

AUSTRALIAN VARIETY THEATRE PRACTITIONERS AND THE RADIO INDUSTRY



Arthur Morley



Peter Finch



Gladys Moncrieff



Claude Holland

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Aldridge, Arthur:

Arthur Aldridge initially established himself in England and the USA before coming to Australia in 1919 with Nell Fleming. After they parted ways he remained in the country as a high profile stage, radio and recording artist. He began appearing on radio in 1925 in stage broadcasts and later worked from the studio. Largely associated with the Farmers Service (2FC), he continued to do radio up until his death in 1929.

Anderson, Oswald:

Although Oswald Anderson never worked in the variety industry as either performer or in management he nevertheless was active in producing many charity and war-time fundraising concerts. As a song-writer his songs were also performed on the variety stage. Anderson began his pioneering radio career in the mid-1920s and continued to be involved up until his death in 1944.

Archer, Joe:

Comedian and dancer Joe Archer was working professionally from the late 1890s or early 1900s. He maintained a continuous presence as an entertainer up until the early 1940s, working for virtually all the leading variety firms of that era. He also operated his own touring companies (sometimes in partnership with other leading performers). Archer performed on radio in the early to mid-1930s.

Arnold, Chic:

Chic Arnold's first known radio appearance was on 14 March 1934 with Humphrey Bishop's The Smith Family variety show (2FC). He was still active on radio in Adelaide as late as 1942, appearing in an Allied Forces variety programme broadcast by the ABC in late June.



Arnold and Norman:

Performed a special turn on 2FC, on 30 Nov. 1932. It was relayed nationally. They appeared again on 5 December with Parts 2 and 3.

Ashton, Queenie:

After arriving in Australia in 1927 Queenie Ashton largely worked in musical theatre (both on stage and on radio). Her radio career, which began as early as 1929, also included work as a singer and dramatic actor.

Attenboro, Hilda:

Hilda Attenboro came to Australia in 1915 under contract to George Marlow. After teaming up with British comedian Dan Thomas the pair left for South Africa in 1917. Attenboro returned to Australia in 1921 with new partner Claude Dampier. After they split up in 1922 she remained in the Australasian region until at 1935 appearing in variety, drama and on radio. In 1934, for example, she sang with Fred Whaite and His Vaudeville Orchestra on **2BL** (ca. Sept-Nov.). These were relayed to **3LO**.

Austral Sisters:

Performed almost exclusively on radio between 1934 and 1936. Sang with Fred Whaite and His Vaudeville Orchestra on **2BL** (ca. Sept-Nov. 1934).

Austral Trio [2]:

Also known as the Austral Salon Trio, the act initially performed on radio in early 1930 before securing revue work with White and Dawe's Midnight Frolics. The trio continued to appear on radio up until 1932.

Balnaves, A.E.

A.E. Balnaves started out in amateur theatre as an actor, writer and designer and in the early 1930s produced three musical comedies in South Australia. His other stage work included dialogue for the Penola Younger Set's 1947 revue *Follies on Broadway*. That same year he resigned from the Commercial Bank of Australasia to work in Sydney as a fulltime radio script writer for Colgate-Palmolive. His most successful work was the comedy series *Ada and Elsie*.

Banvard, Yvonne:

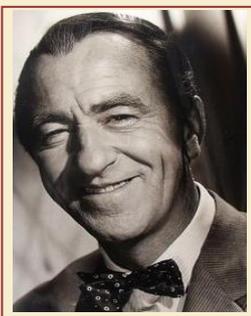
Yvonne Banvard made her stage debut in the USA at age 7 with the Pollard Lilliputian Opera Co and went on to carve out a long and successful career in Australia in variety, drama, musicals, radio and film. Her radio career began as early as 1925, and sometimes included giving interviews from her dressing room. Banvard continued to appear on radio through until the late-1940s (largely in acting roles), and was also involved in producing programmes.

Beck, Syd:

Syd Beck's theatrical career began after he was discovered by Hugh Huxham. Between the mid-20s and the mid-1940s he cemented his position as one of Australia's most popular comedians, working in revue, pantomime and follies. He also worked as Nat Phillips' stage partner (Stiffy, Joe and Syd). Beck appeared frequently on radio from 1926 through until the mid to late-1930s, presented comedy skits, singing and appearing in sketches and radio revues.

Benson, Vera:

A specialist singer (soprano) who worked extensively around Australia (including New Zealand between the mid-1010s and early 1930s (notably for J.C. Williamsons and the Tivoli and Fullers circuits), Vera Benson's radio career was largely conducted during the late-1920s and early-1930s. Her partnership with Frank Perrin was particularly popular on air.

Bentley, Dick:

Dick Bentley started out performing on the variety stage as a musician/comedian and made his first appearance on radio in the early 1930s. Before moving to Britain in 1938 he established himself as a prominent Melbourne personality, notably on Wilfrid Thomas's show *Out of the Bag*. He spent the war years back in Australia and returned again in 1951 to star in a ten-episode radio comedy series, *Gently Bentley*. He came back again in 1960 and worked briefly in television before moving back to Britain. Considered a big star there, his career involved stage, radio, television and film work.

Dick Bentley
Internet Movie Database

Bert Ralton & His Havana Band:

Saxophonist Albert Lewis Ralton (ca. 1885-1927) rose to prominence in the USA during the 1910s. After residencies in Cuba and England he bought his band to Australia (1923-21925) to help open Sydney's Ambassadors Hotel. It later played the Tivoli circuit and various ballrooms, recorded at least 30 songs for local labels and featured in the 1924 film, *The Price*. The band was broadcast on radio **3LO** live from St Kilda (Carlyon St) on 9 July 1925. Its records were also played on air.

Big Four, The: Arguably Australia's most popular male quartet of the 1920s and 1930s, The Big Four was led by New Zealander, Cliff O'Keefe. The ensemble came prominence on the Tivoli circuit with their rendering of popular hits, ballads, jazz and operatic selections – all fused with comedy. They recorded many songs for Columbia and performed live on radio from 1925 until their departure for Britain in 1930. O'Keefe returned to Australia in January 1932 and briefly put together a New Big Four. The quartet was revived again in 1936 especially for radio station 2UE.

Bishop, Humphrey: The English basso, best known to Australians during the 1920s as the leader of the Humphrey Bishop Comedy and Operatic Company, made his first radio broadcast in New Zealand in 1924. From 1932 onwards he worked primarily as a music director/conductor and producer of revues, musicals, pantomimes, and variety programmes, first for the ABC, and later with AWA and 2CH. The continuing shows he was involved with included *The Big Parade*, *The Showman*, and *Humphrey Bishop Cavalcade* (all 2CH). He was still working in the medium in 1955.

Black, Elton: Scottish comedian Elton Black began appearing in live broadcasts in 1933, including 2BL and 4QG/4RK. Appeared in occasional variety programs broadcast in 1935 by Perth National (6WF). Appeared frequently between June and December 1936 (also 6WA). Was one of the feature acts for the opening of Kalgoorlie station 6GF (10 Dec. 1936).

Bluett, Fred: One of the biggest vaudeville stars to work in Australasian region during the first half of the twentieth century, Fred Bluett was heard on radio as early as 1924 performing as a solo comedian and in sketches. In 1938 he chaired the Australian Broadcasting Commission's *Music Hall Memories* series and some two years later originated the role of Albert, the Cockney air-raid warden in the drama serial *Searchlights Over London*. Among his radio career highlights Bluett was one of the feature acts for the opening of Kalgoorlie station 6GF (10 Dec. 1936).

Bluett, Gus: Gus Bluett secured his first minor role with J.C. Williamson's in 1918. His extraordinary versatility led to starring roles from 1924, however, particularly in musical comedy and pantomime. Bluett made surprisingly few appearances on radio before his unexpected death at age 34 in 1936. One of these was an interview broadcast live from his dressing room.

Bluett, Kitty: Kitty Bluett's radio career took off in 1940 when she featured in Jack Davey's variety shows. She later established herself as one of Australia's most popular female disc jockeys and became a big star partnering Dick Bentley. Bluett found even greater success in England as Ted Ray's wife in the radio comedy series *Ray's a Laugh* (1950s). Back in Australia again in the early 1960s she appeared on both radio and television.

Borradale, Harry: Performed recitals on radio from the late-1920s through until the 1940s (incl. 2FC 26 Apr. 1932). During the mid-1930s he and Frank L. Haining presented a series of stories that were broadcast throughout Queensland by 4QG.

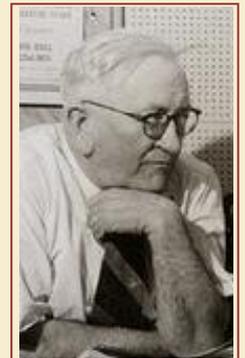
Bovis, Will: His only known radio appearances were on 2BL during the 1934 "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World" broadcast (21 Sept.) and on 2FC (3 June 1938).



