

1905

Lilly Octavia, who in the late 1890s had presented musical sketches with baritone singer, Robert Boyd, had by 1904 teamed up with Dave Warne. It is not clear whether all of their sketches were narrative-driven, however. One sketch known to have been staged by the pair during 1905, but which may possibly have been created as a vaudeville turn was *Faces and Fashions* (Theatre Royal, Brisbane, ca. July). Their sketch, "*Masqueraders*" (first known to be performed in 1904) was also a popular presentation in 1905.

Nina Rochester and Walter Rivers presented a series of society sketches under Ted Holland's management at the Theatre Royal (Brisbane) during the latter part of the year. It is not clear at this stage whether these sketches incorporated music into the narratives. Those sketches known to have been staged by the pair include: *An Island Episode* (30 Sept.), described as being "reminiscent of *Robinson Crusoe*, with Nina Rochester as Princess Zadie, clothed in a "Rose of Persia costume" and Walter Rivers as a "shipwrecked sailor; *A Matrimonial Compact* (7 Oct.); *When Two Hearts are One* (21 Oct.); *Ostler Joe* (28 Oct.); *The Census Man* (4 Nov.) and *For Old Time's Sake* (11 Nov.).

Other musical sketch artists included: Connie Vernon and Joe Woodward. They were engaged by Ted Holland at the Theatre Royal, Brisbane (ca. Dec.). Their act is described as containing "bright dialogue, clever songs and dances." The Gotham Quartet also presented musical sketches during their season at the Palace Gardens in Perth, notably *A Couple of Footpads* (13 Feb).

1905 revivals included *Sinbad the Sailor* (1904): William Anderson's hit pantomime is taken to Adelaide, Broken Hill (NSW), Ballarat, Geelong, and Bendigo (Victoria), Perth, Kalgoorlie and Fremantle (WA) before temporarily disbanding the company. Anderson revives the panto in Sydney at Christmas.

ROMANCE FROM ROME: [one act music comedy] **Txt.** Ted Holland et al; **Mus.** [n/e]

Although details of regarding this production (advertised as a musical comedy) remain scarce, its production as part of the Ted Holland New Vaudeville Entertainers company program suggests that if not written by Holland, then it may well have been adapted by him. In this respect Holland had himself supplied several of his own farce creations for the company during its first few weeks at the Theatre Royal (Brisbane). The season began in December 1904. Additional variety material, and indeed the choice of songs, would undoubtedly have been provided other members of the troupe, and perhaps, too, Percy St John. Holland's previous operations as an established popular entertainer, producer of minstrel farces and entrepreneur with the "Australian team" of Delohery, Craydon and Holland, and on a number of occasions with St John, suggests that the work's creative process would have been a largely local affair.

1905: Theatre Royal, Brisbane; 7-13 Jan.

- **Dir/Prod/Sub-Lse.** Ted Holland; **Lse.** Harry Rickards; **M Dir.** W. Butland; **B Mngr.** J. Stewart.

- **Troupe:** Ted Holland's New Vaudeville Entertainers.

- **Cast** incl. Ted Holland, Eva Wilson, Claire and Albert McKisson, Ted Herbert, Fred Norris, Ruby Clifford, George Williamson.

NORTH-EAST LYNNE: [burlesque] **Txt.** Wilton Swift; **Mus.** [n/e]

1905: Theatre Royal, Charters Towers (Qld); 15 Mar. -

- **Dir/Prod/Sub-Lse.** Ted Holland; **Lse.** Percy St John.

- **Troupe:** Holland's Entertainers.

- **Cast** incl. Wilton Swift (Lady Isabel/Madam Vine), George Williamson (Little Willie).

"*Holland's Entertainers.*" *Northern Miner* (Charters Towers, Qld) 17 Mar. 1905, 5.

NORTH-EAST LYNN: [burlesque] **Txt/Mus.** [n/e]

A burlesque on the popular melodrama, this version is first known to have been staged under the auspices of Leonard Davis at the Palace Gardens, Perth. Although the production's cast members have not been established, the company engaged at the Palace Gardens at that time included George Sorlie, Sam Gale, Myra James (aka Myra Gale), Harry Baxter, Lizzie Kirke and W. Perman.

