(1890-1967) English actress, comedienne, entertainer, singer.

The daughter animal trainer Henry Abdy, Marie La Varre made her stage debut in England at age 10 with her mother, Madame Marvelle and performing cockatoos. After many years in America appearing in both musical theatre and vaudeville she came to Australia in 1919 to appear in Tivoli musicals and revue and remained. Although largely associated with J.C. Williamson's as a musical comedy actress during her long Australian career, La Varre also worked pantomime, vaudeville revue, on radio, and in film. Her revue and variety work included engagements with the Fullers, Tivoli circuit, Clem Dawe, and Ike Delavale. Her most enduring musical comedy role was in J.C. Williamson's Annie Get Your Gun (1947-1952), and her last, the Firm's White Horse Inn (1953).

See also: Harry Abdy • Henry Abdy • F.F.F. (1920)

La Varre's stage surname reportedly comes from the French side of her family.\(^1\) Her brother was prominent Australian-based animal trainer and occasional film actor, Harry Abdy. He was best known for touring Abdy's Animal Circus and Abdy's Boxing Kangaroos.

A number of newspaper reports published during La Varre's career, and several contemporary sources, record that La Varre's father was French and her mother English. However, a report of Abdy's death in the Muswellbrook Chronicle records that he was "a pure-bred Cockney."\(^2\) La Varre's place of birth has also been reported as being either France or England.\(^3\) In an interview published in Perth's Sunday Mail in 1951, La Varre says she was born in England.\(^4\) The Sunday Times (Sydney), which records that she was born in France to English parents, notes too that she spent much of her life prior to coming to Australia in the USA (14 May 1922, 10) [see below]

La Varre made her principal boy debut at Theatre Royal, Sydney, in J.C. Williamson's Cinderella (Dec. 1922). Her Australian vaudeville debut, presenting a song and costume act, was at the Fullers' Theatre, Sydney in April 1923. She also undertook the principal boy role in the Fullers' 1923 panto Red Riding Hood before returning to musical comedy.

During the early 1930s La Varre, a noted cook, operated her own restaurant in the Darlinghurst/King's Cross area of Sydney.

La Varre was one of three performers to remain members of the Australian Annie Get Your Gun production between 1947 and 1952. The others were Evie Hayes and Charles Crawford (Age 14 July 1952, 2).

Film Credits incl.

1917: The Crimson Dove (as Faro Kate) • The Divorce Game (as Fifi Dupet)
1920: The Breaking of the Drought (as Olive Lorette)
1934: A Ticket in Tatts
1937: Captain's Orders (as Violet Potts)
1942: A Yank in Australia (as Dolly)

J.C. Williamson's promo shot from Annie Get Your Gun.
National Library of Australia.

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1 \"Marie La Varre: With J. C. Williamson.\" Cairns Post (Qld) 31 July 1936, 3.
3 Frank Van Straten, for example, records her birthplace as France (see "The Riddle of FFF. A Forgotten Australian Musical." Australasian Music Research 6 (2002), 105-119.
4 \"Taking Exception She Knocked the Hero Cold." Sunday Times (Perth) 7 May 1950, Sunday Times Magazine, 3.
AusStage
(sighted 28/10/2015)
https://www.ausstage.edu.au/pages/contributor/233260

Annie Get Your Gun, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 5 December 1952
Annie Get Your Gun, His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, VIC, 5 July 1952
Ladies Night in a Turkish Bath, Majestic Theatre, Adelaide, SA, 10 November 1950
Annie Get Your Gun, Theatre Royal, Adelaide, SA, 25 May 1950
Annie Get Your Gun, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 27 August 1948
Annie Get Your Gun, Theatre Royal, Adelaide, SA, 15 May 1948
Annie Get Your Gun, His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, VIC, 19 July 1947
Kathina, His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, VIC, 5 February 1944
The Girl Friend, His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, VIC, 21 August 1943
The Girl Friend, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 1842
Wildflower, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 26 August 1939
Wildflower, His Majesty's Theatre, Brisbane, QLD, 12 August 1939
High Jinks, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 18 May 1935
Roberta, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 18 March 1935
Blue Mountain Melody, His Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, VIC, 3 November 1834
Blue Mountain Melody, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 15 September 1934
The Quaker Girl, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 16 September 1933
Our Miss Gibbs, Theatre Royal, Melbourne, VIC, 15 May 1933
Many waters, Criterion Theatre, Sydney, NSW, 15 August 1931
Wildflower, Her Majesty's Theatre (1887-1893), Sydney, NSW, 29 November 1924
The Cousin from Nowhere, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 27 September 1924
Cinderella, Theatre Royal (1875-1972), Sydney, NSW, 23 December 1922
Nightie Night, Palace Theatre, Sydney, NSW, 16 April 1921
The Lilac Domino, Criterion Theatre, Sydney, NSW, 9 April 1921
F F F: an Australian Mystery Musical Comedy, The King's Theatre, Melbourne, VIC, 9 October 1920
The Officers' Mess, Prince of Wales Theatre, Adelaide, SA, 11 September 1920
F F F: an Australian Mystery Musical Comedy, Prince of Wales Theatre, Adelaide, SA, 28 August 1920

Green Room Dec. 1924, front cover.
Marie La Varre

Washington Library digital collections

Publicity photo from the J.C. Williamson's production *Let's Face It* (1943).
National Library of Australia.

“The sparkling comedienne now appearing with Dorothy Brunton in *Mr Battling Butler* at New Princess Theatre, Melbourne.”
*Table Talk* (Melbourne) 5 June 1924, 17.
1914

New York City (USA)

Opened at the 44th Street Theatre, New York, on 29th October 1914.

