

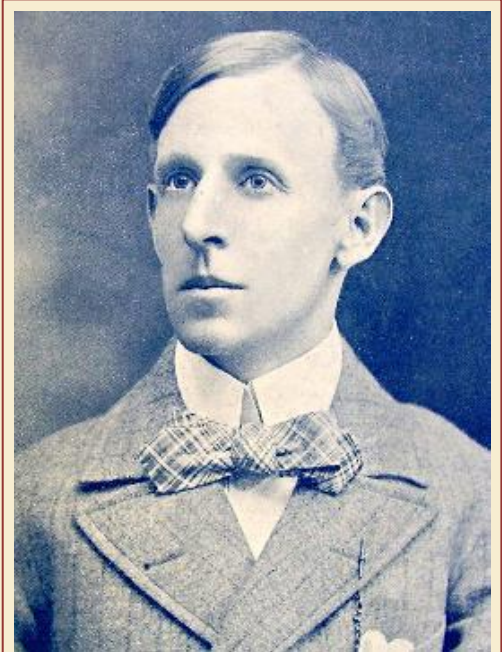
## FRANK REIS

(1871-) After coming to Australia from South Africa Frank Reis was associated with Dan Barry (1896), William Anderson (1899-1909), George Marlow (1910-1913) and George Willoughby (1913), establishing his reputation as both a dramatic actor and stage manager. After making his first vaudeville appearance in 1913 as a comedian, Reis put together a musical comedy/vaudeville troupe in 1914 called the World's Entertainers. By 1919 he was running a Sydney suburban vaudeville circuit. Reis continued to work as an actor, teacher, and producer well into the 1930s.

### 1871-1909

Born in Cape Town, South Africa in 1871, Frank Reis reportedly made his first public stage appearance at 15 years of age.<sup>1</sup> His name has first been connected with Australian theatre when he was engaged as advance rep for the Olivia Kempf Dramatic Company in 1895. That same year he was embroiled in a sensational court case which involved him suing actress Ada Rochfort (aka Ada Gratton) for slander. The case centred on his allegation that Rochfort had told other members of her company, then playing a season in Brisbane, that Reis had done three months gaol for horse stealing in Wagga. The incident occurred when the supernumeraries of the company refused to go on stage. Rochfort, who was under the belief that Reis was one of the organisers of the strike, made the comment in an attempt to discredit him. According to Reis the allegation had spread throughout the local community and resulted in him being unable to secure work at several theatres.<sup>2</sup> Reis secured the judgment but was awarded only £15 (plus costs) after having asked for £50.<sup>3</sup>

The following year Reis briefly joined Dan Barry's company at Melbourne's Alexandra Theatre, before taking up an engagement at the same theatre with the Alexandra Dramatic Company (1897/98). His fellow actors included Edwin Lester, Harry Daniels and Fred B. Norton, whose drama *A Cruel Wrong* was first staged by the company in 1897 (9 Oct.). Other productions included: *Cinders* (Nov.) and *Is Life Worth Living* (26 Dec.), in which he played the character Adam Tozey.



*The Theatre: An Illustrated Monthly Devoted to the Stage* (Sydney) 15 July 1905, n. pag.

1899 saw Reis associated with at least three touring dramatic companies, two of these being Ward's Metropolitan Dramatic Company and the Walsh Comedy Company. Both organisations toured Queensland during the year. The Ward troupe, which included Herbert Linden, Minnie Bradon, J.B. North and George Ward, reportedly staged *The Danger Signal* as one of its feature dramas. Headed by Phil Walsh and Nellie Ogden, the Walsh company presented such works as *All for Gold* and *The Widow O'Brien*. The third company Reis was associated with, Charles Holloway and William Anderson's Dramatic Company, saw Reis engaged initially as an actor, playing such characters as Timothy Trimmer in *Two Little Drummer Boys* (30 June) and Robert Danvers in *The World Against Her* (21 July). He was eventually appointed to the dual role of actor/stage manager, however (and even took over directorial duties on a number of occasions). He continued in these in these positions with Anderson for around a decade, and for almost all of that time was regarded as a prominent member of two of the entrepreneur's companies - the Famous Dramatic Company and the No 2 Dramatic Company.

In mid-1904 Reis temporarily left Anderson's employ<sup>4</sup> to return to South Africa for some eight months, taking advantage of the peace which had come about following the end of the Boer War. He returned sometime in February and was immediately sent to New Zealand in charge of one of William Anderson's dramatic companies - possible the second or third time he had undertaken such a task for the entrepreneur. Reis's brother, Roland, was also engaged as the tour's advance rep. *The Theatre: An Illustrated Monthly* noted in its July 1905 issue that despite his relatively young age, Reis not only demonstrated a great deal of expertise and professionalism but was able much like by those under his direction:

In recognition of his signal ability, Mr Anderson appointed him stage manager of his company, and as he can claim to have been the youngest stage manager of any important theatrical venture in Australasia, it is proof positive of his merits. As Mr Anderson has produced some exceedingly heavy dramas, his choice of Mr Reis is

<sup>1</sup> [no title], 16.

<sup>2</sup> "Action Against an Actress," 2.

