SUNSHINE KIDDIES

aka Mrs Rahilly-Brown’s Sunshine Kiddies / Rays of Sunshine

Established in Brisbane in 1921 by Agnes Rahilly-Brown, the Sunshine Kiddies performed regularly at social events, jazz nights and concerts, presenting a combination of variety acts, dramas, musical comedies and revues. In the mid-1920s the Kiddies also appeared pantomimes – mostly staged at the Majestic Theatre as a supplement to the Union Pictures film screenings. Brown later took the children on regional and interstate tours. Well-known comedian Joe Lawman was a member of the Kiddies between 1923 and 1928. Rahilly-Brown’s name has been linked to the troupe as late as 1941.

[NB: This biography currently focuses on the period 1921 to January 1929. Further research is being undertaken into Agnes Rahilly-Brown’s activities with the Sunshine Kiddies from February 1929 onwards]

AGNES RAHILLY-BROWN (ca. 1890s-1920)

Agnes Rahilly was raised in the regional Victorian city of Ballarat, and undertook her education there in the late 1890s. An article published in Perth’s Daily News in 1911 notes her connection with Ballarat’s South-Street Society, which at that time provided around £1,400 for elocutionary and musical competitions. The writer records that Rahilly and one of her sisters, Maud, "annexed prize after prize in all the elocutionary events in which they competed" (7 Oct. 1911, 5). In 1902 Agnes joined the Steel-Payne Bellringers, with the Border Watch (Mount Gambier, SA) recording that she and fellow newcomer, Jay Watts, had been spoken of highly by newspaper reviewers (26 Mar. 1902, 2). The Southern Argus (Port Elliot, SA) further notes that she performed as a soprano, elocutionist, and a descriptive and coon artist (10 Apr. 1902, 2).

Rahilly made possibly her first stage appearance in Brisbane in 1905 when she organised and headlined a concert at the city’s Centennial Hall on 29 May. The event was attended by the Mayor and his wife, and crew from the H.M.S. Mildura (BC: 29 May 1905, 5). Less than a month after the Centennial Hall concert Rahilly advertised her intention to begin taking students for instruction in all areas of the dramatic arts and elocution. Described at this time as a “society entertainer” (BC: 30 June 1905, 4), Rahilly continued to maintain a presence in Brisbane for several years, appearing in various concerts and theatricals. The Queensland Figaro records in this respect:

Miss Agnes Rahilly is prepared to receive pupils for dramatic art, and all branches of elocution; voice production a specialty; private tuition, £2 2s.; class, £1; comedy and dramatic clubs now forming; first quarter, £1; intending pupils please leave names; children’s class Saturday mornings. Permanent Building Society’s Chambers, Adelaide-street.

Brisbane Courier 17 June (1905), 9.

Rahilly produced regular concerts and theatrical entertainments over the next few years, both with her students and her Dramatic Club. In 1910 she announced the opening of her new studios in Farish’s Buildings, George Street. A year later, however, she was in Western Australia touring with another sister, Maude, and Riggs Miller as the Austral Trio. Their shows were presented in addition to a programme of moving pictures. After playing the goldfield region the three performers travelled to Perth, appearing on the Empire Pictures programme at the city’s Town Hall (2 Oct, -).

In late September 1911 the Rahilly sisters opened a school of elocution, dramatic art and deportment in the Johnson Building, Hay Street. The studio, which also provided instruction in voice production and singing, operated juvenile pantomime, opera and adult comedy and dramatic clubs as well. Although advertising for her school from at least 30 September records that Agnes was also known as Mrs Rahilly-Brown, it is yet to be determined when she married dance teacher George Brown.

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1 The Adelaide Register in 1902 also describes Rahilly as the "Ballarat elocutionist" (25 Apr. 1902, 2). Her name and town of origin appears, too, in a number of published results lists for a music and literary competition held in 1901, including Geelong (June) and her home town (Oct.).

2 See “Additional Anecdotes” section below for more insights from this article.

3 Situated opposite Sir John Forrest’s.
By 1918 Rahilly-Brown was back in Brisbane where she again established herself as a leading teacher of juvenile performers. It would seem that she returned home sometime after her husband's enlistment in the Australian Imperial Forces (A.I.F.) in 1916. Thus while Agnes's first known concert after returning home occurred in late September 1918 (with her Little Patriots company), she may have returned as much as two years prior to this event. Although little is currently known about her school at that time, the Brisbane Courier records that the studio was located in Kelly's Building, Queen Street, Brisbane (12 July 1919, 15).

The Little Patriots presented another revue-style programme at Centennial hall the following April as part of a Memorial Day celebration (29 April). George Rahilly-Brown's return to Brisbane in mid-1919, after some three years with the A.I.F., saw the pair introduce a number of overseas dance crazes, including jazz, to the school's repertoire of styles. According to Brown he had studied these while spending time in London after the Armistice (BC: 12 July 1919, 15). The new dances were demonstrated to the public on 22 September when The Little Patriots staged another concert at Centennial Hall. On Thursday 4 December 1919, the Rahilly-Browns' juvenile students staged the musical play Cherry Blossom San at the Lyceum Theatre. One of the reported features of the production was an exhibition of ballroom dancing, produced under the supervision of George Rahilly-Brown.