**THE LILAC DOMINO**

Characters (in order of appearance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CORNELIUS CLEVEDEN (an American Multi-Millionaire)</td>
<td>John DeLacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEONIE FORDE (Georgine's Friend)</td>
<td>Moya Chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLISTON DEYN (Cleveden's Nephew)</td>
<td>William Valentine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROSPER WOODHOUSE (an American Friend of Andre)</td>
<td>George Gee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORMANI CALMAIN (a Friend of Everybody)</td>
<td>Hugh Strone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAXIMILAN (a Water)</td>
<td>Vincent White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE HON. ANDRÉ DAUBIGNY (a Young Englishman seeing U.S.A.)</td>
<td>Jamieson Dodds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARABANA (Conductor of Spanish Gypsy Orchestra)</td>
<td>Gaston Mervale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEORGINE (Cleveden's Daughter)</td>
<td>René Macowell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE BARONESSE DE VILLIERS (Social Companion to Georgine)</td>
<td>Marie La Varre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARKER (one of Cleveden's Butlers)</td>
<td>Jack Dunn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://math.boisestate.edu/GaS//colins_site/castlists/lilacdomino.html

1916

Chicago (USA)

"Town Topics," an elaborately staged review, dealing in a satirical vein with the "peace ship" venture, found an enthusiastic audience awaiting it at the Chicago Theatre last night. Trixie Firganza, Bert Leslie, Wellington Cross, Lois Josephine, Lew Hearn, Bonita, Marie La Varre, Lillian Herlein, Artie Mehlenger and Pete Page constitute the galaxy of stars interpreting the book, lyrics and music by the immortal Smiths, Thomas J. Gray and Harold Oriob. If this exceptional crew of headliners doesn't keep them going to the Chicago regularly there's something wrong with human nature.


http://idnc.library.illinois.edu/cgi-bin/illinois?a=d&d=NYC19160311.2.124#

1918

**KANSAS CITY.**

BY HAROLD A. LOKMANN.

SHUBERT (John B. Fittpatrick, mgr.).—"The Gypsy Trail," with Chicago cast, including Elsie Mackay, Ott Kurer, Allan Dinehart, Zettie Tilsbury, William Riley Hatch. Warmly Received. Patronage excellent.


GARDEN (W. A. Quigley, mgr.).—First half: "Cleopatra"; second half, Harry Lauder. EMPRESS (J. C. Donley, mgr.).—"Court Room Girls," "A Business Proposal," Burns and Lynn, Jackson and Walsh, Marie La Varre, Hill and Ackerman.

*Variety* (USA) 22 Mar. 1918, 38.

http://fultonhistory.com/Newspaper%2015/Variety/Variety%201918/Variety%201918%20-%200257.pdf
BERT CLARK,
FAMOUS COMEDIAN

Talks of Plague, Quarantine, Plays, and Taste, and is Glad to be Here.

Bert Clark, famous comedian and famous producer, stepped ashore from the Niagara yesterday morning, and removed himself uptown with a pile of baggage, a worried eye, and a wife and baby who don't act. Happily he says, "they don't act; a chap has something still to live for."

"Among the rest of us on the Niagara is Miss Marie La Varre. It is her first trip to Australia, although it happens that a lot of her folks are here. Another strange thing: I only saw her once on the stage. It was in a Schubert production at the big desert of a Winter Garden in New York. She impressed me with her extraordinary versatility and her human grip, so that when we met on the Niagara, and I found that I was to be associated with her on the McIntosh circuit, I was glad. The human grip counts for so much."

Sunday Times (Sydney) 12 Jan. 1919, 2.

TIVOLI MOVEMENTS

Last Nights of Everybody’s Doing It; My Lady Frayle on Saturday Next.

A holiday matinee of the second edition of Everybody’s Doing It will be given at the Tivoli Theatre to-morrow afternoon. On Saturday the smart revue entered on the last week of its season here, and a farewell matinee is announced for Wednesday next. Miss Goodie Reeve, who has made such a big impression in the revue, is now varying her impressions of her mother singing popular songs.

Saturday next, commencing at a matinee, Sydney will see musical comedy at the Tivoli. The piece chosen for the departure is My Lady Frayle, a show noted for its sparkle. It was first produced at the London Shaftesbury under Mr. Robert Courtnedge’s direction, where it put up a record run. A newly-organised musical comedy company will interpret the piece.

The long cast includes Miss Vera Pearce, Miss Bert Clark, Mr. Claude Pienen, Miss Goodie Reeve, Miss Celia Gihon, Mr. Kennedy Allan, Mr. Hugh Brunel, Miss Gwen Burrough and Miss Marie La Varre. The last named is an American beauty actress, and makes her Australian debut. Mr. Bert Clarke, whose skill at producing plays as easily as he produces laughter on the stage, is known from one end of England to the other, in staging the show.

Sunday Times (Sydney) 26 Jan. 1919, 14.

HUGH D. McINTOSH'S
ATTRACTIONS AT THE TIVOLI

The Musical Play Supreme
FOR FASCINATING FUN
FOR MELODIOUS MUSIC

The Officers' Mess

Two Distinct and Different Attractions

Sunday Times (Sydney) 7 Sept. 1919, 23.
Miss Marie la Varre is by this time an established favorite in Australia (say the "Referee"). She came under contract of three months to the Tivoli Theatres last January, and she is still here and likely to stay. She has a very dashing style, a very attractive appearance, a very magnetic personality, and with all that a wonderful gift of broad and natural humor. She comes of a circus family, and saw much work in the ring from her childhood, until she blossomed into theatrical work some few years ago. Off the stage she is known to her friends as a keen sport and a good fellow. "I like sport, and learned in my old circus days to love horses. I have always found that people who have much to do with horses in an intimate and understanding way are good people. Yes, that applies to racing people too. There are a few crooks in every path of life, but racing people as a class are as straight as any, and far straighter than most. And they have a way of staying kids after they're grown, which is a very good thing for them. I think it's a terrible mistake to get old before you have to. I am a Presbyterian by religion, but I have friends who are Bimetallists and High Thinkers and Low Comedians, and I'm not narrow about it. I love Australians because they'll let you be whatever you want to be, so long as you follow your conscience and don't break other folks' windows." [Marie is altogether too flattering to Australians. There are too many sectarian bigots and religious honeylets and fanatics in the country for such to be the case.]