Cabinet radio, 1937-58
(Queensland Historical Atlas)

- Brown, Lester:** The American actor, writer and director was involved in the Australian variety industry between 1913 and 1925, and hence his radio career in the country was brief. He performed "Uncle Rastus on the Kissing Hill" (7 Feb. 1925) on Broadcaster Ltd (**2BL**), and also starred in a one act comedy specially written for him and aired by Broadcasters Ltd on 23 February 1925.
- Browne, Dot:** Pantomime, vaudeville, revusical/revue, musical comedy and grand opera artists Dot Browne was a member of William Andersons' Lilliputian company as early as 1912. Rarely out of work from the late-1910s onwards, she secured engagements as a singer/actress with many prominent variety managers and companies, and from 1930 until her retirement in the early 1940s also worked extensively in radio.
- Burchell, Sid:** English-born "Romantic baritone," Sydney Burchell came to Australia in 1920 with Oscar Asche and remained for 16 years, touring for Hugh Huxham, Hugh J. Ward and J.C. Williamson's. He began his radio career in 1927 and before returning to Britain in 1936 had established himself as of Australia's most popular radio singers. In 1935 he was contracted by the **ABC** to appear in community singing events and radio musicals (often opposite Gladys Moncrieff).
- Campbell, Lawrence:** One of Australia's leading elocutionists and instructors in stage and public speaking of the early twentieth century, Lawrence Campbell held the stage performance rights for C.J. Dennis's *Songs of the Sentimental Bloke* in both Australia and New Zealand between 1916 and the mid-1920s. He also presented "The Bloke" on radio in 1930. Campbell's radio career was carried out from 1925 until 1940.
- Cannot, Jack:** English revue and musical comedy comedian Jack Cannot came to Australia in 1910 and remained. A huge star with J.C. Williamson's and the Tivoli circuit during the 1910s and early to mid-1920s, he also found engagements with companies like the Taits and the Fullers and featured regularly on radio between 1924 and his death in 1929.
- Carlyle, Billie:** Billie Carlyle came to prominence in Australia in the mid-1920s through her partnership with comedian Claude Dampier. A move to England in 1927 saw the pair establish a popular comedy partnership on stage and in radio that lasted until Dampier's death in 1955. Carlyle appeared in film and on radio and television between 1930 and 1947. Her celebrity status as a successful performer overseas resulted in her being heard on radio here (primarily during the late-1930s).
- Carr-Glynn, Neva:** Neva Carr-Glynn got her first big break in the chorus of a 1923 Fullers' pantomime and by 1925 was performing principal girl roles. She worked extensively in revue and musical comedy, and after seven years in England (1930-37) returned to Australia, initially working in revue with Jim Gerald, before turning to radio. Between 1938 and 1941 Carr-Glynn was a prominent radio actress for the **ABC**. She later worked extensively in television and legitimate drama.
- Charlton, Conrad:** Charlton's earliest known broadcast (as a singer) was in 1925. He joined **2BL** in 1929 and remained after it was acquired by the Australian Broadcasting Commission (**ABC**) in 1932. He rose to studio manager before being appointed the **ABC's** General Manager for Western Australia (1936-47) and Victoria (1946-53). Charlton's career as a variety entertainer included the Fullers' circuit and tours with the Famous Diggers, Billy Maloney's Town Topics and J.C. Williamson's Royal Comic Opera Co.
- Chase, Carlton:** American "Fashion-plate" entertainer Carlton Chase toured Australia with the American Burlesque Company (1913-14) and remained for several years. After returning in 1924 he worked in vaudeville, pantomime, revusicals, and on radio between 1924 and 1927. His first known radio appearance was on with Farmers Radio (later **2FC**) on 6 December 1924, presenting "topical talks."
- Cheer-Oh Girls:** Formed in Mosman, Sydney in 1916 the Cheer-Oh Girls was an amateur concert party which staged concerts as a means of raising funds for patriotic appeals. It appeared on radio on several occasions between 1925 and 1928.

- Chenoweth, Maurice:** Best known for his long association with Harry Clay (as performer and manager), Maurice Chenoweth also had a good deal of involvement in radio as a performer in variety programmes during the late-1920s and early-1930s.
- Clyde, Tommy:** One of the first vaudeville comedians to score a radio contract in Australia, Tommy Clyde's was active in this country between 1922 and 1929. He secured a contract with 2BL (Sydney) in late-1923 and maintained a heavy involvement with radio up until 1929 (joining 2GB in 1928).
- Coney, Les:** 2BL (26 Apr. 1932) • 3LO (27 Oct. 1934).
- Connolly, Gerry:** The youngest child born to entertainers Gerald Shaw and Mary Connolly, and brother to Gladys Shaw and Keith Connolly, Gerry Connolly worked for Tivoli Celebrity vaudeville, Union Theatres, Fullers' Theatres and J.C. Williamson's among other firms before joining 4BC (Brisbane) in 1937. He remained with the station until 1953 (becoming its high profile breakfast host) to take up a similar role with 2UE (Sydney).
- Connolly, Keith:** Keith Connolly performed with his parents' troupe as a child and in his youth with the Young Australia League. His career, which continued well into the 1950s, included engagements with Nat Phillips, George Wallace, Fullers All-American Revue Co and his own company Keith's Syncopating Jesters (1925-27). In his late career Connolly also appeared in ABC radio dramas.
- Corrie, Bert:** Associated with Claude Golding (1909-10), Doris Baker (1911-23), Joe Verne (1924-25), Heather Belle (1925), Tom Preston (1928), Jarvis the Talking Dog (ca. 1932), and Joe Rox (1935), Bert Corrie worked for numerous vaudeville firms, including the Tivoli, Clay and Fullers circuits, and was also heard regularly on radio during the 1930s.
- Courtney, Vince:** One of Australia's leading variety songwriters of the 1910s and 1920s, Vince Courtney often performed with his wife, Eva. For several years he was a key member of Nat Phillips' Stiffy and Mo Revue Co, and contributed songs to *The Bunyip* pantomime (1916). Many of his songs were also written for other leading variety performers. Courtney appeared on radio as early as 1926 and was still performing as late as 1937.
- Crosby, Marshall:** Marshall Crosby made his professional debut in 1907 as a singer and later worked on the Tivoli circuit and in J.C. Williamson's musicals in the 1920s before joining George Wallace's revue company in 1924. He later appeared in more than dozen films (including several of Wallace's), played lead roles in radio serials and dramas and become President of the Actors' and Announcers Equity Association.



Marshall Crosby
Matt Crosby: Theatre, Writing, acting, Melbourne and Tokyo

Dampier, Claude: Claude Dampier came to Australia twice (1910-1917 and 1921-1927), spending most of the first visit with Edward Branscombe's Red Dandies. His second stay included touring for Tivoli and Fullers' circuits and with Pat Hanna, while also starring in two films. After returning to England in 1927 he carved out a very successful career on the stage and in radio - largely in partnership with his second wife, Australian actress/comedienne Billie Carlyle.

Davis, Ivy: 2FC (3, 10 Feb. 1930 > with Walter George's Sunshine Players).

Davis, Percy: Music director, arranger, conductor, Percy Davis began his career as a vaudeville conductor around the turn of the century and continued working well into the 1930s. During those years he secured employment with many leading variety managers, including James Brennan, Harry Clay, Bert Howarde, and in the 1930s was music director at Sydney's Rushcutter's Bay Stadium. His only established link with radio was in 1933 when he conducted Wal Rockley's Christy Minstrels on 2BL (31 Mar.)



Dean, George:



George Dean came to Australia in 1880 as a juvenile actor with George Musgrove's Tambour Major company and subsequently spent the next two decades on the "legitimate" stage as comedian, actor and occasional stage manager. He turned to vaudeville in 1899, spending many years with Harry Rickards. Dean continued performing on the stage and on radio well into the 1930s. His radio appearances included 2BL (12 Mar. 1931) and the 1932 Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World special (2FC 25 Feb.).

George Dean
Sunday Times (Sydney) 27 May (1928), 2.

Delavale, Ern:
[aka Ernest Harris]

Best known for his partnerships with Will Gilbert (1908-1916), his brother-in-law Ern Vockler (aka Ike Delavale, 1916-1920) and his wife Lily Vockler (1920-), comedian Ern Delavale's first performed on radio in the mid-1930s. Although largely retired from ca. 1940 he and his wife still worked on stage and on radio occasionally. His last known radio appearance was live from the Melbourne Town Hall in 1951.

Delavale, "Ike":
[aka Ern Vockler / Charles Delavale]

As Ern Vockler, Ike Delavale established himself as Australia's first Chaplin impersonator and between 1916 and 1920 worked in the Delavale Bros act (as Charles Delavale). He spent the 1920s touring with his wife Elvie Stagpoole, mostly as Ike Delavale. He appears to have made his debut broadcast in Adelaide in 1930, and over the next two decades was often heard on radio, especially in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. From the mid-1930s onwards he was largely associated with his partner Maggie Buckley. Delavale was still working in the mid-1950s. His last known radio appearance may have been on Sydney's 2UW in 1952 with members of the Mother Goose pantomime (including Dawn Lake)

De Roebeck, Harry:

Harry de Roebeck has first been identified in connection with Australian entertainment in 1910. Between 1914 and 1918 he was associated with several of Edward Branscombe Dandies companies, and was also in an early line-up of Walter George-led Smart Set. De Roebeck worked on the Tivoli circuit beginning in 1918 and is known to have appeared on radio as late as 1926.

Desmond, G.W.:
[aka Dismal Desmond]

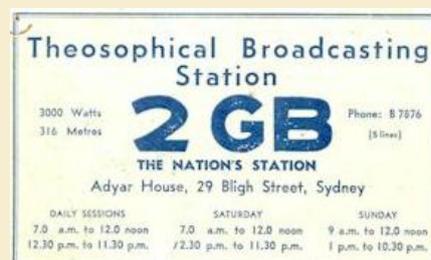
After coming to Australia in 1914 with Sydney James' Royal Strollers, Will Desmond established himself a prominent comedian in such troupes as The Futurists (ca.1920-1928) and Billy Maloney's New Ideas (1926). He began his radio career in 1924 as a member of the Futurists and between 1927 and 1930s was heard regularly around the country through 2FC and 2BL (Sydney) as a variety comedian and actor in comedy sketches. Following the world-wide popularity of the Dismal Desmond cartoon and toy that began in Britain in 1926 he adopted the "Dismal" moniker.

