-Lse. Ted Holland)
- 1910:** PERCY ST JOHN (Th Royal, Bris; 1 Jan. - Dec. > Lse. Percy St John; Sub-Lse. Ted Holland)
- 1911:** HOLLAND & ST JOHN EMPIRE Co (Empire Th, Bris; 7 Jan. > Opening of Empire Th)
- 1912:** HOLLAND & ST JOHN EMPIRE Co (Empire Th, Bris; 1 Jan. > Operated all year)
- 1913:** HOLLAND & ST JOHN EMPIRE Co (Empire Th, Bris; 1 Jan. > Operated all year)
- 1914:** HOLLAND & ST JOHN EMPIRE Co (Empire Th, Bris; 1 Jan. > Operated all year)

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