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**MARIE LA VARRE’S PUNCH.**

Of all the comedennes who have visited Australia of recent years, none has won the popularity of Marie la Varre. This clever performer came to Australia early last year, and made her debut at the Sydney Tivoli in "My Lady Frayle." Her success was instantaneous. The punch she put in her work made her a firm favorite from the outset. And she has remained so. In "As You Were," the new fantastic revue at the Tivoli, Miss la Varre is winning further laurels with the brilliancy of her work, which at all times is full of pep. It has remained for this production to give her the opportunity of appearing in short frocks, much to the joy of audiences, as she has the most shapely of nimble understandings, and is good to look upon. In "As You Were," the comedienne scores her biggest success with "Shake Your Shimmy," in which she goes through the movements suggesting the removal of the garment she sings about. She puts so much enthusiasm into this that most people think Miss la Varre is going to live up to the words of her song. But she is too clever an artist for that. Her power of suggestion is sufficient for her to get all the effect she requires.

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*World's News (Sydney)* 3 Jan. 1920, 5.

*Worker (Brisbane)* 1 Jan. 1920, 14.

*Sunday Times (Sydney)* 4 Jan 1920, 12.
A TIVOLI PLAYER'S FAMILY TREE

Marie La Varre a True Daughter of the Stage

Heredity counts with Marie La Varre. The clever comedienne, who was born in Calais where her parents were performing, states that, as far back as she can trace, all her ancestors have been associated with the stage in some way. "For all I know," she gaily remarked during the week, "one of my ancestors may have been Ann Hathaway, one of the characters I play in As You Were at the Tivoli."

Miss La Varre, by the way, became a member of the Tivoli Famous Players through an accident. When she arrived from America under engagement to Mr. Hugh D. McIntosh the cast of My Lady Frayle had been completed and it was intended that the comedienne should be attached to the Melbourne Revue Company. While My Lady Frayle was in rehearsal, however, one of the cast had an accident in the street, which was so severe that her chances of playing on the opening night were hopeless. With Miss La Varre on the spot the management did not look further for anyone to fill the breach, and the comedienne made good from the outset.

She is glad, too, that she became a Tivoli Famous Player, for she prefers musical comedy to any other style of entertainment. Since she has been in Australia Miss La Varre has formed a great opinion of the Australian girls whom she considers able to hold their own with any in the world.

They are, she says, the prettiest and cleverest girls anywhere. They live as if they mean it and are more independent and friendly and jolly than any other girls I have met. The girls in As You Were are a lot of pats, and that keeps the show happy for everybody.

Evening News (Sydney) 4 Jan. 1920, 12

Matinee To-Day at 2.30
Miss Vera Pearce, Mr. Rex London, Miss Kitty Barlowe.
Mr. Hugh Steyne, Miss Marie La Varre, and all the Favourites.

HIS LITTLE WIDOWS
AT THE
TIVOLI THEATRE
TO-NIGHT, AT 6.

VICEROYAL COMMAND NIGHT.
Under the Diagnostic Night, and at the pleasure of His Excellency the Governor Mr Wright, Mr. McIntosh, and Mr. Wright.

HUGH D. McINTOSH
THE-ZOLD COMMANDER

His Little Widows

A Tivoli Evening Entertain in Three Acts.
Lise by Miss M. J. Wright, and William Carey Smith. Music by William
Miles. Produced by Mr. McIntosh with Bretheld Dursie. Produced by W. J. JACOBSON.

In F. F. F.

Table Talk (Melbourne) 7 Oct. 1920, 23
HIS LADY FRIENDS.

Joseph Coyne, as slick and smart as ever, is still going strong with His Lady Friends at the Palace; but only until Saturday, when Nighty-Night goes on. Marie La Varre gets a good comedy part in this piece, and with Joseph Coyne, will make the pace a hummer. Marjorie Bennett (sister of Enid of screen fame) will also appear, as will the stately and vivid Rubi Trelease and other favorites in this well-chosen company. They say Nighty-Night has nothing to do with silk or crepe-de-chine nighties, or other frivolous things of that kind, and that there isn’t even a bedroom scene in it—which may be a disappointment to some. What one does hear, though, is that it is a light, sparkling farce-comedy which moves rapidly and gives Mr. Coyne big opportunities to display his unique gifts of light comedy.


THEATRE ROYAL

Sole Proprietors: J. C. WILLIAMSON LTD.

FAREWELL APPEARANCES OF
FAREWELL APPEARANCES OF
JOSEPH COYNE,
JOSEPH COYNE.

A COMEDY FOR THE SINGLE AND THE MARRIED.

The Cleverest Comedian To-day,
JOSEPH COYNE,
JOSEPH COYNE,
JOSEPH COYNE.

In One of the Merriest Comedies Ever Staged,
"WEDDING BELLS."
"WEDDING BELLS."

Presented by a Cast of Favourites, including
MARGORIE BENNETT, MARIE LA VARRE, SIDNEY STIRLING, LANCE LISTER, GWEN BURDOUGHS, CLARICE HARDWICKE, LESLIE VICTOR, REGINALD LONG, and
JOSEPH COYNE
In His Merriest Role to Date.