Dobbie, John V.:



John Dobbie started out his entertainment career in Australia as a dance band singer/pianist before touring overseas for several years. After returning home in 1927 he worked primarily in regularly in vaudeville, musicals, revues, and appeared in five films. After settling in Brisbane in the early 1940s, he entertained troupes, co-managed the Cremorne Theatre and eventually moved into radio as a presenter and sports announcer

John Dobbie (left) and George Wallace
His Royal Highness



Douglas, Cecil "Tiny": Formed by former Charleston Symphonist violinist Cyril "Tiny" Douglas the Varsity Boys performed as both feature vaudeville act and support to revue companies led by Nat Phillips (Whirligigs), Stan Foley and Amy Rochelle (Novelettes), Frank O'Brien (Revellers), Al Mack, George Sorlie, and Graham Mitchell. The band was popular with film exhibitors and often appeared on radio during the 1930s. Established radio appearances incl. **2BL** (ca. July 1930) • **2KY** (Nov.-Dec. 1930) • (Feb. 1931) • **4QG** (Aug. 1932) • **4QR** (Mar 1938)

Drew, George: George Drew started his career as a solo coon singer before forming a popular partnership with Jim Romaine. When Romaine enlisted with the Australian Imperial Forces (A.I.F.) he toured an act with Jim Harris before establishing his own company ca. 1923. Drew and Romaine reformed briefly in 1927. Drew's later career also included radio appearances in the early 1930s - notably with Wal Rockley's Old Time Minstrels (**2BL**, 1930).

Duncan, Fred: **2FC** (25 Feb. 1932 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").

Edwards, George: Considered one of Australia's best sketch artists and monologists of the 1910s and 1920s, Edwards later headed his own revusical troupe and was cast in lead roles in several films. As the "man with a thousand voices," he carved out an even more successful career in radio in the 1930s and 1940s.

NB: Edwards also worked on radio ca. 1932 under his birth name - Harold Parks.

Elliot, Violet [2]: The daughter of Arthur Elliott and Maud Fanning, Violet Elliott was on the stage from infancy and by the late 1910s was touring on her own. She was cast in several late-1920s films and worked in English music hall and pantomime as Chick Elliott between 1930 and at least the early 1950s. Her first known radio appearance was for Broadcaster's Ltd on 5 May 1926.



George Edwards Players (1953)

Famous Diggers: The Pat Hanna-led Famous Diggers toured Australasia constantly between late 1919 and the early 1930s, presenting variety entertainment that focused largely on themes relating to the Great War. The company's earliest known radio appearance was via Brisbane's **4CH** on 4 January 1925. The Diggers are also known to have been broadcast live from Perth's Theatre Royal through **6WF** (on the evenings of 21 and 26 May 1928).

Fanning, Lulla: **2BL** (ca. Sept-Nov. 1934 > with Fred Whaite and His Vaudeville Orchestra - relayed to **3LO**).

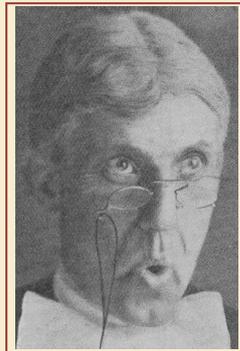
Fanning, Maud: Regarded as Australia's premiere coon singer of the early twentieth century, Maud Fanning appeared on stage at age five. She went on to work for every major vaudeville organisation in the Australasian region and made her last stage appearance in 1940. Fanning appeared on radio in the 1930s (including the 1932 "Veterans of the Minstrel and Variety World" retrospective (**2FC** 25 Feb.)).

- Ferguson, Nellie M:** Classically-trained pianist Nellie M. Ferguson gave numerous recitals during the 1920s and 1930s, both on the concert stage and on radio. Her radio appearances were typically presented as part of variety programmes and sometimes included musical monologues. She made her first broadcast as a singer in 1925. Ferguson's stage work included Ike Beck's New South Wales touring company in the early 1930s.
- Fiddes, Buster:** A Tivoli favourite in revue and pantomime for more than twenty years, Buster Fiddes started his career in the mid-1930s performing a knockabout comedy act with his brother. He began appearing occasionally on radio from 1948 and later transitioned successfully into television.
- Finch, Peter:** Academy Award-winning actor Peter Finch started his career as an actor/entertainer playing the straightman opposite comedian Bert Le Blanc. He later appeared in revues for Ernest C. Rolls before progressing to radio (as actor, writer and director). Before leaving Australia for Britain and eventual international stardom he also hosted the poetry programme *Quality Street*.
- Fitts, Ernest:** After retiring in 1909 basso singer Ernest Fitts returned to part time performing in 1916. He could be heard on radio in the mid to late-1920s, being broadcast out of Melbourne.
- Fleming, Nell:** Appeared frequently on radio in the 1930s, including sketches with George Edwards (as Darby and Joan), and in the late 1940s was employed by the Australian Broadcasting Commission as its New York representative.
- Flemming, Claude:** Flemming's first known "official" radio appearance occurred when the J.C. Williamson's musical *Sybil* was broadcast live from Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney's, on 26 February 1924. Flemming was co-star along with Gladys Moncrieff. However, he and Moncrieff had been involved in a trial broadcast from a Melbourne office in 1919. He could still be heard on radio in 1950.
- Foley, Stan "Stud":** One of Australia's leading revue and vaudeville comedians of the 1930s and 1940s, Stan Foley was heard on radio from 1934 through until at least the mid-1950s.
- Ford & Aldous:** 2BL (ca. Sept-Nov. 1934, > with Fred Whaite and His Vaudeville Orchestra - relayed to 3LO).
- Futurists, The [1]:** Founded in late-1920 as an internationally-touring ensemble (1921-1923), the Futurists was revived twice by Cyril Northcote and G.W. Desmond for both stage and radio performances (1924-1925 and 1927-1928). The later period saw the troupe largely involved in radio for Melbourne radio station 3LO. It also toured New Zealand (as the English Futurists) in association with Joe Brennan during the same period.
- Garling, Rus:** Although closely associated with G.W. Heans from the early-1920s, Rus Garling also established himself as a Sydney-based variety entertainer (notably with his ventriloquist doll Jerry) and became heavily involved in radio. He appeared in Australia's first radio revue (1927), produced his own radio specials and worked regularly as an on-air entertainer.
- Gerald, Jim:** Considered one of the five great post-WWI vaudeville comedians, Gerald toured his revues troupe throughout Australasia during the 1920s and early 1930s and then went on to star in revue and on radio up until the 1950s.
- George, Walter:** English entertainer, comedian and troupe proprietor Walter George toured Australasia from 1912 to the Early 1930s. His earliest known radio work as a performer was on 2BL in 1927 with his Sunshine Players. See also 2FC (3, 10 Feb. 1930 > with the Sunshine Players). In late-1929 George was contracted by the ABC as a producer.

Gilbert, Bert:

Engaged as a musical comedy actor during his early career in Australia, Bert Gilbert first toured here with his wife Ada Reeve (1897-98). He returned in 1907 for Williamson and was later associated with James Brennan's Vaudeville Players and Pat Hanna's Famous Diggers. Well-known for his comic songs, especially his own compositions, Gilbert was also heard on radio performing as a comedian/singer and actor from 1927 up until at least the early-1930s.

Haining, Frank L.:



Haining was involved in radio from as early as 1928, working a comedy act with Frank Perrin. By 1930 he was a member of the ABC Radio Players (Brisbane) and in the mid-1930s he teamed up Harry Borradaile to present a series of stories on Queensland radio (these were broadcast on relay from 4QG).

Frank Haining

Hanley, Nat:

The popular comedian and musician appeared regularly on radio between the late-1920s and the early 1940s. His first known broadcast was for Melbourne's 3AR on 13 September 1929.

Hanna, Pat:

A comedian who specialised in digger roles, Pat Hanna's multifaceted saw him excel as an inventor, lightening sketch artist, creator and producer of the Famous Diggers troupe, and as a film producer. His most popular creations were the military sketches featuring himself as Chic (Chic and Bert, and later Chic and Joe). His earliest-known radio appearance was in Brisbane in January 1925 (4CH). He was also heard on radio in sketches from the late-1920s with the Famous Diggers and became well-known for his "comic monologues" on subjects like cricket.

Harrison, Reg:

Considered one of Australia's foremost "refined" costume comedy comedians on the 1910s and early 1920s, Reg Harrison was associated with such companies as Mascotte's Ltd (1911), Grotosques (1912), Punchinellos (1912/1913), Huxham's Serenaders (1915-1924) and a revived [Royal] Strollers (1924). He appeared regularly on radio for 2BL (Sydney) between 1925 and 1930, and continued to work as a stage comedian up until at least 1938.

Hastings, Will:

Comic and part owner of the Gallipoli Strollers company, Will Hastings is also known to have appeared with Rawdon Blandford's Classics of 1923 and worked on Harry Clay's Sydney circuit (ca. 1925). Hastings was broadcasting on Australian radio ca.1925.

Hawthorne, Reg:

2BL (ca. Sept-Nov. 1934 with Fred Whaite and His Vaudeville Orchestra - relayed to 3LO).