1905: Palace Gardens, Perth; 1 Apr. -

- **Prod.** Leonard Davis

- **Troupe:** Palace Gardens Variety Co.

THE FUN DOCTOR: [musical comedy] **Lib.** G.H. Forbes; **Mus.** [n/e]

George Forbes, at one time prominent on the comedy stage [in Sydney] as a portrayer of "heavy swells," moved to Wyalong in the New South Wales Northern Riverina region sometime prior to turn of the century to resume practice as a solicitor. He maintained contact with the stage through participation in many local theatricals, and in 1905 wrote *The Fun Doctor* ("Music and Drama," 4). The *Wyalong Star* further notes: "Old playgoers will remember Mr Forbes as a member of Williamson, Garner, and Musgrove, and Wybert Reeve's comedy companies... although many years have passed since then" ("*Fun Doctor*," 14 Apr., 2). A review of the West Wyalong production provides a snapshot of the storyline:

The Fun Doctor is, merely a peg upon which to hang a variety show, and the plot consists in a certain Doctor Bartholomew Brown undertaking to cure an eccentric baronet of his supposed madness by laughing at him. Brown arrives and mistakes cousin Robert for Sir Charles, and cousin Robert also mistaking the Fun Doctor for the mad baronet; has him taken off to a lunatic asylum, presided over by Dr. Philpotts Brown escapes and finds the young people at Poltroon, the baronet's house, engaged in rehearsing a variety troupe for the stage. He joins them and together they give sample of what they can do ("*Fun Doctor*," 2 May, 2).

The Fun Doctor included 14 musical items and several recitations. The known titles are "Sister Mary Walks Like That" (sung by G.H. Forbes), "Life's Dream is O'er" (Neeld and Lynch), "Doreen" (Neeld), "The Song that Reached My Heart" (Lynch), "Let the Hills Resound" (Neeld, Lynch, Nelson and Dunn), "We've All Been 'Aving a Go at It" (Dunn), "Take Your Umbrella With You, John" (Smith), "Skylark" (Dunn), "Hiawatha" and cakewalk (Neeld), "One of the Family" (Dunn), "The Story of a Stowaway" (Nelson), "Maritana" (Lynch), and "Kitty Mahone" (Smith).

Publicity published in the lead-up to the premiere provided a bulletin for the health of the audience as the show progressed - "At 8 o'clock the laugh begins, at 8.30 it increases, at 9 louder than ever, at 9.30 it becomes a roar, at 10 screams of laughter, at 10.30 no more laughing room - the Fun Doctor has cured you" ("*Local*," 2). In reporting on the event the *Sydney Morning Herald* records that the work was favourably received as an exhilarating piece of fun, still further animated by songs and dances" ("*Music and Drama*," 4).

Oddfellows' Hall, West Wyalong.

THURSDAY, APRIL 27th, 1905.

AT 8 O'CLOCK.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE

LOCAL HOSPITAL.

The Intensely Humorous Musical Comedy Farce,
"THE FUN DOCTOR,"

Performed by the Following Strong Cast:—

Dr Bartholomew Brown ("The Fun Doctor")	Mr. G. H. Forbes
Sir Charles McGregor (Laird o' Poltroon)	Mr E. McKensy
Canon Bolton (Guardian to Harry and Arthur)	Mr W. Bannister
Harry Hawthorn (in love with Alice)	Mr H. Nelson
Arthur Hawthorn (in love with Mabel)	Mr. H. Dunn
Dr. Philpotts (of Balmly House Lunatic Asylum)	Mr W. Hart
Robert McGregor (Heir Presumptive to Poltroon)	Mr J. Craig
Constable Noobs (a member of the Force)	Mr P. A. Smith
Miss McGregor (Aunt Agatha)	Miss Florrie Irwin
Alice McGregor (in love with Harry)	Miss Alice Neeld
Mabel McGregor (in love with Arthur)	Miss Ida Lynch