Box-plan at ALLAN’S.

THE CHERNIAWSKYS,
THIS AFTERNOON, at 5,
ASSEMBLY HALL.

Argus (Melbourne) 19 Oct. 1921, 20.
"Cinderella: Gorgeous Pantomime." Marie La Varre is a dashing Prince, full of fun and pep. She seems to set the speed of the production, and no one can keep still while her hands and feet are moving in time to a catchy rhythm. Her best song is "If Ma Could See Me Now," while "Pucker Up Your Lips" is sure to be a winner (Sunday Times 24 Dec. 1922, 2).

"Cinderella at the Royal." Marie La Varre was just her own delightful, vivacious self as the Prince. She did not in any way endeavour to adapt herself to pantomime, and, as far as appearances go, there was no need, for her limbs were made to order for a principal boy (Referee 27 Dec. 1922, 15).

"Gossip from Everywhere." Madge Bilton (Boy Blue of Bo Peep, at the Opera House), and Amy Rochelle have had several principal boy roles, but this is Marie La Varre's first trial in tights. Marie comes of a gifted circus family that can turn its hand to anything in a stage way and do well (Referee 3 Jan. 1923, 15).
Sunday Times (Sydney) 4 Mar. 1923, 3.

Marie La Varre Joins Fuller's Theatres

Miss Marie La Varre, the well-known comedianne, signed a contract with Fuller's during the week. The popular artist will make her appearance at Fuller's New Theatre in a vaudeville act at an early date. Her appearances in this sphere will be welcomed, as will give her the opportunity of expressing her own desire. Her engagement with the Fuller's during the week is that of Colleano, the Wizard of the Wire, whose act is looked upon as one of the most remarkable seen on the Australian stage.

Sunday Times (Sydney) 8 Apr. 1923, 3.

FULLERS' VAUDEVILLE

Marie La Varre Still Going Strong

Mrs. Asquith, in England, was the first to accept a costume commemorative of old Tutankhamen the Egyptian. Marie La Varre, can be likened to the first vaudeville lady in Sydney to similarly skip the fashions of a couple of thousand years and wear something approaching the frocks affected by dames of the Pharaoh period.

Yesterday, in her opening number at Fuller's Theatre, she was arrayed in a charming original gown. It is reminiscent of Thelma to the waist, and indicative of a Paris Winter the rest of the way. This gown proved, however, to be an extraordinarily designed costume. Under it was another frock of equally dazzling beauty.

Miss La Varre is going to stay at Fuller's for a long time, and for this reason—she has a style and stage ingenuity all her own, and a bunch of songs you can whistle and hum even while Charlie Ryders' good orchestra is jazze a march. Her numbers yesterday included Mimi, Suzanne, Georgia, and Why Don't You Leave Me Alone?

Miss La Varre is an adept at quick change, too, and possesses an extraordinary personality.

World's News (Sydney) 14 Apr. 1923, 5.

THE DEAR PUBLIC.

MARIE LA VARRE SPEAKS

Marie La Varre, the delightful comedianne at Fuller's New Theatre, Sydney, puts it this way: “I have no theories about acting. I think that life's a jolly good game, and you should play on the stage and off with all the gusto that one can put into it. I suppose I break all the rules for I never lose—set up for a refined and cultured young person; but I do enjoy myself, anyhow, and I don't pretend to be anything but the unmentionable girl God made me. I love that dear old public, because it is so responsive. The public has none of those moral qualms the men have suffered so. When I wink at the public, it works back. If I tell it something funny, the public always enjoys it. If I sing on a pretty frock, the public always lights its dear old lips and says complimentary things about my frock that are more encouraging. The public is a jolly good sort, however you take it."

World's News (Sydney) 14 Apr. 1923, 5.

MARIE LA VARRE

VAUDEVILLE'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BLONDE.

Miss Marie La Varre's name is a household word in the Theatrical World of Three Continents. The charming actress will present a delightful act, with a budget of suddenly the Man Jump, and wearing the most expressive and captivating gown. An artistic treat.

GOLDI. THE AMBROS. DELORS. Crosby of the Wire, in a Cleveland Act. Interpreted Translating. This week we have a special treat in the New Revue, presented by the Ward and Sherman Company, still adhering to its policy of producing Adelbert and Brighter Show each week.

WARD AND SHERMAN REVUE COY.

Little Horace Fulke's novels with some weird and wonderful adventures this afternoon. From a poor wandering umbrella-bearer he develops into that high mighty person THE SHERIFF. THE SHERIFF. OUT WEST OF NEW YORK. OUT WEST. OF BEAUTY. AND THRILLS.

NEW YORK.

MARKET STREET. MAJOR FINCH. MAJOR REYERDER. MAJOR FINCH. MAJOR REYERDER. MAJOR FINCH. MAJOR REYERDER. MAJOR FINCH. MAJOR REYERDER.

FALLING OUT. OF BEAUTY. AND THRILLS.

NEW YORK.

MARKET STREET. MAJOR FINCH. MAJOR REYERDER. MAJOR FINCH. MAJOR REYERDER. MAJOR FINCH. MAJOR REYERDER. MAJOR FINCH. MAJOR REYERDER.

FALLING OUT. OF BEAUTY. AND THRILLS.

NEW YORK.
GIGANTIC NEW ALL-VAUDEVILLE Programme on Saturday, HEADED BY MARIE LA VARRE, Vaudeville’s Beautiful Blonde. Book Your Seat Early. MATINEE TO-MORROW Vaudeville. FULLER’S Vaudeville. EMPIRE THEATRE.

Register (Adelaide) 1 Sept. 1923, 15.