In January 1920 the Rahilly-Browns moved their studio to a new building opposite the General Post Office in Queen Street. The principals also appear to have maintained a presence within the wider Brisbane social and entertainment scenes around this time. Agnes is recorded, for example, as contributing monologues to the 41st and 42nd Battalion concerts at the Exhibition Hall in early March. She also produced an artistically-conceived tableau during the evening (BC: 4 Mar. 1920, 8). The previous year George had acted as co-organiser (with a Mr O'Sullivan) of the dance portion of a Bal Masque held at Centennial Hall (BC: 26 Sept. 1919, 11). Around this period, too, he occasionally travelled to nearby regional centres offering short seasons of dance instruction.

On 2 September 1921 the Rahilly Brown's staged a children's musical revue at the Centennial Hall in aid of the Children's Hospital. Although the authorship of Rich Girl, Poor Girl, has not yet been established, it was likely written by Agnes. Advertising records that the production contained "catchy songs, recitations, pretty children, quaint movements and dances, the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet," along with ballroom dancing displays, the new Tango dance and Perman's Brooklyn Cakewalk. Agnes was also described as a "certified champion elocutionist of Australia" (BC: 27 Aug. 1921, 2).
The first public appearances by the Rahilly-Browns students as The Sunshine Kiddies, were a series of open-air concerts and dance nights presented in the Brisbane suburb of Dutton Park during November 1921. George supervised the jazz dancing (Wed and Sat) in the dance pavilion, while Agnes directed Saturday night entertainments put on by her students. As the Sunshine Kiddies, the children also presented their annual break-up concert at the Elite Theatre on 3 December. As in previous years the entertainment was varied, comprising variety/revue-style performances and sketches, along with a more substantial piece - this being the playlet Aunt Martha's Son. The Brisbane Courier notes that the ages of the children in the Sunshine Kiddies troupe at that time ranged from four to nine (26 Nov. 1921, 6). Within a few years, however, the age range expanded to include those in their mid to late-teens.

The Rahilly-Browns revived the Dutton Park shows in February 1922 and in late March the Sunshine Kiddies played a three night's season at the Elite Theatre. Their popularity with audiences and critics alike led to an announcement less than a week later that the children would be "making more regular appearances in Brisbane" (BC: 5 Apr. 1922, 7). The first of these shows was produced on 12 April. A review in the Brisbane Courier records:

The Sunshine Kiddies are a charming company. Last night, in a programme of vocal and musical selections, they danced and sang themselves into the good graces of an enthusiastic audience. It was worth going a long way to hear half a dozen of the little folk sing "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "Jack and Jill," Bo-Peep," and all the favourite juvenile ditties, with musical accompaniment, and a graceful stage presence that comes of discreet and careful training. There was nothing objectionably precocious about these little ones, yet they were all at home on the stage... In the vocal solos many of the performers gave promise of future successes, and the elocutionary items also attained a high standard (13 Apr. 1922, 6).

On 20 April the Sunshine Kiddies No 2 company began another season at the Elite Theatre. Rahilly-Brown then took a troupe of children to Toowoomba at the end of the month, following that season with a short tour of nearby country towns. Over the course of the year the children played at a number of different venues and events around Brisbane. On 14 July, for example, they were one of the feature entertainments at the Wattle Day benefit for returned soldiers. Also on the programme was comedian Billy Maloney. The following night they played West's Olympia, one of the specialty acts being the debut of possibly the youngest child member of the company, 19 month-old Gwen Islan (aka "The Sunshine Baby"). A review of the show indicates, too, that the oldest child in the company at that time was 13 years of age (BC: 17 July 1922, 6). For the school's annual break-up concert at the end of the year (9 Dec.), the Kiddies presented the Christmas play The Fairy Dream, along with a variety of individual and concerted items.
Rahilly-Brown's greatest student success, comedian Joe Lawman, made his debut performance with the company as a clog dancer in the revue Back on the Farm. Staged at the Elite Theatre on 1 August, the show was given in aid of the Children's Hospital. He was also possibly a member of the company which competed in the “Twenty Minutes of Entertainment” section in the A.N.A. Eisteddfod (19 Oct.). The Kiddies placed fourth (150 points) behind Wilfred Pargoes Party (187), the Lyric Male Choir (195), and "The Nomads" (174).

Published accounts of the Sunshine Kiddies in 1924 include their appearance at the Exhibition Grounds as part of the Centenary celebrations. The Brisbane Courier records that a naval dance saw the children foot "a hornpipe with abandon. The critic further notes that "their blue and white dresses were very picturesque" (7 Aug. 1924, 7). On August 9 they put on a between-films entertainment at the Tivoli Theatre, New Farm and the following month returned to the Elite Theatre where they presented the musical revue Shriek and a minstrel pierrot entertainment (10 Sept.). November saw the company stage the "picturesque and screamingly funny Spanish play The Bullfighter at the Elite (3 Nov.). As usual the final production for the year was the annual break-up concert at the Elite Theatre (15 Dec).