Hemsley, Arthur:

Arthur Hemsley's career from the late 1920s was largely involved in radio. He appeared on 2BL in the early 1930s (see for example 27 Oct. 1932). Also performed in live community singing broadcasts during the 1930s and presented on 4BC (including the Shell Radio Party)

Holland, Claude:

Claude Holland, the son of entrepreneur Ted Holland, started in radio in the mid-1930s and went on to work as an announcer, disc jockey, producer and station manager. One of the shows he was linked to was *Australia's Amateur Hour*. During his radio career he was employed by 2UE, 2SM and 2UW, and in 1976 his name was added to the Australian Broadcasters' Honour Board.

Hollister, Syd:

Syd Hollister turned to radio in 1928 and went on to feature in numerous variety and comedy shows including *Happy-Go-Lucky* and *The Village Glee Club* well into the 1950s. In the 1930s he was appointed the Australian Broadcasting Commission's light entertainment producer for Victoria and with Darcy Kelway scored a hit with the characters Mrs 'Olmes and Mrs Entwistle.

- Hunter, Mayo:** Performed on radio with his Hawaiian troupe as early as 1926 - **2FC** (4 May).
- James, Will:** **2BL** (21 Sept. 1934 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").
- Jones, Madame Ray:** **2FC** (25 Feb. 1932 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").
- Knowles, J. P.:** Pianist, conductor, and songwriter, J.P. Knowles's earliest known engagement was with Carl Hertz in 1897. He later worked for J.C. Bain and Alf Lawton, the World's Entertainers (US, 1902), Maggie Moore Dramatic, and James Brennan among other managers and firms before settling in Hobart where he established himself as a band leader up until at least the late-1930s. Knowles was associated with Hobart radio station 7ZL in the late-1920s and early-1930s.
- Kolle, Nellie:** Nellie Kolle came to Australia in 1912 for the Brennan-Fuller organisation, and over the next two decades established herself as one of the Australasia's great vaudeville singers and male impersonators. During the mid-1920s she travelled around Australia with her own vaudeville show and continued performing in pantomimes and revue up until at least the 1940s. Kolle began appearing on radio in the late-1920s and was still active in the medium well into the 1950s. During her later years she was particularly popular with community singing events.
- Lamond, Stella:** Stella Lamond's first known radio appearance was on 8 January 1925 when she featured in the Sunbeam Pantomime Children's live broadcast from the Haymarket theatre, Sydney, by the New South Wales Farmers Service. After going solo in 1928 she joined Nat Phillips' Whirligigs and went on to work with comedian Joe Lawman (also her first husband) for almost a decade. Lamond, whose career also spanned radio and television, later worked in partnership with her second husband Max Reddy.
- Lashwood, Hal:** The son of comedian Joe Lashwood, Hal Lashwood started his professional life in 1932 as a dancer with J. C. Williamson's, later toured the Tivoli circuit, appeared in musical comedies, and revue and on radio. He became a huge radio star in the 1940s as Lasho in Roy Rene's *McCackie Mansion* series.
- Lauri, Ernest:** Ernest Lauri started out as an illustrated/picture singer in the early 1900s and later appeared in at least seven films. After returning from World War I he toured as the "Singing Anzac." He retired from the stage in 1941 due to injuries sustained in World War II but then spent more than 15 years involved in radio.
- Lawman, Joe:** A popular Tivoli comedian and pantomime dame during the war years, Lawman appeared on radio as early as 1934, and featured in many community concert broadcasts before heading to Britain in 1945.
- Lawrance, Alf J.:** Lawrance came to Australia in 1914 from England and became a high profile performer and songwriter here. In the 1930s he worked as a pianist/songwriter for Ernest C. Rolls while also contributing music for radio and film. His radio career began in the late-1920s with the privately-owned Australian Broadcasting Company (as music director/conductor). He joined the government-run **ABC** in 1937.
- Lear, Ward:** **2FC** (25 Feb. 1932 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").
- Le Mar, Trixie:** Performed with Fred Whaite and His Vaudeville Orchestra on **2BL** (ca. Sept-Nov. 1934, relayed to **3LO**).
- Le Blanc, Bert:** Performed on Sydney stations **2FC** and **2BL** (1928, 1933). Also presented sketches with Bert Barton in 1933 – including "Cohen Gives Casey Advice, and Vice Versa."
- Leeds, Harry:** **2BL** (21 Sept. 1934 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").
- Leslie, Will:** **2FC** (25 Feb. 1932 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").

Little, Marsh:

One of Australia's leading songwriters of the 1910s, Marsh Little was also a popular baritone. Many of his biggest hits were patriotic numbers like, and included "Boys of the Dardenelles," "His Photo," and "Women! You Have Nobly Done Your Share." Marsh also appeared on radio, mostly as a singer, between 1925 and the late-1930s.

8.33.—Mr. Bert le Blanc: "Sadie Cohen," "Abraham,"
and "Parody on River Shannon."
8.39.—Madame Lillian Gibson (contralto): "Pleading"
and "Largo."
8.45.—Haymarket Theatre: Orchestra.
8.52.—Mr. Herbert Browne (tenor): "Are You Happy"
and "My Old Kentucky Home."
9.1.—Mr. Bert le Blanc: "Cohen Owes Me 97 Dollars"
and "The New Found Yiddish Flag."

2FC

Sydney Morning Herald 8 Feb. (1928), 11.

McAllister, Kyrle:

The brother of Elsie Sylvaney (aka Elsie Chauvel), Kyrle McAllister spent much of his youth in South Africa and toured internationally before returning to Australia in 1927 to tour the Fullers' circuit. He also appeared on radio in 1927, performing songs and monologues. He and Arthur Aldridge were killed in a car accident in Brisbane in 1929.

MacCunn, Andrew:

Associated with the biggest names in Australian and international show business during his 51 years with J.C. Williamsons (1910-1961), music director/conductor Andrew MacCunn was involved in hundreds of productions, and wrote countless songs, ballets, marches and incidental music for pantomimes and revues. His association with radio largely occurred between 1925 and the early-1930s. These typically involved live broadcasts from various theatres, with the orchestra under MacCunn's baton.

Mack, Val:

Val Mack came to prominence with Humphrey Bishop's touring company in 1928. He was involved in both theatre and radio in Queensland during the 1930s and at one stage toured his own show, Mack's Comedy Players. Before enlisting in the Australian Imperial Forces (A.I.F.) during World War II Mack worked for several radio stations, including 4KQ (Brisbane), 4MB (Maryborough) and 4BU (Bundaberg), conducting community singers, acting in radio plays and hosting his own radio shows.

Mahon, Isabel:

Isabel Mahon made her professional debut in 1924 aged seven. She began a two year tour of the East in 1925 and after returning home secured a contract with J.C. Williamson's. Before moving to the USA (ca. 1937) she worked in vaudeville and pantomime on the Tivoli circuit, starred in the film *Splendid Fellows* (1934) and in a radio broadcast of *Our Miss Gibbs* in 1933

Maloney, Billy:



Billy Maloney turning to vaudeville as a comedian in 1913 and eventually became a high profile vaudeville artist, manager, producer, writer and songwriter. He appeared on radio as early as 1924 and after moving to Britain in 1939 appeared on television, worked on radio for the BBC, produced revues, toured his own comedy company, and managed a theatre in Edinburgh.

Listening to the radio in
the 1920s



Billy Maloney

Frank Van Straten. Tivoli(2003), 71.

Martin, A. E.:

Edward Martin started out his as an Adelaide journalist and later editor. He was later involved in Promoting circus and vaudeville and wrote at least two pantomimes - *Aladdin* (1913) and *Little Bo-Peep* (1922). In later years he established a travel agency, wrote radio plays and serials for George Edwards Productions, published magazines and comics and wrote several novels.

- Martin, Georgie:** Georgie Martin came to Australia in 1912 with Walter George and their Smart Set Entertainers. In 1915 joined Edward Branscombe's Scarlet Dandies. They reformed the Smart Set in 1917 and founded the Sunshine Players in 1921. In the late-1920s she and George also appeared on radio together.
- Masters, Eric:** Eric Masters made his Australian debut in 1922 on the Tivoli circuit, and later worked for the Fullers, J.C. Williamson's, Hugh J. Ward, and Frank Neil. He also toured his own companies, worked regularly on radio as a singer and actor from 1925 and appeared in Roy Rene's film *Strike Me Lucky* (1934). During the 1930s Masters was largely associated with the ABC as a member of its dramatic staff.
- May, Clement:** Clement May presented his Charles Dickens character sketches on the vaudeville stage from 1913. He later established his own troupe, toured overseas on several occasions and was in great demand on Australian radio between 1924 and his departure for New Zealand in 1927. May spent much of the late-1930s and early 1940s touring overseas before settling in Canada.
- Medhen, Carl:** Son of prominent nineteenth century musician Charles Von der Mehden Carl (drums) and Harry Mehden (trombone) were members of the Fullers' National Orchestra between 1914 and 1918. Carl then relocated to the USA where he worked in theatre and in a touring film orchestra. He came back home in 1922 to direct T. Carlyon's Esplanade Ballroom orchestra in Melbourne. Mehden was also involved in radio broadcasts at various times throughout his career (which continued into the late-1950s).
- Mehden, Harry:** After leaving Fullers National Orchestra in 1918, Harry Mehden toured the company's circuit with The Jazz Band, the first band to perform jazz in Australia (1918). His career in Australia included an engagement with Bert Ralton & His Havana Band (1923-25) and many radio broadcasts. Mehden also performed overseas at various times up until at least the late 1930s.
- Moncrieff, Gladys:** Affectionately known as "our Glad," and our "Queen of Song," Gladys Moncrieff established herself as one of Australia's most successful singers and musical comedy stars (both at home and internationally). She also appeared on the variety stage at the start of her career various times, had an extensive radio career beginning right at the start of regular radio broadcasting in Australia (1924), and also appeared on television in the early 1960s.
- Monument, Fred:** After coming to Australia in 1912 Fred Monument secured engagements with Edward Branscombe, J. and N. Tait, Harry Rickards Tivoli Theatres Ltd, and Ada Reeve among others. He also travelled internationally with the Futurists (1921-1923). He settled in Brisbane in 1925 and over the next 10 years worked in radio and on stage, first as a performer and later as an announcer for 4BK (1930-33) and 4QG (1933-35). He remained active as an entertainer, emcee and actor (radio and theatre) until the late-1940s.
- Moon, George Jnr:**
Moon, George Snr: Both father and son were active on radio between the late-1920s and their departure from Australia in the mid to late-1930s. However, because advertisements, reviews and radio listings do not always distinguish between them, it is seldom clear which one of the two men is being referred too.
- Moore, Carrie:** After establishing herself in Australia in the mid-1890s Carrie Moore moved to England in 1903 where she became an even bigger star in British musicals, pantomimes and variety. She came home in 1908 to tour with *The Merry Widow*, and made several return visits before settling in Sydney in 1918. Up until her death, however, she continued to travel overseas often while also taking up brief stage, radio, film and television opportunities whenever and wherever they were offered. Moore's radio appearances were in both Australia and Britain.