Majestic Theatre.
Marie La Varre is well and favourably known to theatregoers all over Australia. With great pleasure Sir Benjamin and Mr. John Fuller announce that she will make her first appearance at the Majestic Theatre this afternoon in a delightful vaudeville offering. Miss La Varre is full of fun and radiates it. Her gift of broad comedy is so exceptional, and her personal magnetism so marked, that she has been a warm favourite with every audience.

cont...

Truth (Perth) 29 Sept. 1923, 2.
"Theatre Royal." The vaudeville programme is headed by Marie La Varre, the French comedienne, who appeared recently in Perth in *My Lady Frayle* and *His Little Widows*. Her numbers include "Stop! Stop!," "My Indiana Home," and other favourites (*West Australian* 10 Oct. 1923, 9).

"What's on at the Shows." Marie La Varre will give a new programme of popular numbers at the Royal on Saturday. It is whispered - and we quite believe it - that she wears some especially noteworthy gowns (*Call* 12 Oct. 1923, 6).

"Thrills at Fullers: Top-Notch Vaudeville." With honours thick upon her, won during a tour of the Fuller circuit, Marie La Varre, popular and pretty comedienne, made a re-appearance at Fullers' New Theatre yesterday. She gave a delightful programme of new and undying old songs, and, as is her wont, wore some magnificent frocks (*Sunday Times* 4 Nov. 1923, 3).

"The National." Marie La Varre, a true music hall artist, is getting a good reception, and a well-merited one, too (*Sydney Stock and Station Journal* 23 Nov. 1923, 26).

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*Sunday Times* (Sydney) 30 Dec. 1923, 6.  
IN SYDNEY.

“The New Moon.”

The opening performance of “The New Moon” at Her Majesty’s Theatre, Sydney, on Saturday, January 4, attracted an audience which expressed its appreciation most enthusiastically. The majority of the eight scenes in the play are laid in the year 1792, in New Orleans. The music is by Sigmund Romberg. Miss Marie Bremner, in the role of Marianne, played with emotional fervour and sang melodiously. The play treats of the life of Robert Mison, a French aristocrat, whose autobiography was written in the late 18th century, and this thread of historic reality gives substance to the plot. Mr. Lance Fairfax took the role of Robert Mison (now a bond servant of Monsieur Beaumoir in New Orleans) with great seriousness. Mr. Herbert Browne had been allotted several parts, and Miss Marie de La Varre, Miss Vera Spaul, and Mr. Frederic Bentley supplied liberally the comic relief. The

cont...

Australasian (Melbourne) 11 Jan. 1930, 17.

Age (Melbourne) 6 Sept. 1930, 26.

Truth (Sydney) 15 June 1930, 22.
ST. JAMES THEATRE.

“BY THE SEA.”

There have been a great many changes in the cast at the St. James Theatre since the first night of “Sunny Skies,” but the latest production there, entitled “By the Sea,” retains all the brightness of its predecessors, “Pot Luck,” “Happy Days,” and “Sunny Skies.”

In spite of its title, the new revue had nothing to do with the ocean, except in its opening and closing scenes, when the ballet danced on in brilliantly coloured bathing costumes. The topics it actually dealt with were as diverse as life on a desert island, the melodies of Erin, the American cotton-fields, and Russia with the snow falling. That is one of the chief attractions of this line of revues—they branch from one thing to another with a completely irresponsible air, holding always some agreeable surprise in reserve. The numbers which most appealed to the audience were those of Marie La Varre, Colin Crane, James Puran, and the “Four Clevers.”

Miss La Varre, who came before a reddish draped curtain clad in a bright yellow frock, attracted attention at once through the naturalness with which she sang the whimsical words of the song, “Helen,” and the vim with which she joined in the dancing of the ballet. She has a delightful sense of humour. Mr. Crane appeared in negro guise.

Evening Post (Wellington, NZ) 22 Nov. 1930, 29.
“My Lady’s Dress” has transferred to the Criterion and the last nights are forecast. “Many Waters” will be the next piece. At present this is a dark horse. Marie La Varre will be included in the cast in spite of running a café in Darlinghurst. She is a very versatile woman, our Marie. Iris Darbyshire will share the leads with Frank Harvey in the new piece.

*Auckland Star (NZ)* 8 Aug. 1931, 5.
http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&cl=search&d=AS19310808.2.140.25.5


**PALACE: The financial trick played by a naughty actress on four Jewish gentlemen in saddling them with “The High Cost of Loving” is the storm centre of a really big laugh at the Palace Theatre, where the musical burlesque plays twice daily with Coo, Hermie Ward and Bert le Blanc as chief of the Hebrews, and Audrey Lewis, Marie La Varre, Althea Siddons, Len Rich and other experts are in the cast of Frank Neil’s peppy show.**

**THEATRE ROYAL.**

"Hello, Brisbane," the current production of the Ike Delavale Vaudeville and Revue Co. will be presented for the last time to-night. To-morrow, at the matinee, there will be a change of programme. The comical Ike will be heard in a new budget of humorous items. Marie La Varre and the Lewolla Bros. (simultaneous dancers), Ronnie Shand, Doris Tindall, Reg. Desmond, Colleen Hope, Elvina Stagpolo, Le Murray, and the Royal Ballet will be seen in a new production of vaudeville and revue, entitled "Chuckles." An added attraction will be the first appearance of Jeanette and Vince ("Ambassadors of Syncopation"). At the matinee free sweets and Christmas tree tickets will be distributed to the children.

*Telegraph (Brisbane)* 21 Nov. 1931, 15.

*Telegraph (Brisbane)* 27 Nov. 1931, 3.
TIVOLI.