1925-1928

During the three years 1925 to 1927 the Sunshine Kiddies were engaged by Union Pictures to present regular mini-productions at its Brisbane cinema, the Majestic. These shows, most of which were written and directed by Agnes Rahilly-Brown, included the pantomimes Sinbad the Sailor, Babes in the Wood, Jack and the Beanstalk, Old Mother Hubbard, Sleeping Beauty, Simple Simon Little Red Riding Hood, Babes in the Woods (1925); Beauty and the Beast, The House That Jack Built (1926); Robinson Crusoe and The London Waif (1927). Most of the earlier productions were also revived in later years. Among the other productions staged were Rahilly-Brown's The Red Lantern; Or The Hobgoblin of Goblin Island (1925) and her "original Australian revusical pantomime" The Blue Goanna (1926). From around 1926, too, Joe Lawman began to emerge as the company's brightest star. His comedic abilities saw him take over the Dame roles in the pantomimes, and in turn the Brisbane press regularly acknowledged his unique talent as a comedian. His name also began to increasingly feature in advertising.4

Another significant move by Rahilly-Brown during the mid-1920s was to take the Sunshine Kiddies on longer regional tours, particularly through North Queensland (and to a lesser extent Northern NSW). These tours, which generally took place around the school holiday periods in 1926 and 1927, included such centres as Cairns and Charters Towers (Qld) and Lismore, Mullumbimby and Murwillumbah (NSW). The nine-week 1925 tour reportedly comprised only 14 children. Those known to have toured were Joe Lawman, Nancy Zumpner, Stewart Struthers, Carmen Burgess, Doreen Albert, and Mona Sugrue. Lily Blake was the accompanist (TDB: 9 Nov. 1925, 3). The Morning Bulletin previewed the season in Rockhampton by citing the following comments published in the Townsville Daily Bulletin:

It was a brilliant entertainment, bright and snappy, and no one but could admire the versatility of these clever youngsters, who won their way right into the hearts of their audience. The entertainment was described as a "potted pantomime;" [and] true there was the pantomime spirit about it - the story told of Sinbad the sailor - but still it was something different, and the crowd enjoyed it thoroughly (30 Nov. 1925, 5).

Rahilly Brown reportedly took the company on tour through New South Wales between March and late May 1926. The itinerary included an eight weeks season at the Haymarket Theatre, Sydney.5 By the start of June the Sunshine Kiddies were back in Queensland, playing Brisbane briefly before heading back to North Queensland. In October the company returned to NSW, playing a month or more of engagements around the Northern region. Interestingly advertising for this tour promotes the Sunshine Pony Ballet, a feature that does not appear to have been part of the previous shows. During their time in Lismore the children also took part in the town's Carnival Day procession, performing from the back of their lorry, which also carried a piano (NS: 21 Oct. 1926, 4).

By 1926 the Sunshine Kiddies repertoire had also expanded to include revusicals and farces. Among the new productions were the musical comedies A Trip to Honolulu and The Lost Princess (1926); Hotel Balmy (aka The Crazy Hotel), Fun in a Florist's Shop, Miss Bone from New York and the revue Back Again and (1927). Described as being "brimful of comedy from start to finish, Back Again was viewed by one critic as another vehicle for "the wonderful boy comedian Joe Lawman to show his talent" (BC: 4 Sept. 1927, 13). The shows were not always confined only to

4 Joe Lawman is believed to have made his last tour of North Queensland with the Sunshine Kiddies in 1928.
5 Details regarding the tour have been cited in WCB: 3 July (1926), 12; and LL: 25 June (1926), 9. See ‘Further Reference” section below for links to these articles.
the children, however, with Rahilly-Brown also recorded as appearing on the stage on a number of occasions. The *Cairns Post* records in 1927, for example, that she gave a recital in that town of "the Italian and the Rose," "Scandal," and "The Game of Life" (9 May 1927, 3). The company’s success led to several other Brisbane juvenile troupes being formed around this period. Two of the most successful were Peggy Hearle’s Sunrise Panto Kiddies and Patricia Cullen’s Jingle Bells Kiddies were also engaged by Union Pictures from around the 1926 onwards.

Between August 1927 and January 1928 the Sunshine Kiddies reportedly toured the southern states, playing seasons in each of the capitals (BC: 9 Jan. 1928, 11). The troupe’s popularity in North Queensland was such that they returned in late 1927, even bypassing Brisbane. By this time they were presenting another new repertoire, with the pantomimes including *The London Waif* and *Sleeping Beauty*. The remainder of the programmes comprised a selection of comedy sketches and vaudeville turns. The principal performers over 1927 and 1928 included Joe Lawman, Carmen Burgess, Doreen Albert, Fergus Flynn, Eileen Borrodale, Thora O’Halloran, Mavis Holliman, Stewart Struthers and Mercia Watson. The musical side of the venture was also stable over this period, with Toowoomba pianist Patty Doyle touring as music director/accompanist for at least three years from 1926.

