

MADAME (ALICE) BELL

aka **The White Mahatma**

Alice Bell is largely connected with the Australian variety industry through her husband James Bell and Ada Delroy. Before coming to Australia in 1895 she had been performing professionally for some 16 years, however. Her act is believed to have been styled along the lines of Professor S.S. and Clara Baldwin.

[For a more extensive insight in to Alice Bell's career in Australia see the entries for Ada Delroy and the Ada Delroy Company]

Alice Bell (aka Madame Bell, the "White Mahatma") has first been identified to date with her husband, comedian James Bell and sister-in-law, Ada Delroy,¹ when all three toured Australia for [Harry Rickards](#) in early to mid-1895. All three were the principal artistes in the Ada Delroy Company, which made its debut in Singleton, New South Wales, in June that same year. Madame Bell's theatrical career, which reportedly began some 16 years previous, was styled very much along the lines of Samri Baldwin ([Professor S.S. Baldwin](#)) who also used the "White Mahatma" billing during his career.

Advertised as "Somnomistic Dream Visions" her act largely involved audience participation, whereby selected individuals would write down questions on folded paper earlier in the evening (which they retained). She would then answer them later in the evening. Madame Bell toured with the company throughout much of Australia and New Zealand until late 1897, at which time it undertook a two and a half years tour of the world. All three artistes returned to tour Australia in 1900, while also making occasional tours elsewhere (including New Zealand, 1901 and Manila, 1904).

Little is yet known of Bell's last years, and indeed although she reportedly died in 1907 no details or records have yet been located which confirm where, when or how. The following year her husband married Ada. The company continued to tour up until at least 1909.



SEE ALSO

- [Ada Delroy](#)
- [Ada Delroy Company](#)
- [James Bell](#)

Some details, including the image, have been sourced from "[Something About Alice](#)," an interview with Joy Bell published in the *Northern Herald* 16 Sept. 2011 (sighted 9 May 2012)

¹ Delroy was born Elizabeth Breslin. At age 12 both her parents died and she was subsequently adopted by Bell's parents.