Marie Dresser and Polly Moran make a screamingly funny story of "Politics" at the Tivoli this week, providing patrons with a mirthquake of laughter. The performance starts at 9 a.m., and rarely has anything so captivating been seen as this talkie of women in small town elections, with electrifying methods of their own of getting votes. "A Dangerous Affair," with Jack Holt and Ralph Graves, is also being shown, and is a thriller, with lots of comedy. Universal news reel, Metrotone news, Pathé gazette, and the all-Australia Cinesound news also are screened. Billy Romaine's stage band is at its best this week, with Marie La Varre, and Colleen Hope, associated with a brilliant stage presentation.

Brisbane Courier 5 Jan. 1932, 11.

"GET-RICH-QUICK WALLINGFORD."

For the last times to-day and to-night the Tivoli will screen "The New Adventures of "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford," with William Haines, "Schnozzle" Durante, Ernest Torrence, and Leila Hyams. "Let's Love and Laugh," with Gene Gerard and George Gee, also is being screened, together with latest new reels, and a new Billy Romaine musical presentation on stage, associated with Marie La Varre and Colleen Hope. Sessions start at 9 a.m. to-day.

Brisbane Courier 14 Jan. 1932, 17.

Henry Abdy, father of Marie La Varre, well-known musical comedy actress, passed away at Lidcombe, N.S.W. the other day. Abdy was one of the best of the old school of Vaudeville performers, the ablest of animal mimics, and an animal and bird trainer of the highest ability. He toured with his animal circus in Australia for many years and appeared in Townsville on many occasions. At the time of his death his animal circus was appearing in the pantomime of "Cinderella" at the Roxy Theatre, Sydney.


"Poincaré" Abdy Dead.

Henry Abdy, who in his time was the greatest animal impersonator in the world, died near Sydney a few days back. Abdy came to Australia in 1912 as Fritz von Linden, but he was a pure-bred Cockney. When the war broke out, he changed his name to Mons Poincare and grew a beard to appear like a Frenchman. Abdy, who was also a great animal and bird trainer, was the father of Marie La Varre, the well-known soubrette.

“Poverty Point.”

Lucky is the theatrical who has a residential or a share in a residential to fall back upon in hard times. That has always been a side-line with mummers to help through periods when they are out of collar; but the great Titheradge had a Rose Bay flower garden as a standby. It was Titheradge who made daffodils popular in Australia. A great stock actor of a former day, Harry Overton, made a living as a chiropodist when times were slack. To-day one leading comedian goes back to his Victorian market garden, when no stage engagement offers. Another sells fish in his shop at Bondi. Marie la Varre has a classy cafe at King’s Cross, with a farm in the near-country to help it;

cont...

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The Quaker Girl (Theatre Royal, Melbourne)

There are a number of newcomers in the company, and outstanding among them is Kathleen Goodall, who sings most enjoyably and makes an attractive Princess. And thank you, Frank Tarrant, for your “Come to the Ball.” Last, but not least, a word for Marie La Varre, whose whole part is a riot. Her two handsprings were the hit of the evening on Saturday and brought down the house.—E.D.

The Arcadians

Miss Marie La Varre creates a sensation in her frock of emerald green satin trimmed with fichu and godets of green tulle, and worn with a large green hat finished with feathers. She also appears in a blue satin evening frock, its large sleeves lined with plaid fabric and edged with flame-coloured feathers. One of Miss Miriam Lester’s costumes is of blue banded with silver and another is of shell pink and gold. Miss Lois Green wears blue shoes, gloves, hat, and with her frock of green lace and marieette.

"Frocks at The Arcadians” Sunday Mail (Brisbane) 19 Aug. 1934, 17.

The J. C. Williamson production at His Majesty’s, Melbourne, at present, is “Roberta,” a musical comedy, sad to have cost £20,000 to produce. Cyril Ritchard, Madge Elliott, Frank Leighton, Ethel Morrison, Marie La Varre and Leo Franklyn have the principal parts.

Courier Mail (Brisbane) 19 Jan. 1935, 18.

RUMOR hints that Madge Elliott is to have one bridesmaid from Toowoomba, one from Melbourne and two from Sydney. Marie La Varre is to give her a big party in Sydney before the wedding, and if Marie does the cooking it will be some party, as there is nobody out of Italy who can cook spaghetti like Miss La Varre.

Truth (Brisbane) 23 June 1935, 33.
COMEDIAN-COOK
Hobby of Miss Marie la Varre

THE modern woman relishes too much on canned foods because they make housekeeping so much easier for her, according to Miss Marie la Varre, the well-known comedienne of the J. C. Williamson Company, now playing in Perth.

Cooking is a favorite hobby and important art to Miss la Varre.

"I like to cook on tour," said Miss la Varre. "In America I had a large cabin trunk fitted up for cooking. Inside was an electric stove, and on the lid, after the style of a picnic basket, were the knives and forks. On a tray were the saucepans and pan. In fact the trunk was fitted with everything necessary for cooking. The trunk was lined with American leather which made it easy to keep clean."

Miss la Varre regrets that this very useful trunk is no longer a feature with her, as it was lost from her luggage before she left the United States.

At one time Miss la Varre lived at Chester Hill, in New South Wales, where she had a cottage. During the week-end it was "open-house" for all her friends, and in order to cope with the cooking she would begin at 7 o'clock every Thursday morning to do her baking. She hopes that before long she will have a home again with her mother in Sydney.

She considers that she is not a good pastry cook, as her hand is not light enough. She finds now that she is not able, as a rule, to do any cooking when travelling, except at the homes of friends. But she has a number of them in most places she visits.

Practised on Pigs

Miss la Varre admitted that she was very critical of other people's cooking. "I have been keen about cooking all my life and when I was a little girl my sister and I used to make cakes - or rather 'pretend' cakes. We cooked them out of scraps of food in an oven my father used to keep his performing birds warm in. "The pigs got the cakes afterwards."