After returning in late February from a holiday spent in Sydney and Melbourne, Rahilly-Brown announced that she was putting together a new Sunshine Kiddies troupe, and invited mothers with talented children to attend an initial rehearsal on the 28th (SM: 26 Feb. 1928, 11). The first known performance by the new line-up was at the Tropical Theatre, Cairns on 9 May. Reports from the region indicate that the troupe was not entirely new, however, with Joe Lawman, Stewart Struthers, Fergus Flynn, Thora O’Halloran, Sylvia Grice and Mavis Holliman still among the performers. A new feature of the shows presented in the major far north centres and smaller tablelands towns was the Sunshine Midgets. These youngsters presented self-contained "Tiny Town Revues" such as "Grandpa’s Whiskers."

Among the new productions staged in 1928 were *The King and the Beggar Maid*, a pantomime adaptation of *Sweet Nell of Drury Lane* (it possibly debuted on the troupe's return to the Majestic Theatre, Brisbane in January 1928); and a show given the intriguing title *A Pantomime Without a Name*. For the Northern NSW tour the company also presented, possibly for the first time, the "potted pantomime" *Tom Thumb*.

According to the *Northern Miner*, the troupe returned to tour New South Wales after the 1928 North Queensland tour and then headed back to Brisbane for seasons in Fortitude Valley (2 weeks) and the city’s Majestic Theatre (30 May 1928, 4). The troupe appears to have been playing towns in South-East Queensland during the latter months of 1928, too, with known destinations ranging from Landsborough (Sunshine Coast) to Southport (Gold Coast) and Beaudesert. A number of suburbs in South Brisbane, including Manly, Morningside and Stone’s Corner were also visited.

Agnes Rahilly-Brown announced that she would be disbanding the Sunshine Kiddies after a farewell concert at the Broadway Theatre on 8 January 1929. Her intention was to form a new novelty musical comedy company and to this end began advertising for the parents of talented children (over school age) to apply for training (SM: 6 Jan. 1929, 12). The new company was initially billed as Agnes Rahilly-Brown’s Rays of Sunshine.

1929-1936
On 21 January 1929 the Rays of Sunshine company made its debut performance at the Majestic Theatre, Brisbane, with a production of *Prince Charming*. Although described as "the adult members of the original Rahilly-Brown Sunshine Kiddies" (BC: 18 Jan. 1929, 16), the troupe likely comprised youths in their mid to late-teens. The season ran until 9 February, after which the troupe appears to have played shows at various suburban theatres, including the Savoy, Clayfield. As in previous years the company mounted an extensive regional tour in 1929, returning to the far North for several months.

The years 1930 and 1931 saw the troupe maintain a similar schedule of appearances in and around Brisbane, interrupted by regional tours. The Rays of Sunshine name does appear to have lasted long, however, with a cursory search of newspapers from 1930 bringing up very few references. Almost all the advertisements and previews/reviews refer to the company as the Sunshine Kiddies. During the 1930 Far North Queensland tour the *Northern Miner* records that the company had recently completed an eight weeks season at the Tivoli, Brisbane (14 July 1930, 3). Advertisements in the *Brisbane Courier* indicate, too, that the company played additional seasons at the Tivoli in 1931. As usual these appearances were part of a combined film and live theatre programme.

Rahilly-Brown does not appear to have sent the company on any regional tours after 1931. The Sunshine Kiddies tours identified as having been undertaken in Queensland Central West region were not associated with Rahilly-Brown but rather a Mrs P. Johnson of Longreach. That troupe was sometimes billed as the Western Sunshine Kiddies to differentiate it from the Brisbane-based troupe (but not always). The early to mid-1930s did, however, see the Rahilly-Brown Sunshine Kiddies make regular feature appearances in Fortitude Valley at McWhirters Children's Parties.

Among the children identified with the Kiddies during the 1930s are: Steve Baker (dame), Jock Mack (eccentric comedian and dancer), Billie Blake (singer/dancer and ukulele musician), Beatty Ralfs, Joan Wilesmith, Doreen Albert and Eileen Borrodale. The repertoire included the pantomimes *Bluebeard*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Little Boy Blue*, *The Red Goblin*, *The House That Jack Built*; the revues *Let's Get Married* and *Here We Go Again*; and the revusicals *Fun in a Beauty Parlour*, *Back Again in Pierrot Land* and *Spanish Revels*. A review in the *Cairns Post* records that the 1931 shows included "The Doll Shop," the "Scarf Ballet," and Chinese novelty dances (27 Aug. 1931, 3), while in 1933 the company staged a new musical and patriotic sketch called "John Bull and Aussie" (BC: 26 Oct. 1933, 1).