Moreni, Con:

The son of acrobat Con Moreni (Snr), Con Moreni's career as an Australasian variety entertainer was carried out between ca. 1905 and the late-1940s, and included two years in the USA (1910-12) and eight years in Britain (1930-38). His final working years involved both stage and radio appearances.

Morley, Arthur:

Arthur Morley came to prominence in 1915 as the originator of several pioneering revusicals. He directed shows for Harry Clay, the Fullers and Harry Sadler. In the 1920s he was associated with Bert Howard and George Sorlie before gaining a reputation as a radio entertainer with 4BC Brisbane under various guises - notably as "Midshipman Bob Breezy," "Old Timer" and "Constable McGinty."



National Museum
of Australia

Neil, Frank:

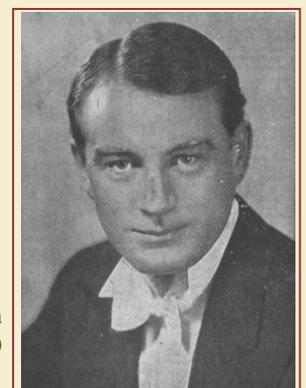
Best known to Australians during the 1910s and 1920s as one of the country's leading theatre practitioners (notably as actor, director, troupe leader and pantomime librettist), Frank Neil turned to entrepreneurship in 1934 when he bought out Mike Connors and Queenie Paul's interests in Tivoli Circuit Australia. Although his appearances on radio were rare, Neil was heavily involved in promoting his artists and shows (including live broadcasts) through the medium during the mid to-late 1930s.

Nelson, Leonard:

Leonard Nelson made his first Tivoli appearance at a trial night in the early-1900s and after a tour of the East (1902) quickly established himself as a vaudeville favourite around Australasia, first on the Tivoli circuit and then with the Fullers (1910-). He settled in the Blue Mountains in the late-1920s but continued to come out of retirement on many occasions until the mid-1940s. His radio appearances were mostly undertaken during the late-1920s.

Norman, Charles:

After splitting with partner Chic Arnold in the mid-1920s Charles Norman worked in musical comedy, revue and revusicals in both Australia and Britain. He and Arnold teamed up again in the Britain for several years in early 1930s. Norman later became a director of Savoy Theatres and remained active in the industry up the late-1960s. His career from the 1930s onwards also included radio performances.



Charles Norman
JCW Magazine (1935)

Northcote, Cyril:

Cyril Northcote came to Australia in 1914 with Sydney James' Royal Strollers and later co-founded the internationally-touring Futurists. The costume comedy company was also involved in Australian radio broadcasts during the late-1920s. Northcote and his wife Ira Bissett operated a variety circuit out of Calcutta between 1930 and 1936, and then returned to Australia where they initially worked in radio (for 2BL).

O'Connor, D. B.:

Actor, director and stage and film producer David B. O'Connor started his professional career with Pollards Juvenile Opera and began his entrepreneurial activities in 1906. He toured his own companies, including Warton and O'Connor's Frivolities (ca. 1924), up until the 1940s. His later career, based in Sydney, was largely undertaken as a theatrical entrepreneur. O'Connor performed on radio in sketches and as a singer between ca. 1930-1936. In 1948 he was involved organising broadcasts by Sir Laurence Olivier and Vivian Leigh during their Australian tour (in association with the Food for Britain appeal).

O'Hagan, Jack:

Jack O'Hagan began his five decade-long career as a composer in the mid-1910s, finding initial success during the war years as a lyricist, and later providing music for silent films. He wrote songs for revues, plays (including *The Sentimental Bloke*, 1922) and musical comedies and was heavily involved in radio from 1924 onwards. In later years O'Hagan established his own publishing company, and for 14 years prior to his retirement in 1967 wrote radio jingles.

O'Keefe, Cliff:

Clifford O'Keefe was best known to Australians as a member of the Big Four (1923-1933), one of Australia's greatest lyric male quartets, and as the Judge in the long-running quiz show *Cuckoo Court* (2SM, 1938-1948). He appeared on radio with the Big Four as early as 1925 and in the early 1930s performed as a solo artist. O'Keefe's move to fulltime radio occurred in 1935 when he joined 2SM. He nevertheless remained active on stage well into the 1950s.

Ordell, Tal:

Best known as a stage, screen and radio actor, Tal Ordell also contributed verse and short stories to the *Bulletin*, wrote at least one play, contributed many works for radio, and directed two films. One of his biggest successes as a radio writer was the long-running serial *Wattletown*. His association with variety was largely on the Tivoli circuit between 1921 and 1923. Ordell also appeared in community singing concert broadcasts, including one by 2BL (1 Feb. 1934).

Parkes, Harold:

See: George Edwards

Paterson, Jack:

After concluding his popular partnership with George Wallace (as Dinks and Oncus) in 1923, Dinks Paterson spent several years working in Britain with Trixie Ireland. They came home briefly in 1929 to play the Tivoli circuit before returning to Britain, where they became one of the earliest performers to work in the television medium. Paterson also worked in radio in both countries, either as a solo artist or with Ireland. The couple retired from the stage in Australia in the mid to late-1950s.

Pauncefort, Rita:

[aka **Rita Sauer**]



Melbourne-born stage, film, radio actress and comedienne Rita Pauncefort returned to Australia in 1921 after some ten years working in South Africa. Over the next four decades she established herself as one of the country's most versatile and enduring actresses and entertainers. She appeared in seven films between 1935 and 1959, and continued to work live on stage in drama, musical comedy and variety into the 1960s. The biggest success of her extensive radio career was as Elsie in the long-running radio partnership *Ada and Elsie* (opposite Dorothy Foster). Her radio work also included pantomime and revue.

Ada and Elsie
(Dorothy Foster and Rita Pauncefort)

Perrin, Frank:

The English actor/comedian came to Australia and worked for J.C. Williamson and the Fullers (notably with F. Gayle Wyer's Band Box Revue Co). In 1930 he became a radio producer at 4QG, Brisbane.

Phillips, Nat
(**Whirligigs**):

6FW (20 Sept. 1926 > Several items from the Whirligigs show at the Luxor Theatre, Perth by Westralian Farmers Ltd). Appeared with Stella Lamond on 2KY in December 1930.

Pitcher, Sam:
[aka Ernest Pitcher]

Ernest Pitcher came to Australia in the mid-1890s as Sam Wilson, a "plantation melodist," cornerman and "Negroistic comedian." Later known as the "the Big Mug," Pitcher developed a saxophone, concertina, banjo and comic stories act. His last known engagement was at the Embassy Theatre, Parramatta (New South Wales) in 1934 with the 2UE Minstrels. In 1932 he took part in the "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World" special, which was broadcast by 2FC on 25 February.

Pope, Charlie:

African-American comedian Charlie Pope first toured Australasia with Hicks-Sawyer Minstrels (1888-91). He later worked with fellow endman Irving Sayles in an act that became a Tivoli institution. After parting with Sayles in 1903 Pope worked as both a solo comedian and in partnership with others. His last known public performances were in 1928, the same year that he died (aged 60). Pope appeared on radio in the mid-1920s. His last known broadcast was on 3AR on 9 July 1927.

Pryde, Peggy:

Cockney music hall and pantomime star Peggy Pryde moved to Australia with her Melbourne-born husband in 1919 after an international career of more than 40 years - including at least three Australian tours. Although she retired from fulltime professional commitments in the early-1920s, Pryde continued to make stage and radio appearances on a semi-regular and later occasional basis well into the 1930s. She also appeared in several films. Her radio in Australia appears to have begun in 1929 and ended in 1939 - some four years before her death.

Quine, Grace:

Grace Quine has first been linked to the Australian variety industry as a member of J.C. Williamson's 1913/14 *Forty Thieves* company. Over the remainder of the decade she established herself as a coon singer and descriptive balladist while also developing into a light comedienne. She appeared regularly on radio between 1927 and 1939 and was still performing on stage in the early 1940s.



Radio Pictorial of Australia, 1937

Ralston, Edna:

Edna and Mascotte Ralston, daughters of actor John Ralston, worked for J.C. Williamson's during the 1920s and also appeared on radio and on the variety stage. When Mascotte moved to the USA in 1928 Edna remained to work on the Tivoli circuit and tour with Clem Dawe (Midnight Frolics) and the Jim Gerald. She then scaled back her career, appearing primarily on radio (1935-38) and in amateur theatre.