Apart from cooking Miss la Varre is interested in sewing and makes all her own clothes and carries her electric sewing machine about with her. When interviewed she was busy knitting herself a short cardigan, patterned in squares of marina green and mauve. This was of her own designing and when finished will have a large medicoll collar. Here are two of Miss la Varre's favorite recipes:

Sweet Corn

One can of corn, 2 eggs, 1 cup milk, 1 pound strong cheese, mustard, pepper and salt. Cut up an onion and a small amount of butter. Stir over the fire until cooked. Serve on toast either for luncheon or supper with Worcestershire sauce.

Spaghetti

One medium sized chicken, 1 pound lean pork, 2 ounces butter, 1 pint olive oil, 2 pounds tomatoes, 2 pounds onions, 6 or 7 kernels garlic, 6 bay leaves, about 20 pepper corns, 1 inch cinnamon broken up in small pieces, 1 tin tomato conserve, pepper, 1 teaspoonful sugar. Joint the chicken, cut pork in small pieces, fry in oil and butter. Put tomatoes (peeled) in another pot, add nicely browned chicken and pork, add other ingredients. Simmer over small fire on an asbestos mat for four hours, stirring well. Take one pound of spaghetti, put into a large saucepan of boiling water with a dessertspoon of salt. Cook for 20 minutes, strain and serve with the sauce and grated cheese.


-- Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954) about Friday 15 April 1937 -- Page 7

MARIE LA VARRE.
WITH J. C. WILLIAMSON.

Marie La Varre, who appears in "Yes, Madam," which will be one of the feature shows of J. C. Williamson's coming season, is of French extraction, and a member of a family that has won distinction in their profession. The history of France is not altogether silent about certain of her ancestors. Marie is particularly proud that more than one La Varre has been mentioned in French history.

One, Captain La Varre, is also mentioned in dispatches for brilliant work under De Gruchy, at Ligny, the battle immediately preceding Waterloo.

One of Marie La Varre's most treasured possessions is a document testifying to the merits of another progenitor as an armorer. This gentleman is alleged to have made the suit of mail for Joan of Are in the year 1429.

Marie played one of the leading roles in "Roberta" some time back.

Cairns Post (Qld) 31 July 1936, 3.


“GETTING THE LAUGHS”

Miss Marie La Varre Has No Routine.

“Often when I go on the stage I don’t know what I am going to do, and I never stick to one routine. More than once before a show people have asked me whether I am going to be funny. I have only been able to tell them that I did not know, but hoped so.” So said Miss Marie La Varre, who has kept audiences laughing throughout Australia and New Zealand for more years than her appearance suggests, when she passed through Fremantle yesterday by the liner Strathaird. “I think that there has to be something in you to make you funny,” she added, “because there are some people who are not able to get even the funniest lines over.”

Although she was born in England, it is 28 years since Miss La Varre appeared on the stage in Great Britain. In the meantime she has played, in all, about 18 years in Australia and New Zealand, and has made a number of visits to Perth. The last occasion was with Madge Elliott and Cyril Ritchard in “Robertina.” She pointed out yesterday that by a coincidence all the principals who played in the production in Perth would be in London at the same time. They included Madge Elliott, Cyril Ritchard, Leo Franklin, Molly Morrison, Frank Leighton (who is also travelling by the Strathaird), and herself.

Miss La Varre hopes to come back to Australia, but, at present, is looking for a contract on the English stage, where, she says, there is present only one other actress of her type.


George Gee Company for Royal

The J. C. Williamson George Gee musical comedy company will open at the Royal on Tuesday, July 19. The cast also includes Marie La Varre. Valerie Hay, Donald Burr, Lois Green, R. Barrett-Lennard, Billie Worth, Irene Vere and Helen Bruce. They will play “No, No, Nanette.”

Ruggles On The Air

“Ruggles of Red Gap,” a play which has proved its popularity both on the stage and the screen, will be presented by the Radio Theatre at 7.30 p.m. tomorrow.

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Ruggles of Red Gap,” a play which has proved its popularity both on the stage and the screen, will be presented by the Radio Theatre at 7.30 p.m. tomorrow.

A veteran of both stage and screen, Ronald Morse, plays the title role, supported by Marie La Varre and Rita Paucaufort. From his entry as the butler, during the trying times when he is panned to America, and after his successful wooing of the wealthy widow, the story of Ruggles is hilarious.

**Sews a Fine Seam**

**HANDICRAFT and STAGECRAFT**

**Marie La Varre Is Versatile**

**SHOULD** you ask the well-known actress, Marie La Varre, about her work, she will probably tell you about her latest piece of tapestry, for she is just as interested in her handicrafts as she is in her stagecraft.

**MISS LA VARRE,** who is at present playing in “Reunion in Vienna” at the Minerva Theatre, excels at almost every branch of handicraft, from pottery to embroidery, and her present ambition is to become an expert at woodwork.

She has already made some little seed tops, but is now about to make chairs, and plans to make tables and chairs, which she will ornament with carving.

Although Miss La Varre has never learned to crochet, she can do any of the most intricate croche-stitches, and has made some beautiful pillow-cases. She does cross-stitch all-over covers, completely embroidered, and makes and sells button-holes, and makes woolen ornaments on worsted backs.

In addition, she makes all her own robes, gowns and underclothes, and can also make hats of the latest style and variety.

When Miss La Varre was appearing in vaudeville with the Polier circuit, she made her own stage clothes.

**Crazy About Underclothes**

A FEW years ago I was crazy about making underclothes,” said Miss La Varre. “I made so many I had to open a shop so that I could get rid of them, and I supplied all the underclothes for the play, “My Lady’s Dress,” when it was produced in Sydney.”