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6 Possibly *The Red Lantern; Or The Hobgoblin of Goblin Island* (first staged in 1925).
Although the last Sunshine Kiddies appearances located to date were in 1941, as part of a fund-raising benefits at Brisbane's All Saints Hall for the Incapacitated and Wounded Sailors and Soldiers Association (7 Mar. and 25 July), the children likely played concerts after that. As to how long Rahilly-Brown continued operating her school, and presenting her children on stage, this is presently unknown. The extent of her impact on the overall variety industry is also unclear. While a number of her children went on to work as adult performers, only one, Joe Lawman, went on to become a recognised star. In this respect she must be credited with helping develop the career of one of Australia's top comedians of the 1930s and 1940s. Aside from this, however, her most significant achievement was in continuing to tour the Sunshine Kiddies for two decades under conditions that were far more difficult than experienced in the later 20th and early 21st centuries. She and her husband George Rahilly-Brown also played a major role in helping promote jazz music to the Brisbane public in the late 1910s and early 1920s. Agnes herself in the later 20th century continued operating her school, and touring the Sunshine Kiddies for two decades under conditions that were far more difficult than experienced in the later 20th and early 21st centuries. She and her husband George Rahilly-Brown also played a major role in helping promote jazz music to the Brisbane public in the late 1910s and early 1920s. Agnes herself in the later 20th century went on to work as adult performers, only one, Joe Lawman, went on to become a recognised star. In this respect she must be credited with helping develop the career of one of Australia's top comedians of the 1930s and 1940s.

SEE ALSO
- Joe Lawman

ADDITIONAL QUOTATIONS
- Every year the South-street Society in Ballarat provides about £1,400 for elocutionary and musical competitions, and as a result some of the finest talent in the Commonwealth appears on its platforms during the month of October every year. During the past 15 years some of the best Australian artists made their first bow in public on the concert platform at Ballarat. Amongst others one finds the names of Amy, Dolly and Eileen Castles, Alice Crawford, Peter Dawson, Florence Quinn (now with the Arcadians in Perth), and others; but there were, perhaps, none more successful in their amateur days than Miss Agnes Rahilly and her sister Maud, who annexed prize after prize in all the elocutionary events in which they competed. After an almost unbeaten record, Miss Agnes Rahilly left Victoria and settled in Brisbane as a teacher of elocution (DNP: 7 Oct. 1911, 5).
- The humorous side of the entertainment was well catered for by Doug [Cook], Joe [Lawman], Gordon [Mudell] and Jack [Swain]. A story dance, “the Dying Rooster,” an amusing skit on the Terpsichorean masterpiece, “The dance of the Dying Swan,” kept the audience in a roar of laughter... Doug Cook was “the dying rooster” and he was later brought back to life by two “fairies,” Joe and Jack respectively... A musical burlesque in one act, “The Bull Fighters,” replete with amusing episodes occupied the second half of a really creditable performance (BC: 4 Nov. 1924, 8).
- Unlike the ordinary juvenile show, these children have many really excellent voices among them, and at least three of the company are phenomenal singers. The whole of the company are remarkably clever dancers and the boys are most versatile comedians. Mr and Mrs Rahilly Brown, of the Brisbane dancing academy, trained the children and not only have they paid attention to [them] by teaching them dancing but have also trained them as elocutionists and their speaking parts are as well carried out as the other part of the delightful entertainment. The following critiques from Brisbane papers will be read with interest. The Brisbane Courier says: “Of the many juvenile shows we have had The Sunshine Kiddies stand supreme.” The Brisbane Daily Mail says: “No juvenile combination that has played Brisbane possesses such beautiful voices and such clever dancers as the Sunshine Kiddies” (CP: 13 Nov. 1925, 3).
- Rahilly Brown’s Sunshine Kiddies were an instantaneous success in the Federal Hall last night, when they made their first appearance in Lismore. They came to [the town] with the reputation of being the brightest juvenile combination on tour, and without a doubt sustained their reputation as there was not a dull moment from start to finish. The comicalities and eccentricities of the wonderful boy dame, Master Joe Lawman, had the audience convulsed with laughter from the moment he stepped on to the stage. He is also a very fine whistler, and was ably supported by little Jackie Warren in their comic sketches and duets (NS: 14 Oct. 1926, 2)
- Mrs Rahilly-Brown’s New Sunshine Kiddies opened at the Superlative Theatre last night. Their presentation, the pantomime Bluebeard is a scream from start to finish. Jock Mack, the youthful comedian, in his impersonation of Al Jolson singing “My Mammie” is a number one should really not miss... The usual Sunshine Kiddies matinee will be held on Saturday afternoon when a singing competition for boys and girls will be held (NM: 17 July 1930s, 5)
HISTORICAL NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

1. At least one other juvenile troupe called the Sunshine Kiddies is known to have been active during the 1920s. Interestingly, this troupe, run by Miss Iris Jack, and possibly based in Tasmania (either Launceston or Hobart) was also linked to Union Theatres. The first established appearance by that troupe was at the New Princess Theatre, Launceston on 30 April 1920. Jack was also presenting the company in 1923, while an advertisement published in the Launceston Examiner in 1926 asks the readers to not confuse the forthcoming tour by the Sunbeam Panto Kiddies with the local Sunshine Kiddies troupe (23 Sept. 1926, 6). Newspaper advertisements and reviews indicate that she was still producing shows with this troupe well into the late 1930s.

Advertising and reviews in Adelaide in 1923 also records the appearances of the "Two Sunshine Kiddies" - Baby Hailes and Baby Phillips (see for example RA: 18 Aug. 1923, 18).

Another unrelated Sunshine Kiddies company has been identified as being active in South Australia around the late 1920s and early 1930s. See for example, the Recorder (Port Pirie) 21 June 1930, 2.