Ralston, Mascotte:

One Australia's most successful Hollywood actresses of the 1930s and early 1940s, Mascotte Ralston and her sister Edna both secured employment with J.C. Williamson's in the 1920s and worked together and individually on radio and in variety (with Mascotte specialising in ukulele-playing). Mascotte married American drummer and band leader Philip Harris in 1927 and left for the USA the following year. Her film career (as Marcia Ralston) began in 1933.

Ranger, Florrie:

2BL (21 Sept. 1934 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").

Ranger, Stella:

2FC (25 Feb. 1932 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World." • 2BL (21 Sept. 1934 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").

Ray, Bert:

As co-partner with Jack O'Donnell Bert Ray help run one of the country's most popular travelling pantomime and musical comedy companies of the 1920s and 1930s (and also wrote much of the company's material). He appeared on radio, often in comedy sketches, from the late-1920s through until at least the mid to late-1930s, and continued to work professionally as a comedian until the early 1950s.

Raynor, Molly:

Appeared on radio regularly between 1925 and late-1927 with the Cheer-Oh Girls.

Reddy, Max:

Appeared with Stella Lamond in the late 1930s (as "the two nitwits").

Reeve, Ada:

Considered one of the biggest stars of late nineteenth and early twentieth century international variety and musical comedy, Ada Reeve also had an extensive association with Australia. She came to the country professionally no less than six times between 1897 and 1929, and from 1929 to 1935 lived and worked here. In addition to her work in musical comedy, vaudeville, revue, and pantomime she also worked in comedy drama, cabaret, films and radio.

Reeve, Goodie:

The daughter of Bert Gilbert and Ada Reeve, Goodie Reeve established herself as a British-based musical comedy/revue artist during the mid-1910s. She came to Australia in 1917 as one of the stars of Tivoli circuit's production of *The Better Ole*, and in 1926 began her 46 year career in radio, first with **2FC**, then **2GB** and later with **2CH**. Known in later years as "Auntie Goodie" she maintained a high public profile well into the 1960s.

Rene, Roy:

One of Australia's greatest ever larrikin comedians, Roy Rene is best remembered for his early career partnership with Nat Phillips as "Stiffy and Mo" (1916-1928) He began his extraordinarily successful radio career in 1940 with *The Misadventures of Mo* (with his wife, Sadie Gale) and had his greatest radio success with the *McCackie Mansion* series (1947-1950).



Rochelle, Amy:

Amy Rochelle was one of Harry Clay's big stars during the mid-1910s and afterwards spent some 10 years on the Fullers' circuit - notably as a pantomime principal boy and with Nat Phillips' Stiffy and Mo Revue Company. Rochelle continued performing into the 1950s, appearing on radio as a singer and actor. In the 1950s, for example, she was a cast member of the comedy series *My Friend Irma*.

Rockley, Wal:

2FC (25 Feb. 1932 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World." • **2BL** (21 Sept. 1934 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").

Romaine, Billy:

Billy Romaine came to Australia in 1912 and in 1918 he toured Australia's first jazz band for the Fullers. He was later associated with several Sydney dance venues, as well as the Tivoli Theatre, Brisbane, and the Empire Palais, Newcastle. His career in Australia, which continued until at least 1948, included many radio broadcasts.

- Ross, Harry [1]:** Singer/actor Harry Ross worked for J.C. Williamson's in the early 1910s and later toured with several high profile variety companies. After returning home from active service in WWI re-established himself as a popular entertainer with the Fullers. Ross was also often heard on radio during the 1920s and 1930s.
- Rossiter, Madeline:** British singer/entertainer Madeline Rossiter's was largely associated with Australia between 1914 and 1925, and during this time performed with Sydney James' Royal Strollers, Town Topics, Famous Diggers, Tivoli Frolics and the English Pierrots. Her only confirmed radio broadcast (to date) was through **2FC**, Sydney on 31 August 1925 when she gave her impressions of the East (courtesy of the Tivoli Theatre).
- Rox, Joe:** Comedian Joe Rox began his career in the late-1890s and continued entertaining Australasian audiences through until at least the mid to late-1940, at some stages touring his own companies. His radio appearances occurred through the 1930s and up until WWII when he was heavily involved in entertaining troops in Brisbane.
- Rudder, Dorothy:** Possibly the first soprano to perform on radio in Australia (during a trial broadcast in Sydney in mid-1923), Dorothy Rudder made regular appearance throughout the 1920s and early to mid-1930s.
- Scales, Harry:** Harry Scales career involved a number employment opportunities including performer (notably with Edward Branscombe's Dandies), stage manager, business representative, troupe owner/manager, and theatre lessee. During the 1920s and 1930s he was a representative for the Universal Film Manufacturing Company. Based in Melbourne, he also worked occasionally as an entertainer on stage and on radio.
- Scanlon, Terry:** Terry Scanlon performed with Young Australia League from age 13 and spent most of the 1930s developing his comedic skills touring Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria. He eventually made his Tivoli circuit debut in the 1940s. Scanlon later spent many years working overseas. His first known radio appearance was on **6IX**, Perth, in 1934.
- Scott, Bebe:** After establishing herself in vaudeville with her half-brother George Wallace and his revusical, Bebe Scott [right] worked for the Australian Broadcasting Commission (**ABC**) from the early-1930s to at least the early-1950s. Her first established appearance (to date) was on **2FC** (27 Apr. 1932). Scott's radio career included starring in *The Cap and Bebe Show* for **4QG** (1933-38) and later in *Out of the Bag*. She worked largely in drama from the early to mid-1940s onwards.
- 
- Bebe Scott**
Richard Lane. *Golden Age of Australian Radio Drama Vol 2* (2000), 19.
- Shand, Ron:** Best known to Australians in the 1970s as Herb Evans in *No 96*. Ron Shand started out in the circus at 14 and went on to carve out a long career in variety (as "Wacko" Shand). He and his second wife Letty Crayden appeared in musical comedy and revue throughout Australia during the 1930s and 1940s and later tuned to legitimate theatre and television. Shand is recorded as working on radio as early as in 1927 and as 1946 (when he gave a talk on **3AR**, Melbourne in mid-August).
- Shaw, Gladys:** Gladys Shaw performed with her family's variety troupe as a child and got her first big break as a solo artist with the Royal Strollers [2] in 1919 (along with her brother Keith Connolly). Shaw's career, which continued up until the 1950s saw her associated with companies and troupes like Fullers' Theatres, Stiffy and Mo, Keith's Syncopating Jesters (later Gladys Shaw's Syncopating Jesters), Connors and Paul's League of Notions, Coles Varieties, and Sorlie's travelling theatre. She also occasionally appeared on radio, either as a solo act or with some of the companies she was with at the time.

- Shipp, Les:** The son of minstrel performers Edwin and Minnie Shipp, Les Shipp spent more than six decades involved in entertainment industry, initially building a reputation as a solo singer/dancer, then in duos like Shipp and Gaffney and Shipp and Little. He later managed troupes, worked as a producer, and in the 1930s and 1940s established himself as a regional entrepreneur in the Illawarra and Hunter Valley regions. Shipp was active in radio as both performer and compère between 1926 and the mid-1940s, and continued performing up until at least 1954.
- Slavin & Thompson:**
[Art Slavin & Lilly Thompson] Art Slavin and Lily Thompson worked for most of the leading variety organisations, including Harry Rickards and the Tivoli circuit, from 1910 up until at the 1940s. Between 1915 and the early-1920s, however, they were largely associated with Harry Clay. The couple, who continued working up until the early-1940s, also appeared on radio during the 1930s as studio comedy sketch artists and in community singing broadcasts.
- Smart Set Diggers:** Broadcasters Ltd (2BL), Sydney (13 Jan. and 9 Mar. 1926).
- Smith, Ethel:** 2FC (25 Feb. 1932 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World" • 2BL (21 Sept. 1934 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").
- Smith, Linn:** Linn Smith accompanied singer/songwriter Jack Wells on the Tivoli circuit in 1921, and toured his own jazz band between 1923 and 1929, while also working in vaudeville as a solo piano act and in partnership with other performers. He appeared regularly on radio as a novelty pianist/accompanist and in revues (both radio and stage) throughout the 1930s, and was still working as a jazz musician in 1950.
- Smith, Phil:** English comedian Phil Smith made his Australian debut in J.C. Williamson's *The Prince of Luxemburg* in 1913 and was still working professionally in the country in the 1940s. His variety career included long-term engagements on the Tivoli and Fullers circuits, at least four film roles (1930s) and many radio performances.
- Spry & Monti:** 2FC (25 Feb. 1932 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").
- Stanley, Kitty:**
[aka Madge Bracey] Kitty Stanley (as Madge Bracey) joined the chorus of the German Grand Opera Company at age 14 and made her variety debut at the People's Concerts, Melbourne, in 1901. Some two years after marrying comedian George Pagden in 1902 she adopted her stage name. Pagden and were well-known throughout Australasia as vaudeville artists and as revusical pioneers. Although she retired from full-time performing in the late-1920s Stanley continued to make radio appearances into the 1950s.
- Stanley, Ted:** Ted Stanley began his show business career in the late-1890s and over the next forty years worked for most of the leading variety managers and firms both a solo comedian and in several high profile partnerships. He was also popular on radio, finding particular success as a children's entertainer for 2CH (and Anthony Hordern's, Sydney) in the late-1930s and early 1940s.
- St Clair, Hector:** Hector St Clair came to Australia in 1920 under contract to J.C. Williamson's and remained until his death in 1932. A droll-type comedian whose act featured a battered old violin and the catch-phrase "isn't it awful," he toured Australasia as a vaudeville, revue and musical comedy comedian, and at times also operated his own troupes. St Clair was also cast in the 1923 film, *Prehistoric Hayseeds* and appeared on radio.