—000—

During the Entertainment the following Attractive List of VARIETIES will be rendered by those taking part:—

Duet, "Life's Dream is O'er"	Misses Alice Neeld and Ida Lynch
Song, "Doreen"	Miss Alice Neeld
Song, "The Song that Reached My Heart"	Miss Ida Lynch
Song, Selected	Mr Will Perry
Quartette, "Let the Hills Resound"	Misses A. Neeld, I. Lynch, and Messrs H. Nelson and H. Dunn
Comic Song, "We've all Been 'Aving a Go at It"	Mr Harold Dunn
Comic Song, "Sister Mary Walks Like This"	Mr G. H. Forbes
Comic Song, "Take Your Umbrella With You, John"	Mr P. A. Smith
Song, "Skylark"	Mr Harold Dunn
Song and Cakewalk, "Hiawatha"	Miss Alice Neeld
Song, Selected	Mr. J. Bowring
Comic Song, "One of the Family"	Mr Harold Dunn
Recitation, "The Story of a Stowaway"	Mr H. Nelson
Song, "Maritana"	Miss Ida Lynch
Song, "Kitty Mahone"	Mr P. A. Smith
Imitation of Italian Opera	Mr G. H. Forbes

—000—

"THE FUN DOCTOR'S" BULLETIN ON THE HEALTH OF THE AUDIENCE:—

"At 8 o'clock the Laugh begins; at 8.30 the Laugh increases; at 9, the Laugh becomes louder than ever; at 9.30, the Laugh becomes a Roar; at 10, Screams of Laughter; at 10.30, no more Laughing room—The Fun Doctor has cured you!"

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Prices of Admission: 1s. and 6d.

RESERVED SEATS at A. Emmett's 2s. ; CHILDREN

Half-price to all parts of the house.

Wyalong Star and Temora and Barmedman Advertiser (NSW) 18 Apr. 1905, 3.

[NB: The *Wyalong Advocate and Mining, Agricultural and Pastoral Gazette* reports in its 10 June edition that George Forbes was intending to take a company on a short tour within the region. The towns mentioned are Barmedman and Temora. The journalist writes: "It is to be hoped that Mr Forbes will stage his own production - *The Fun Doctor* -during the tour." ("*News Summary*," 2) It is not yet known of the tour went ahead and if so whether musical comedy was staged]

1905: Excelsior Hall, Wyalong (NSW); 10 Apr. [am]

- **Prod/Dir.** G.H. Forbes.

- **Cast** incl. G.H. Forbes (Dr Bartholomew Brown), E. McKensy (Sir Charles McGregor, Laird of Poltroon), W. Bannister (Canon Bolton, Guardian to Harry and Arthur), Horatio Nelson (Harry Hawthorne, in love with Alice), Harold Dunn (Arthur Hawthorne, in love with Mabel), W. Hart (Dr Philpotts), John Craig (Robert McGregor, heir presumptive to Plotroon), P.A. Smith (Constable Noobs), Florrie Irwin (Aunta Agatha), Alice Neeld (Alice McGregor), Ida Lynch (Mabel McGregor), Will Perry.

- **Musicians** incl. Mrs Hall, Marshall Dunn.

1905: Oddfellows' Hall, West Wyalong; 27 Apr.
- Cast and production as for Wyalong.

"*Fun Doctor, The.*" *Wyalong Star and Temora and Barmedman Advertiser* (NSW) 14 Apr. 1905, 2.

"*Fun Doctor, The.*" *Wyalong Star and Temora and Barmedman Advertiser* (NSW) 2 May 1905, 2.

"*Local and District News.*" *Wyalong Star and Temora and Barmedman Advertiser* (NSW) 4 Apr. 1905, 2.

"*Music and Drama.*" *Sydney Morning Herald* 13 May 1905, 4.

UNCLE'S VISIT: [musical sketch] **Txt/Mus.** [n/e]

It is likely that this Warne/Octavia turn would have essentially been a society sketch, staged with one or more songs, and may well have been written by the pair.