The early 1930s also saw the emergence of the Western Sunshine Kiddies (see right), a troupe based out of Longreach and trained by Mrs P. Johnston.

Longreach Leader 6 Feb. (1937), 12.

2. Agnes Rahilly-Brown was assisted in running her first Brisbane school by her sister, Kathleen Rahilly. Kathleen reportedly ran the classes whenever Agnes was absent (BC: 9 June 1906, 7).

3. The Rahilly-Browns' moved their studios several times. Known addresses were the Kent Building at the corner of Adelaide and Albert streets (ca. 1922); Treasury Chambers, George Street (1923-24); and Cordelia St, South Brisbane (1925).

4. The Sunshine Kiddies were reported to have been engaged to tour New Zealand on two occasions in 1926 and 1927, but no record of these tours has been located to date. The Western Champion (Barcaldine) noted in 1926, for example:

They have appeared with phenomenal success throughout Queensland - starting with fifteen weeks at the Majestic Theatre, Brisbane, afterwards touring New South Wales as far as Sydney, where they were such a success that they have been engaged there again to appear for three months after their present tour of Queensland. They have also been engaged after their Sydney season to appear in Victoria and New Zealand. They are the first Queensland combination to have this honour (19 June 1926, 16).

PERSONNEL (1921-1928)

1. Troupe members incl. Doreen Albert (1925-26), Marion Albert (1923-26), Dorothy Anderson (1923), Nellie Anderson (1923), May Ashmen (1924), Phyllis Ashman (1924), Amy Bates (1922), Doris Birbeck (1922), Lily Black (1922), Gladys Blake (1922), Winnie Blanchard (1921), Vera Boorman (1921), Eileen Borrodale (1926-28), Dorothy Bradford (1921), Erin Bratchford (1921), Dorothy Brawn (1925-26), Grace Bromley (1921-22), Dorothy Brown (1924), Irene Briers (1921), Victor Brown (1924), Doris Burbank (1922), Carmen Burgess (1924-27), Addie Cantwell (1921), Phyllis Carver (1922), Dorothy Caves (1921), Joyce Chapman (1923), Douglas Cook (1925), Pattie Connolly (1923), Sadie Costello (1922), Marjorie Cullen (1923), Edna Dalgleish (1923), H. Deakin (1921), Tom Dodd (1926-27), Joy Dodds (1924), Fergus Flynn (1927-28), Jack Frawley (1922), Rosie Gelling (1923), Essie Gilbert (1923), Molly Gordon (1923), Sylvia Grice (1928), Aileen Harris (1922), Myrl Gillan (1924), Irene Griffiths (1922), Hazel Heideke (1925), Maud Hogg (1924), Mavis Holliman (1928), Iris Huddleston (1923), Vivian Humber (1921), Sid Humber (1921), Kathleen Hurley (1921), Hero Hurst (1924-25), Flora Irvine (1923), Doris Islen (1922-23), Gwen Islen (1923), Ethel Jackson (1921), Phyllis Jackson (1922), Marjorie Jacob (1921-22), Gladys James (1922), Mimi Jones (1923), Maida Jones (1923), Amy King (1922-23), Aileen King (1922-23), Joe Lawman (1923-28), Kathleen McGregor (1924-25), Iris McKenzie (1924), Mervin McKenzie (1924), Helen McKinnon (1922), Jack McNamee (1924-25), Norman McNamee (1924), Willie Meredith (1924-25), Nellie Money (1922), Queenie Moore (1922),
Gordon Mudell (1923-24), Maggie Murray (1921), Willie Murray (1921), Dorothy Nevis (1928), Lena Nichols (1921), Phillis Noden (1923), GracieNorval (1921), Thora O’Halloran (1926-28), Isabel Oldham (1923), Jessie O’Rourke (1922), Dorothy Osborne (1922), Billie Patterson (1921), Rene Phillips (1923), Marjorie Phillips (1923), Ellen Pope (1924-25), Gwen Power (1923), Mabel Priestly (1925), Jackie Pringle (1925), Bessie Procht (1921), Elsie Procht (1923), Vivian Rice (1924-28), Eileen Riley (1924), May Riley (1923), Verlie Riley (1924), Wynn Roberts (1927), Phillis Rovey (1923), Ivy Rovey (1923), Rosie Russell (1923), Hilary Salmon (1924), Vilma Salmon (1925), Miss A. Savage (1921), Alice Scanlan (1921-22), Jackie Scanlan (1922), Pat Scanlan (1921-22), Dorothy Steer (1926), Stewart Struthers (1925-28), Mona Sugrue (1923-25), Jack M. Swain (1924), Gladys Tettow (1923-26), Hester Thomas (1921), Tiny Tichborne (1925), Baby Tommy Thomas (1921), Myrtle White (1928), Nancy Zumper (1924-26).

**NB:** Children whose surnames have not yet been established are: Baby Edna (1923), Baby Gwennie (1923), Baby Peggy (1927), Baby Sylvia (1927).