Miss La Varre has also owned a restaurant in Broadway, New York, but after I developed ulcer’s, I was never sure whether it was coming along with me or not,” she explained.

Before this maiden, Marie had singing roles in many American shows. At the famous New York Wintergarden, she appeared with the late Will Rogers in “Town Topics,” in which she had no fewer than nine numbers.

“I’m afraid this was the cause of my voice,” she said, “I did too much singing without knowing the correct way in which to place my voice, and it was terribly strained.”

**At the Age of Ten**

**MISS LA VARRE** started her stage career in England at the age of 10, when she appeared with her mother, Madame Marcelle, and the latter’s “Performing Caractartes.” “The birds were really marvellous,” said Miss La Varre. “They were trained by my father, Harry Aby, the music and whistler, and he made them dance and take part in comedy sketches. Some of them which are now well over 80, are living in the Lido district. Once they had been trained they were absolutely eager to get their little piece, and would wait for their cue in a tremendous state of excitement,” she said.

For the most humorous experience during a performance, Miss La Varre’s agent, she was appearing with Dorothy Brenton and Charles Hasing in “Dazzling Butter.”

“In one scene we were having strawberries, and the fruit was made of modelling,” explained Miss La Varre. “It was quite pleasant at the beginning of the run, but after we had played for some weeks the modelling became harder and harder. On the memorable night that Dorothy knocked over the dish, the strawberries flattened to the floor with bullet-like things and reduced us and the audience to hyperventilation. I never anything ever happens if Marie has to keep in strict training to perform those amazing acrobatic feats or not—she hasn’t. Not even by doing the splits once a month. She is naturally supple, and finds no difficulty in executing a handstand after a six months spell.”

She never goes to bed before 2 a.m., and invariably rises at 7 a.m., and most important of all, she always gets up smiling. This fact, no doubt, accounts for her wonderful youthfulness.
Marie La Varre and Don Nicol in J. C. Williamson’s *The Girl Friend* (1942-1943)

Yvonne Banvard, Lily Moore, Marie La Varre in J.C. Williamson’s *Let’s Face It* (1943)

In J.C. Williamson’s *Let’s Face It* (1943)

All images on this page courtesy of the National Library of Australia.
Taking exception, she knocked the hero cold

by Leslie Bateman

Women's News Magazine

1950

Sunday Times (Perth) 7 May 1950.
Sunday Times Magazine, 3.

Western Mail (Perth) 11 May 1950, 29.
Marie La Varre Comes "Home"

When veteran actress Marie La Varre walked on to the stage of the Tivoli for the opening of Ladies Night in a Turkish Bath, she was greeted with warm enthusiasm. But it is doubtful if many in the audience realised that this was a home-coming for Marie. The Tivoli was the theatre in which she made her bow to Australian audiences in 1919.

In that year Marie came to Australia under the management of Hugh D. Macintosh to play in Lady Frail. Except for a brief return visit to England, she has been here ever since.

In the intervening years Marie has endeared herself to lovers of pantomime, vaudeville, musical comedy and farce from one end of Australia to the other.

A member of a theatrical family, she learnt her art the hard way—gaining experience first by playing the halls in England.

Eighteen years of her life were spent in America.

Offstage, Marie, whose favorite medium is farce ("so long as it's swift"), is rarely idle. She must keep her hands employed, and loves to knit, sew or embroider.

During the Melbourne run of Annie she knitted nine cardigans, two pullovers and two costumes.

At her home in Chester's Hill, N.S.W., Doll's House Cottage—she has a collection of hand-embroidered linen sufficient to last several lifetimes.

On May 9 Marie will celebrate her 81st birthday... "but I can still do the splits and kick higher than my head," she said yesterday. Perennially youthful in spirit, Marie is able to laugh at the passing years.

Managing See How They Run at the King's Theatre.

When all else fails June turns her hand to anything offering. Recent jobs she has tackled have included teaching at a primary school and waiting in a Sydney cafe.

Waiting was shift work which gave her time to rehearse her part as the unrepentant Edna, in Dark of the Moon.

June is anxious to go abroad—once day; but she believes it is useless to do so until she has acquired a wealth of experience here in Australia.

"The trouble is getting it," says June. "You're lucky to get one job in six months. Then, if the show is a success, it probably runs for six months...and you play the one role all the time."

Meanwhile, she realises how much can be learnt from watching the top-line artists who do visit us occasionally.

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DEATHS

ABDY. Grace Antoinette. — July 29, 1951 at her residence, Virginia Avenue, Chester Hill, dearly loved sister of Marie La Varre, and dear cousin of Bertha and Arthur, aged 53 years. At rest. For funeral notice see Tuesday's "Herald."
**A Favorite**

WHITE HORSE INN, one of the most spectacular and also one of the most successful musicals ever produced, is being presented by J. C. Williamson Theatres Ltd., at the Empire Theatre, Sydney.

This sparkling new production of a great favorite of 15 years age is one of the most colorful shows seen in Sydney since the great days of musical comedy.

The glorious music of Ralph Benatzky and Robert Stolz is as lovely and fresh as ever and the story still glows with the same warmth, humor and romance which first made "White Horse Inn" a first favorite the world over.

The top-line cast includes such popular and outstanding artists as Miriam Lester, Charles Norman, Fred Murray, Marie La Varre, Max Oldaker William Rees, Bobby Mack, Ronnie Shand, Betty Sparks and Ray Hartley.

The story concerns the celebrated White Horse Inn, which overlooks one of the many lovely lakes in the Austrian Tyrol. A number of English visitors and Austrian sightseers arrive by picturesque lake steamer. The ensuing story provides the love affairs.