Dad and Dave from Snake Gully
(1937-1953)

Left: Eric Scott, Tom Farley, Lou Vernon and John Saul.

Right: Hope Bultor (Mum), Ethel Gabriel (Mrs Bill Smith) and Dorothy Whiteley (Rita Ramsey)

Images courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive



Stern, Sam: American-born Hebrew comedian and dialect singer, songwriter, actor Sam Stern came to Australia in 1921 for the Fullers and stayed. He began working in radio from 1925 and was heard over the airwaves up until at least 1952. His last known stage appearances were as late as 1956. Stern also made a number of sound recordings.

Stiffy & Mo:
[aka Nat Phillips & Roy Rene]
Stiffy and Mo's association with Australian radio was brief. Although their 18-month breakup (1925-1927) and time in New Zealand in 1928 eroded much of the time available, their only known broadcasts (to date) were in May and June 1928. The paucity of appearances is all the more surprising because during their final years together (1927-28), their company also played extended engagements in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Newcastle and Adelaide. See for example **5KA** (14 May and 15 June 1928 - "Eucalyptus Baby," "Tit Bits" and "The Sailors").

Stirling, Len: Appeared in live broadcasts in 1933 (see for example **2BL** 23 Feb.).

Stirling, Nell:
[aka Nell Malmgron]
Nell Malmgron joined Jim Gerald's company as a soubrette in 1929 and the followed year secured an engagement with George Wallace. By 1931 she was partnering George Edwards on stage and in radio sketches. Following the founding of the George Edwards Players in 1933 Stirling went on to play almost every lead female role in the company's radio series for more than a decade.

Tauchert, Arthur: Best remembered today as the star of the classic Australian silent movie, *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919), Arthur Tauchert's career as an entertainer began in the early 1900s as a vaudeville comedian. Over the next two decades he was associated with most of the leading managements firms of that era and appeared in eleven more films. Tauchert continued to perform on the vaudeville stage up until his death. His radio appearances during the late-1920s and early-1930s typically recitations from *The Sentimental Bloke* and/or comic singing.

Thomas, Dan: Dan Thomas carved out a successful career in Britain as a Hebrew comedian and pantomime dame. He toured Australia (1914-17) then spent time in South Africa. He returned to Australia in 1922 for George Marlow in 1922 and remained. In the 1930s he appeared in three of George Wallace's films and continued to work in Australian variety theatre and on radio up until at least 1954. Thomas first appeared on radio in 1927. He continued to find work in the medium into the 1940s.

Dan Thomas
National Library of Australia



Thompson, Jock: Jock Thompson came to Australian in 1910 and established himself in Brisbane as both a singer and concert promoter. During his time overseas with the Australian Imperial Forces (A.I.F.) he served in both the infantry and in a concert party, and after the war was a prominent member of Smart Set Diggers. Thompson continued performing professionally in both Australia and Great Britain well into the 1940s, with his Australian engagements also including radio broadcasts.

Thompson, Lyla: Lyla Thompson began her career as a child artist in the early 1890s and went on to establish herself as one of Australia's hardest working variety performers. She worked almost continuously up until the late-1940s. In 1940 she was one of 12 veteran vaudevillians to appear in "50 Years of Variety," a special event staged at the Sydney Tivoli. The show was also broadcast live by the **ABC**.

Tier, Athol: Comedian Athol Tier got his big break with Edward Branscombe's Dandies and by 1915 was working the Tivoli circuit. Four years later he featured in the classic silent movie *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919). After spending several years touring Britain and US vaudeville circuits Tier returned to Australia in 1930. From 1934 he became best known as a radio comedian through shows like *Mrs 'Arris and Mrs 'Iggs* and *How the Other Half Lives*.

Tom Katz & His Saxophone Band:

Tom Katz and His Saxophone Band was formed by Sam Babicci in late-1927 primarily as a vaudeville act. After almost a decade touring various Australasian variety circuits and appearing on numerous radio broadcasts Babicci took the band to Great Britain.

Tutty, Ted:

Comedian Ted Tutty worked for every major variety organisation in Australia between 1905 and the mid to late-1920s, but was best known for his twenty-odd years with Harry Clay. He worked both as a solo comedian and in several partnerships (including his wife Kate) and occasionally toured his own companies. Surprisingly Tutty's only known radio appearances were in the early 1940s when he performed in several "from the past" stage shows (that were also broadcast live) and appeared as a guest celebrity on John Dunne's weekly "Fifty and Over" show (2SM, Sydney).

Tyrell, Ned
[see [The Tyrells](#)]

Edward "Ned" Tyrell worked a dance and comedy music act with his sister Maisie from the early-1910s that eventually led to them working overseas for many years. Following Maisie's death (ca. 1920), Ned returned to Australia and went on to carve out a career as one of the country's pioneering jazz musicians (banjo) and as a band leader. He and his various bands and orchestras were heard on radio from 1928 (the Radi-o-Aces) through until at least 1937.

Valli, Joe:

Joe Valli toured Australia in 1916 and 1917 then returned to the Australasian region in 1921 to join the New Zealand Famous Diggers. Two years later he and Pat Hanna established their Chic and Joe partnership with the Australian Famous Diggers. Over the three decades Valli cemented his position as one of Australia's leading stage, radio and film comedians. His 16 film credits included Hanna's *Diggers* (1931) and *Diggers in Blighty* (1933). Valli's extensive radio career started in Brisbane in 1925 and continued through until the early 1940s.

Vaude, Charlie:

Regarded as one of Australia's greatest vaudeville comedians Charlie Vaude's career after Vaude and Verne was primarily associated with radio, and in particular 3DB, Melbourne. He and Renn Miller he provided light entertainment and advertising material for the station's coverage of the 1930, 1934 and 1938 Ashes series. The pair also recorded a number of songs and several patter-style comedy pieces. Vaude was also associated 3DB's Smile Away Club, featured in its *C. and G. Minstrel Show*, hosted community singing and tours of country towns, acted as the rat-bag professor of Bonehead College, become a leading figure in the station's charity events, and played an influential role in helping develop the careers of a number of variety and radio performers.

Vascoe, Bert:
[aka [Sam Vascoe](#)]

Bert Vascoe worked as band leader/music director for Fullers revue companies led by George "Hermie" Ward, Eric Masters and Frank O'Brien during the late-1920s. While with O'Brien's London Company in Adelaide in late-October 1928, however, he inexplicably changed his first name to Sam. He soon afterwards made his first-known appearance as a vaudeville act (with the Ten Musical Loonies). He performed on Australian radio in 1929 and 1930 (as trombonist). His movements after 1933 are currently unknown.

Vaude & Verne:

One of Australia's most successful patter acts, Vaude and Verne worked the Australasia vaudeville circuits for 21 years (1908-1929), presenting original comic material that relied heavily on current subjects and personalities. The pair settled for some time in Rockhampton (Queensland) in the mid to late-1920s. Despite being so far from the major Australia centres they were able to maintain an interstate presence through radio broadcast during the years 1927 and 1928. The partnership ended in either late-1929 or early-1930 when Vaude moved to Melbourne to begin a fulltime radio career.

Verne, Priscilla:

Melbourne-born soubrette Priscilla Verne and her first husband Charles Hugo toured his Buffalo Minstrels for ten years from 1882. After their divorce she spent 15 years overseas as a solo artist before teaming up with Tommy Armstrong in 1909. Verne retired from the stage in 1912 but returned in 1940 to appear with other Veteran's of Variety (Tivoli Theatre, Sydney). The ABC's broadcast of one of the shows is believed to have been her first and only radio appearance. Verne's return to the stage lasted up until at least 1943.

Vernon, Lou:

Lou Vernon's versatility and durability as an entertainer is demonstrated by a career spanning seven decades. He started out as an amateur baritone in Brisbane and by the late-1910s had begun to establish himself in vaudeville. The experience he gained in pantomimes, revusicals and revues allowed him to eventually broaden his career into legitimate theatre (playing everything from musicals to Shakespeare), film, radio and television. During the 1940s he worked in radio with George Edwards and became a major star through his lead role in the series *Doctor Mac*. He was also a cast member of *Blue Hills*. Vernon was still working as late as 1967.

Vockler, Lily:

Born in 1883 Lily Vockler likely started out as an amateur singer in Melbourne while in her late-teens. Although her career is almost entirely linked to Ern Delavale's after they married in 1908, it wasn't until 1920 that the couple began working as Delavale and Vockler on a permanent basis. They made their first radio appearance in the mid-1930s. Their last known broadcast was live from the Melbourne Town Hall in 1952.



Examiner (Launceston) 1924-1930

Wallace, George:

Considered one of Australia's greatest comedians, and renowned for his extraordinary versatility, George Wallace's career highlights included the Dinks and Oncus partnership (with Jack Paterson), touring Australasia for the Fullers with his own revusical company, starring or featuring in six full-length films, and establishing himself as a hugely popular radio comedian. His radio career began in 1942 with the half-hour *George Wallace Programme*. He found greater success in 1949 with the *George Wallace Road Show (Macquarie Network)*. That series was based around the character "Wallaby" Wallace, from Bullamakanka. His other radio shows included *George Wallace Barn Dance* (1949) and the *George Wallace Show* (1950-53).