<sup>3</sup> "Theatrical Case, The" 4.

<sup>4</sup> "Prompter." "Lorgnette." *Observer* (Auckland, NZ) 8 Oct. 1904, 6.

certainly a wise one, for the man who has the pluck to take up a spectacular play like *The Ladder of Life*, which takes over 250 people to produce it in actors and auxiliaries, and put it on the stage with only a few days preparation, as was the case when first placed on the boards in Australia, is worthy of the important position which he holds. When Mr Anderson determined on sending his combination through Maoriland, on several occasions Mr Reis was chosen as the reliable man for discharging the important obligations incidental to the stage manoeuvres. Off the stage he possesses many sterling qualities, which cause him to be very popular. The stage hands say he is the best man they ever had to deal with, and coming from this quarter it is praise indeed.<sup>5</sup>



*Newsletter (Sydney)* 26 Aug. 1905, 11.

After returning to Australia in mid-1905 set up his own Academy of the Dramatic Art in Sydney. The inaugural student production, *Under Two Flags* was staged at the Palace Theatre on 25 August in association Stella Chapman's drama studio. Additional entertainment, a ballet entitled "The Carnival," was presented by 40 young ladies from Ina Alston's Academy.<sup>6</sup> It is believed that Roland Reis eventually took charge of the Academy.<sup>7</sup> In late 1905 Reis was engaged by Lily Dampier to direct the second production of her company's newly inaugurated season at the Palace. That production, *The Postmistress of the Czar*, also saw Reis appear in a comedy role.<sup>8</sup>

Over the next four years Reis was almost exclusively associated with one or another of William Anderson's companies. In 1906 he is known to have appeared in *The Road to Ruin* (Dorcas O'Dowd), *Transported for Life* (Ong Lee), *Streets of New York* (as Dan Puffy), *The Work Girl* and *The Ladder of Life*. 1907 saw him cast in *The Face at the Window*, *A Sailor's Sweetheart*, *The Favourite*, *The Great World of London*, *East Lynne*, *The Midnight Mail*, *The Ladder of Life*, *Thunderbolt* and *The Career of the Kelly Gang*. Among the actors he performed alongside included Bert Bailey, Edmund Duggan, Eugenie Duggan, Max Clifton.<sup>9</sup>

By 1908 Reis had become one of the principals in the company which was known variously as William Anderson's New Australian Dramatic Company (aka William Anderson's No 2 Dramatic Company). For some time, too, he also acted as the company's stage manager. Robert Inman, Stirling White, Frank Crossley, Herbert Linden and Lillie Bryer were also prominent members of the company at that time. After playing seasons in Adelaide (twice) and Melbourne, as well as touring through Tasmanian, the company left for New Zealand in late October. By then the major productions included *The Squatter's Daughter* and *The Village Blacksmith*. After returning to Australia the company undertook another arduous tour of the country, with established engagements being played the capital cities and regional centres of South Australia, Victoria and Queensland. The company's 1909 repertoire included revivals of *The Face at the Window* and *The Squatter's Daughter*, along with new productions such as *The 10.30 Down Express* and *Her Luck in London*.

## 1910 - 1918

In 1910 Reis was engaged as stage director for the Charles Stanford Dramatic Company during its season at Harry Clay's Standard Theatre,<sup>10</sup> Sydney. The *Sydney Morning Herald's* review of the opening production, *The Queen of Spies*, records Reis also played the comedy role of Phelam McNab with much success.<sup>11</sup> Another work produced during the season was *The Demon's Device* (16 July). By the end of September he was in Brisbane, stage managing for George Marlow's Dramatic Company. The opening production was *The Bad Girl of the Family* (24 Sept.). Early the following year Marlow's company was ensconced at Melbourne's Princess Theatre.

"Where Everybody Goes."

## EARL'S COURT.

"The Home of the People's Pictures."

All the World's a Stage, and the Pictures are Merely Players.

Direction . . . . . BIRCH & CARROLL.

TO-NIGHT. — TO-NIGHT.

By Special Request,  
THE SENSATIONAL AND POWERFUL  
DRAMA,  
**DRIVING A GIRL TO DESTRUCTION**

This Film should have a Special Attraction for Rockhampton Play-goers, inasmuch as the DRAMA was played here some twelve months ago by the Geo. Marlow Dramatic Co., and the Film was taken here by the West's Operator in place of local interest, viz., the Royal Hotel, Criterion Hotel, the Club, the Custom House, Quay-lane, &c., &c. Hundreds of people will remember the Great Court Scene. Come and see yourselves as you came down the steps.

**COME AND COMPARE THE DRAMA AND THE FILM.**

*Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld)*  
7 Dec. 1912, 2.

<sup>5</sup> [no title], 16.

<sup>6</sup> "Palace Theatre," 15.

<sup>7</sup> See "Historical Notes and Corrections" section below for further details relating to Roland Reis's career.

<sup>8</sup> *The Theatre: An Illustrated Monthly Devoted to the Stage* (Sydney) 1 Dec. 1905, 17.