2. **Production team members** incl. Lily Blake (ca. 1925), Patricia Doyle (music director/pianist, 1926-28), Emily Spurgen (accompanist, ca. 1924), Les Williams (scenic artist ca. 1926-27)

3. **Additional notes and/or historical clarification:**
   - **Irene Griffiths:** Her Christian name may have been Ivy.
   - **Nancy Zumper:** Her surname has also appeared in advertisements and reviews as Yumper and Zumper. Her Christian name has also been spelled variously as Nancie or Nancy.
   - **Carmen Burgess:** Her Christian name is sometimes referred to as Carmeline and/or Carmleen.
   - **Thora O’Halloran:** Also played violin.
   - **Nancy Perrrott:** Although billed in the *Cairns Post* in 1930 (8 Apr.) as being "late of the Sunshine Kiddies" (2), it has not been established when she was associated with the troupe.

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**Children's Party to-morrow at 10 O'clock**

**Spanish Revels**

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**Enagement chronology**

**1921:** **Rahilly-Brown** (Dutton Park, Bris; ca. Nov. > Wednesday and Saturday nights) • (Elite Th, Bris; 3 Dec. > Annual break-up concert)

**1922:** **Rahilly-Brown** (Dutton Park, Bris; ca. Feb. > Wednesday and Saturday nights) • (Elite Th, Bris; 25-27 Mar.) • (Elite Th, Bris; 20-22 Apr.) • (Toowoomba Th; 28-29 Apr.) • (Regional tour; ca. Apr.-May > no details) • (Elite Th, Bris; 15 July) • (Elite Th, Bris; 9 Dec. > Annual break-up concert)
1923: RAHILLY-BROWN (Elite Th, Bris; 11 May) • (Elite Th, Bris; 1 Aug. > Back on the Farm revue) • (Dutton Park, Bris; ca. Feb. > Wednesday and Saturday nights) • (Woolloomin Picture Th, Bris; 15 Sept.) • (Bris; 19 Oct. > A.N.A. Eisteddfod)

1924: RAHILLY BROWN (Exhibition Grounds, Bris; 6 Aug. > Centenary celebrations) • (Elite Th, Bris; 4 Nov.) • n/e (Tivoli Theatre, New Farm; 9 Aug. - *>) • RAHILLY BROWN (Elite Th, Bris; 10 Sept.) • (Elite Th, Bris; 15 Dec. > break-up concert)

1925: UNION PICTURES (Majestic Th, Bris; 4-24 Apr. - * > Sinbad the Sailor) • n/e (Astor Th, Bris; 28 Apr. - * > Sinbad the Sailor) • UNION PICTURES (Majestic Th, Bris; 2-9 May > Old Mother Hubbard) • n/e (Elite Th, Toowong, Bris; 11 May - * > Sinbad the Sailor) • UNION PICTURES (Majestic Th, Bris; 12 May - 6 June > The Red Lantern, 12 May -; and The Sleeping Beauty, 25 May •) • (Majestic Th, Bris; 29 June - 1 Aug. > Babes in the Wood (29 June -); Jack and the Beanstalk, 13 July -; and Simple Simon, 1 Aug.) • (Elite Th, Bris; 10-15 Aug. > Red Riding Hood)

RAHILLY BROWN (Empire Th, Nambour, Qld; 30 Sept. - * > Sinbad the Sailor) • (Th Royal, Townsville; 7, 9 Nov. > Inc. Sinbad the Sailor) • (Hibberland, Cairns; 14 Nov. - * > Inc. Sinbad the Sailor) • Mareeba; ca. Nov. * > 2 nights) • (Tropical Theatre, Cairns; 24 Nov. > one night return season) • (Herberton; 30 Nov. - * > Sinbad the Sailor) (Oddfellows Hall, Rockhampton; 5, 7-8 Dec. > Sinbad the Sailor, 5; 7 Dec; and Old Mother Hubbard, 8 Dec.)

NB: The company also possibly played Babinda between the cairn's engagements.

1926: UNION PICTURES (Majestic Th, Bris; 18 Jan. - * > Little Red Riding Hood, 18 Jan.; Beauty and the Beast, 1 Feb.) • n/e (Empire Th, Cessnock, NSW; 23 Mar. > one night only) • UNION PICTURES (Majestic Th, Bris; 1 June - *) • RAHILLY BROWN (Radio Th, Barcaldine; Qld; 29-30 June) • (Shire Hall, Longreach; 2-3 July) • (Superlativ Th, Charter Towers; 12 July - * > Blue Goanna, 12 July; Beauty and the Beast, 14 July; A Trip to Honolulu, 16 July) • (Tropical Th, Cairns; 24-31 July - * > Blue Goanna 24 July (matinee only), 26 July; Babes in the Wood, 28 July; The Lost Princess, 30 July)) • (Th Royal, Townsville; 2-4 Aug. > Blue Goanna 2 Aug.; Beauty and the Beast, 4 Aug.) • (Murwillumbah, NSW; 11 Oct.) • (Mullumbimby, NSW; 12 Oct.) • (Federal Hall, Lismore; 13-16 Oct. > Blue Goanna, 13 Oct.; Beauty and the Beast, 15 Oct.) • (Byron Bay; 18 Oct.) • (Ballina; 19 Oct.) • (Coraki; 20 Oct.) • (Bangalow; 21 Oct.) • (Altstonville; 22 Oct.) • (Casino; 23-24 Oct.) • UNION PICTURES (Majestic Th, Bris; 27 Nov. - 10 Dec. > Robinson Crusoe, 27 Nov.) • (Majestic Th, Bris; 27 Dec. > House That Jack Built)

NB: Several reports published in Queensland during the year indicate that the Sunshine Kiddies had toured New South Wales as far as Sydney, with the Longreach Leader recording that the company had played an eight weeks season in the capital. To-date only the Cessnock season has been confirmed. If these reports are correct then the company most likely undertook the tour between March and May.