Ward, George:

George Ward came to Australia with Charles L. Sherman in 1920 and eventually found much popularity with his alter-ego, "Hermie Shultz" (Fullers American Revue Co). He later toured his own company (1925-28), worked as headliner with The Merry-makers of 1929, The Co-optimists (1929), and the Frivolities of 1932 among others, and worked in musical comedy for J.C. Williamson's. Ward's radio career began as community concert comedian in the late 1920s. He later developed the character "Uncle Hermie" for the ABC in Sydney before moving to Hobart where he worked for 7HO up until his death in 1944.

Warne, Bert:

Dave Warne's first known Australian engagements were in 1894. After working popular sketch acts with Alice Davenport (1895-1904) and Lily Octavia (1904-12), he worked largely as a solo vaudeville comedian. His later involvement in the theatre included serving as secretary of the Green Room Club and occasional work in legitimate theatre. Warne also appeared regularly on radio from the late-1920s through until at least the early 1940s.

Warrington, Ed:

Comedian, writer, caricaturist and director Ed Warrington was a key member of Famous Diggers during the early 1920s. Largely associated with Western Australian entertainment from 1924 onwards, he operated his own troupes, appeared regularly on radio and in the early 1930s reunited with Pat Hanna's in the latter's two *Diggers* films. Warrington was working well into the 1940s. His earliest known radio appearance was a live cross from Perth's Luxor Theatre by 6WF, which broadcast the first half of his revue company's show on 28 January 1928. The following year he produced radio revues with Charles Lawrence for 2BL (Sydney) that were broadcast around the country on relay.

Warton, Les:

During more than four decades on the Australasian stage Les Warton established himself as a top flight minstrel and vaudeville comedian. Warton's earliest known radio broadcast was in July 1932 when he took part in a Grand Minstrel Show on **2FC** (billed as a "coon dialect comedian). In 1934 he took part in another retrospective broadcast, "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World" (**2BL** 21 Sept.), and thereafter continued to perform in revue and variety programmes up until shortly before his death in 1943. His later radio career also saw him cast in radio dramas, including *The Mutiny on the Bounty* (1941).

Webber, W. Hamilton:



W. Hamilton Webber
Advertiser (Adelaide) 7 Dec.

Hamilton Webber's early professional career saw him compose original incidental music and songs for various Fullers productions during the 1910s and 1920. In mid-1929 he became conductor of the Melbourne's State Theatre orchestra. Soon afterwards his ensemble began regular broadcast from 3LO, presenting selections that ranged from classical to jazz. He continued his association with radio throughout the 1930s, later moving to Sydney where he directed the orchestra for that city's State Theatre. The 1930s also saw contribute scores for several films. In 1940 Greater Union enticed him to return to Melbourne to take charge of a fully augmented orchestra at the State Theatre.



Evening News (Sydney) 1924

Weichard, Lou:

Louis Edward Weichard Jnr initially established himself in Melbourne music circles in the 1880s. He moved to Western Australia in the late-1890s to take up opportunities there but by 1909 was back in Melbourne conducting a military orchestra. He later worked as music director for William Anderson and Allan Wilkie (1920), and between 1919 and the mid to late-1920s was active as both entrepreneur and music director, largely in connection with the St Kilda area. Weichard's only known radio broadcast was from 3LO (Melbourne) on 21 November 1925, with the Sonora Trio (which included Reg Weichard on flute. **NB:** Weichard's son-in-law was Jack O'Hagan [above]

Welch, George:

2FC (25 Feb. 1932 > "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World").

Whaite, Fred:

During his early career Fred Whaite (son of scenic artist Harry Whaite) was employed by Edward Branscombe (1915-16), John N. McCallum (1919-1922) and the Fullers (1917-18, 1923-29). He began his long radio career in Sydney in 1929 working as an arranger for the Australian Broadcasting Company, and transferred across to the Australian Broadcasting Commission (**ABC**) when it was established in 1932. Whaite remained with the Commission until his retirement in 1962. During that time he was employed in a variety of positions. He also wrote a number of radio works, including *The Tin Soldier* (1931 musical comedy) and *Waratah* (1931 pantomime).

Wheeler, Charles:

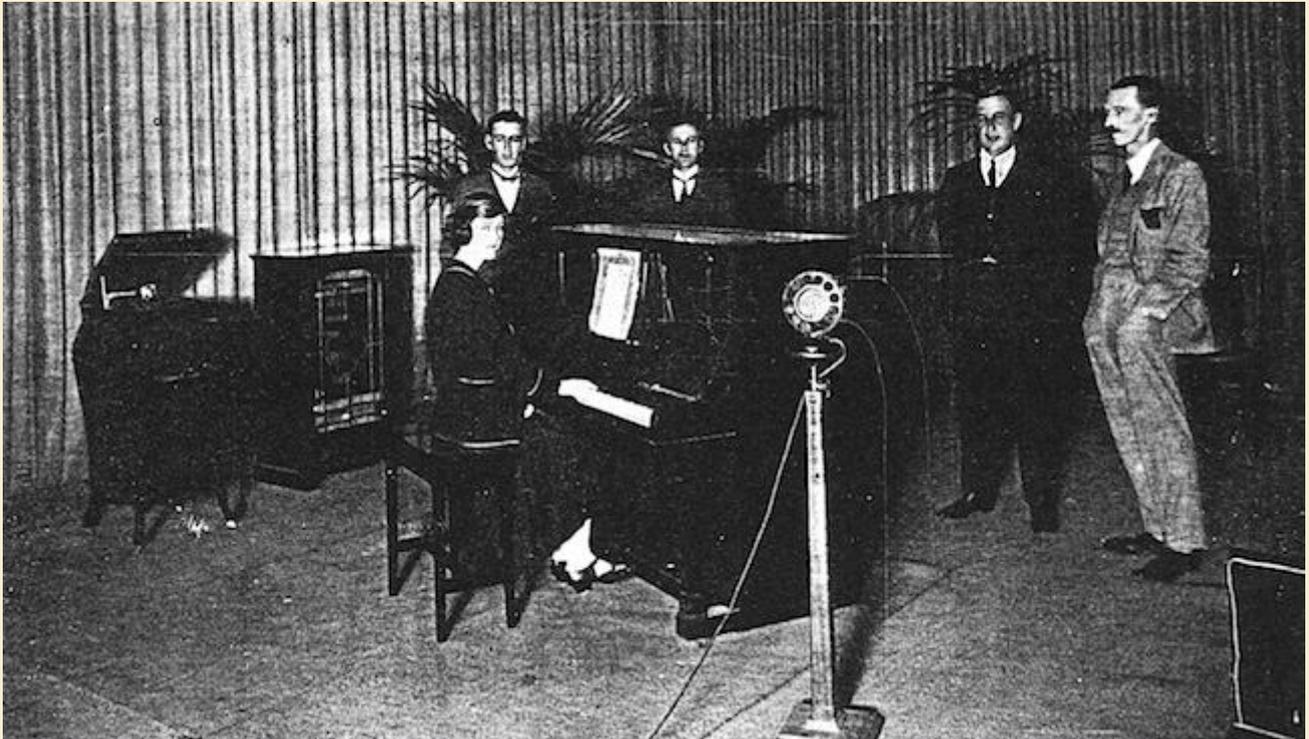
Performed with the "Veterans of the Minstrels and Variety World" (**2FC** 25 Feb. 1932).

Whelan, Ronald:

The son of comedian Albert Whelan, Ronald Whelan worked as an entertainer/comedian and film actor in Britain until 1933 (apart from a brief period in Australia in the early 1920s). Between 1936 and the late 1950s he was largely involved in Australian film production (as assistant director, actor and unit manager), while also appearing in radio as an actor. He moved to the USA in the early-1960s to work in television.

Zoli, Charles:

London comedian (and one-time roller skating dancer), Charles Zoli came to Australia in 1910 and went on to carve out a career that lasted some four decades. During that time he worked in vaudeville (notably as a "dago" character comedian), revues and revusicals for Fullers' Theatres, operated his own troupes and spent almost 20 years with J.C. Williamsons. Zoli appeared in at least four films, and became well-known on radio as a comedian and character actor. His earliest known radio appearance was in an experimental broadcast from a theatre in Newcastle, New South Wales in January 1924. Among the numerous productions he appeared in over the next 25 or more years was Dan Agar's comedy series *Mrs 'Obbs*. Zoli played Louie.



In 1924, Westralian Farmers Co-operative Limited (Wesfarmers) began operating radio station 6WF from the top floor of the company's Wellington Street building. The floor was divided into two studios, the smaller used for news broadcasting, the larger for music and entertainment. The above photo shows the station's first entertainment space.

Image source: Wesfarmers. Information courtesy of Richard Rennie. "[The 6WF Story](#)." WA TV History.

This variety theatre and radio research list was first published in 2011 using information compiled during the course of Dr Clay Djubal's MA and Ph D candidature at the University of Queensland (1997-2005), and through private research between 2005 and 2011.

Dr Djubal also acknowledges the project headed by Prof Tom O'Regan (University of Queensland) which aims to investigate the intermedial relationships existing between the Australian theatre, radio, film, and television industries. Dr Djubal was employed by Professor O'Regan on a casual basis from March to late-October 2016, then full-time until early-January 2017 to research these links between the early-1930s to early-1960s. Information relating to Australian-written works and series was published in AustLit: The Resource for Australian Literature. Some additional information relating to radio broadcasts of variety programmes and music theatre shows between 1924 and 1939 is included in this list.

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