1905: Theatre Royal, Brisbane; 17 July -
- **Dir/Prod/Sub-Lse.** Ted Holland; **Lse.** Percy St John.
- **Cast:** Dave Warne, Lilly Octavia.

THE LOTTERY TICKET: [musical sketch] **Txt.** G.H. Forbes; **Mus.** [n/e]

Described as "a musical comedy farce in two acts."

1905: Excelsior Hall, Wyalong (NSW) 2 Aug. **[am]**
- **Dir/Prod.** G.H. Forbes.
- **Cast** incl. G.H. Forbes, Horatio Nelson. E. McKensy, Len Channon, Harold Dunn, H. Emery, L.T. Rimeldi, J. Bowice, F. Leathley, S. McKensy, Miss M. McKensy, Miss Clarke.
- *The Lottery Ticket* was preceded by a first part comediaetta entitled "A Happy Pair."

"*Variety Entertainment.*" *Wyalong Advocate and Mining, Agricultural and Pastoral Gazette* (NSW) 5 Aug. 1905, 3.

THE AGONY COLUMN: [play with music] **Txt.** W.H. Binstead and Evelyn Faunce; **Mus.** [n/e]

Mitchell Library [manuscript] QA822/B

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reports that this one act comedy with music was first staged for copyright purposes at Queen's Hall on the afternoon of 18 August 1905. The cast for *The Agony Column* may have included Evelyn Faunce (she appears in a lead role in the other work). The *Herald* notes that while she "has played leading parts in London... this will be her first appearance on the Sydney stage" ("Copyright Performances" 19 Aug. 1905, 14). Its first known professional production was in Newcastle later in the year during a season of vaudeville.

1905: Queen's Hall, Sydney; 18 Aug. [copyright performance]
- Produced along with *The Bitter Sacrifice*, an original two act drama by the same authors (*Sydney Morning Herald* 18 Aug. 1905, 2).
1905: King's Hall, Newcastle (NSW); 26 Dec. 1905 – 1 Jan. 1906.
- **Prod/Lse.** W. H. Binstead; **Mngr.** W. J. F. Wilson; **S Mngr.** A. B. Carr-Glynn.
- **Troupe:** Hawthorne and Wilson's Vaudeville Entertainers

NB: The Mitchell Library (State Library of New South Wales) also holds a copy of *The Bitter Sacrifice*.

TRILBY: [burlesque] **Txt/Mus.** [n]

It is not clear what relationship this production has with another burlesque of Du Maurier's famous story, staged in March 1897 under the management of Delohery, Bovis and Deane at the Gaiety Theatre (Brisbane). In the company for that production were Ted Holland and James Craydon. Nina Rochester and Walter Rivers, who played the leading roles in the 1905 burlesque, were at the time engaged by Ted Holland to supply society sketches, and could possibly have been involved in the adaptation/creation of the piece.

1905: Theatre Royal, Brisbane; ca.14 Nov.
- **Dir/Prod/Sub-Lse.** Ted Holland; **Lse.** Percy St John.
- **Troupe:** Ted Holland's New Vaudeville Entertainers.
- **Cast** incl. Nina Rochester (Trilby), Walter Rivers (Svengali).

THE GOLDEN CORNFIELDS: [musical entertainment] **Txt.** [n/e]; **Mus.** Fred Hall

Advertised as a "entirely new and original first part," the songs and chorus were especially written for Harry Rickards. The extent to which a narrative thread runs through this production remains unclear.

1905: Tivoli Theatre, Sydney; 23 Dec. 1905 - 5 Jan. 1906
- **Dir/Prod.** Harry Rickards; **S Art.** Alfred Clint; **Cost.** Mrs Huxham.
- **Cast** incl. Dorothy Dennis, Edie Calder, Violet Martin, Emily Neville, Ruby Forde, Evelyn Dolby, Maud Edwards, Liella Delmont, Emma Murray, Bertha Lloyd, Myra Thompson, Lily Kane, Emily Keeley, Daisy Vernon, Kitty Mason, Daisy Berry, Mabel Bell, Eva Stewart, Lillian Davis.

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