1927: UNION PICTURES (Majestic Th, Bris; 1-8 Jan. > House That Jack Built, 1 Jan; Sinbad the Sailor, 3 Jan.) • (Majestic Th, Bris; 5 Feb. - * > Sunshine Revue, 5 Feb.; Hotel Balmy, 9 Feb.) • RAHILLY BROWN (Hibberland, Hall, Toowoomba; 7 Mar. > Robinson Crusoe - one night only) • (Babinda; 3 May) • (Gordonvale; 4 May) • (Hibberland Hall, Cairns; 6 May - * > Robinson Crusoe and Fun in a Florist's Shop, 6 May; The House That Jack Built and The Crazy Hotel, 9 May) • (Yungaburra; 10 May) • (Millaa Millaa; 11 May) • (Malanda; 12 May) • (Atherton; 13-14 May) • (Hibberland Hall, Cairns; 19 May > The House That Jack Built and The Crazy Hotel - fundraiser for St Monica's School) • (Th Royal, Townsville; 25 May - * > Robinson Crusoe and Fun in a Florist's Shop 25 May; The House That Jack Built and The Crazy Hotel, 28 May) • (Superlativ Th, Charter Towers; 30-31 May > Robinson Crusoe and Fun in a Florist's Shop 30 May; The House That Jack Built and The Crazy Hotel, 31 May) • (Th Royal, Longreach; 15-16 June) • (Oddfellows Hall, Toowoomba; 6 July - *) • (Brisbane suburban picture theatre tour; ca. 7 Aug. - ca. Sept.) • (Lyceum Th, Bris; 5 Sept. - * > Back Again, 5 Sept.; Miss Bone from New York, 10 Sept.) • (Hibberland Hall, Cairns; 2 Dec. - * > Sleeping Beauty, 2 Dec.; Miss Bone from New York, 3 Dec.) • (Tolga; 5 Dec.) • (Yungaburra; 6 Dec.) • (Millaa Millaa; 7 Dec.) • (Ravenshoe; 8 Dec.) • (Herberton; 9 Dec.) • (Atherton; 10 Dec.) • ($of A, Malanda; 12 Dec.) • (Mareeba; 13 Dec.) (Tropical Theatre, Cairns; 15 Dec. > The London Waif - one show only) • (Warwick; 30 Dec.) (Toowoomba Th; 31 Dec.)

NB: The Brisbane suburban picture theatre tour incl. Sandgate (Bris Accord; 24 Aug.) • Annerley (Princess Th; 25 Aug.) • Paddington (Paddington Picture; 26 Aug.) • New Farm (Astor; 30 Aug.)

1928: RAHILLY BROWN (Toowoomba Th; 2 Jan.) • UNION PICTURES (Majestic Th, Bris; 9-21 Jan. - * > Sleeping Beauty, 9 Jan.) (Tropical Th, Cairns; 9-11 May - * > A Pantomime without a Name) • (Mareeba; 12 May) • (Tolga; 14 May) • (Atherton; 15 May) • (Yungaburra; 16 May) • (Ravenshoe; 17 May) • (Herberton; 18 May) (Malanda; 19 May) • (Millaa Millaa; 20 May) • (Gordonvale; 21 May) • (Tully; 22 May) • (South Townsville Pictures; 24-26 May) • (Superlativ Th, Charter Towers; 28-31 May > A Pantomime without a Name, 28 May; Sleeping Beauty, 31 May) • ($ of A, Townsville; 1-2 June > Sleeping Beauty and Miss Bone of New York) • (Landsborough, Qld; 17 Oct.) • (Thames Th, Southport; 3 Dec.) • (Manly; 5 Dec.) • (Morningside, Bris; 6 Dec.) • (Beaudesert; 7 Dec.) • (Stones Corner, Bris; 8 Dec.)

NB: The productions staged during the Tablelands tour included A Pantomime without a Name and Grandpa's Whiskers)

1929: RAHILLY BROWN (Broadway Th, Brisbane; 8 Jan. > Sunshine Kiddies farewell concert)
FURTHER REFERENCE

"Miss Agnes Rahilly's Recital," BC: 30 May (1905), 5.
"Sunshine Kiddies, The," MB: 30 Nov. (1925), 5
"Sunshine Kiddies," WCB: 3 July (1926), 12.
"Tropical Theatre, Friday: Extended Season by Special Request - The Sunshine Kiddies" CP: 11 May (1928), 3.


See also:


WCB: 19 June (1926), 16.