

# INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS: I-J

## THE INGENUES

An all-girl jazz band based out of Chicago, the Ingenues toured the US and international vaudeville circuits between 1925 and 1937. In addition to playing vaudeville and music halls the band also established itself with film exhibitors (as a "between films" entertainment), and as a specialty act in revue. In 1927, for example, the band starred in the Ziegfeld Follies production *Glorifying the American Girl*, with their act featuring 12 white baby grands as well as various combinations of brass bands, strings and woodwinds. The Ingenues even appeared in films - notably *The Band Beautiful* and *Syncopating Sweeties* (Vitaphone, 1928) and *Maids and Music* (RKO, 1937).

Managed by William Morris, the band specialized in jazz, ragtime, Tin Pan Alley, light classical works and Dixieland. Highly regarded for the versatility of its members,

many of whom could double up on both novelty and symphonic instruments, it was even claimed that each member could play at least 8 instruments.<sup>1</sup> Among the countries and continents the band is known to have visited were Europe, South Africa, Asia, Australia and Brazil (where they also recorded for Columbia Records).



Source: Hood Collection, State Library of New South Wales.

What the World's  
Greatest Jazz Conductors  
Think of  
**THE INGENUES**  
America's Famous Girls'  
Orchestra

"If I ever form a girl's orchestra I will model it on the Ingenues—they are great." — Paul Whiteman.

"These college beauties may be young—but they've got ability, too. I predict that they will be just as well received as my band was in Australia." — Henry Saenger.

"I had the pleasure of seeing the Ingenues in the Ziegfeld Follies when I was in New York. I never imagined that a girl's orchestra could attain such perfection—they equal any male band." — Jack Hydon.

"The tremendous success of these girls in New York was no flash in the pan. I was present in Chicago, and they were a riot just the same. Male musicians are getting jealous of the 'G' countries." — Paul Ash.

**A BOATLOAD OF BEAUTY**  
The Arrangi arrives at 1 p.m. tonight. Listen in to the broadcast concert by 2FC from the ship's musicroom.  
Metro-Goldwyn's Trackless Train will convey the girls from the ship to the Tivoli.  
**COMMENCING ON MONDAY  
AT THE TIVOLI**

**THE INGENUES**

The line-up, and each members primary instrument(s) for the Australian tour included : Genevieve Brown (sax), Gladys Young (trumpet), Frances Garton (xylophone/sax), Lucy "Lucky" Westgate (flute/sax), Marguerite Lichtie (harp/banjo/violin/piano), Virginia Roberts (trumpet), Mina Smith (violin/sax), Dorothy Donahue (sax), Marie Novak (piano), Velma Grimm (violin/sax), Pauline Dove (drums/sousaphone), Mary Donohue (sax), Alyce Plyce (sax), Babe Colby (violin/sax), Blanche Olsen (piano/sax), Lora Standish (cello/oboe), Paula Jones (trombone), Billy Jenks (sousaphone)

The Ingenues arrived in Australia on 19 July 1928 under contract to the Tivoli circuit (then being run by [J.C. Williamson's Ltd](#)), and opened at the Sydney [Tivoli](#) four nights later. Such was the clamour of attention raised in the lead-up to their Australian debut that Radio Station 2FC organised to broadcast a short performance by the band from their ship after it docked in Darling Harbour.

After completing their hugely successful season in Sydney the band undertook a national tour that continued through until mid-January the following year. The seasons established to date were: Sydney (Tivoli, 23 July-), Melbourne (Tivoli, 1 Sept.-), Adelaide (Regent, 20 Oct. -), Newcastle (Victoria Theatre, 3 Nov.-), Brisbane (Wintergarden, 12 Nov.-), Sydney (Tivoli, 1 Dec.-) and Perth (Hoyts Regent, 14 January 1929). The Perth season also included a one night engagement at the Temple Court Cabaret (17 Jan.). The Ingenues are believed to have departed Australia following the conclusion of the Perth season on 19 January.

*Evening News* (Sydney) 19 July 1928, 11.

<sup>1</sup> See for example "Saxophone Girls: Graduates of Jazz." *Examiner* (Launceston, Tas) 11 Sept. 1928, 9.





**The Ingenues  
in  
Australia  
(1928-29)**

Hood Collection,  
State Library of New  
South Wales



*"The Ingenues" at the Tivoli*



*Sunday Times*  
(Sydney) 15 July  
1928, 24.

*Sunday Times* (Perth)  
13 Jan. 1929, 8.



THE GREATEST MUSICAL ATTRACTION  
NEWCASTLE HAS EVER KNOWN.

Hollywood's  
Favourites  
Are  
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**VICTORIA**  
Theatre.

BOX  
PLAN  
NOW  
OPEN  
AT  
MURDOCH'S  
AND  
FAYZIE.

Commencing To-day, at the Matinee, 2.30 p.m.  
(It's a Great Show for Children, Too!)  
J. C. WILLIAMSON, TIVOLI VAUDEVILLE, LTD. PRESENTS  
THE  
**INGENUES**  
AMERICA'S FAMOUS GIRLS' ORCHESTRA  
OF  
TWENTY COLLEGE BEAUTIES.  
In a Revelation of Melody, Symphonies, and Virtuoso Lightness.

*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* (NSW) 3 Nov. 1928, 8.

A decided novelty and a musical treat will be provided for listeners on Thursday night, July 20, when the trans-pacific mail liner, Aorangi berths at Darling Harbor. Immediately the vessel ties up a line will be put aboard by the N.S.W. Broadcasting Co., and a concert broadcast from the music room by the "Ingenues," an American orchestra of twenty talented girl musicians. All the girls are advanced musical students from America's leading colleges, and have banded together as an opportunity of seeing the world.

*Sunday Times* (Sydney) 15 July 1928, 24.