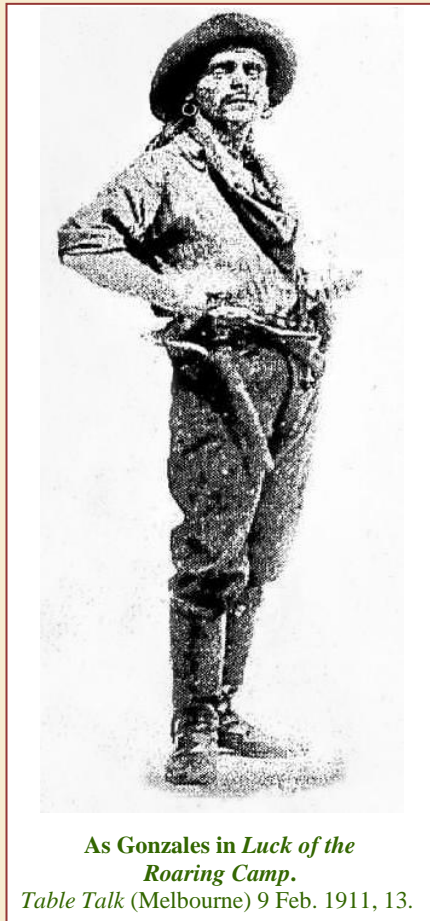
<sup>9</sup> See for example *The Female Swindler*. *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 Oct. 1907,

2. [Criterion Theatre advert.]

<sup>10</sup> See *Royal Standard*.

<sup>11</sup> "*The Queen of Spies*." *Sydney Morning Herald* 11 July 1910, 5.





As Gonzales in *Luck of the Roaring Camp*.

Table Talk (Melbourne) 9 Feb. 1911, 13.

The *Argus* records that Reis's character in *Luck of Roaring Camp* (4 Feb.) was chilling: "Mr Frank Reis makes of Gonzales a gaudily-dressed half-breed, with his fingers always straying towards the knife in his belt, and succeeds in sending many a creepy sensation through the house."<sup>12</sup> The company followed Melbourne with a 20 weeks season in Sydney at the Adelphi, opening once again with *The Bad Girl of the Family* (5 Apr.). Another prominent production was Mrs Morton Powell's *Driving a Girl to Destruction* (17 June). Reis's fellow cast members by then included [John Cosgrove](#), J.P. O'Neill, Harry Diver, Arthur Shirley, [Essie Clay](#), Robert Inman, Ethel Buckley, Cora Warner and Nellie Fergusson. After 20 weeks in Sydney the company returned to Queensland playing Brisbane and a number of regional centres. 1911 also saw Reis appear in a film adaptation of *Driving a Girl to Destruction*. Produced by Marlow and his Australian Picturised Drama Company, the cast comprised most of the members of his dramatic company, along with imported British stage stars Louise Hampton and Cecil Mannering in the lead roles.

Reis remained with George Marlow through until at least mid-1913, with one of his last engagements being a season at Sydney's [Adelphi Theatre](#). Around July/August that year he was engaged as a comedian in a vaudeville program at the [Princess Theatre](#), Melbourne, with this possibly being his first appearance on the variety stage. Among those also on the bill were [George Sorlie](#), [Ted Stanley](#), [Con Moreni](#), [Lyla Thompson](#), the Three Stars and [James Craydon](#). Later that year Reis accepted an engagement from [George Willoughby](#) to appear with his dramatic company during its season at the Adelphi. Other members of the company included Frank Crossley, Arthur Shirley, Charles Taylor and Muriel Dale. Among the productions staged were *The Night Side of London* (4 Oct.), *White as a Lily* (18 Oct.) and *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1 Nov.).

1914 saw Frank Reis begin focusing his attention towards the variety industry, undertaking a tour of New South Wales and Queensland with his own musical comedy and vaudeville company. Invariably billed as "Mr Frank Reis presents The World's Entertainers," and described as comprising leading English and American artists, the original line-up was Ina Alston (Reis's wife), his brother Roland, Gladys Bertram, Sam Chester, Harry Dicconson, Gertie Murdoch, Nell Matheson, Vera Murray, Violet Randall and Sam Stanley. The troupe's first established engagement was in Warwick (Queensland) in late March, with one of the last for the year being a two nights season in Grafton (New South Wales) beginning Boxing Night. Among the feature productions staged were *The Runaway Wife*, *The Evil Stranger* and *The Insurance Agent*. The following year Reis introduced several new productions, notably *The Goose That Layed the Golden Egg*, *On the Brain* (an English farce) and *The Wrong Mrs Wright*. One of the artist's known to have been engaged in 1915 was P. Seton Crisp, who reportedly spent some seven months with the company. The World's Entertainers continued touring up until around mid-1915, with the established itinerary once again including New South Wales and Queensland.

**SAINT PATRICK'S DAY.**

Shire Hall, ARAMAC, . . . March 17, 18, 19.  
 Shire Hall, BARCALDINE, . . . March 20, 22, 23.  
 ILFRACOMBE, . . . Wednesday, March 24.  
 A REVUE OF REVUES.—A DELIRIUM OF DELIGHT.  
 Second Queensland Tour.

Mr. FRANK REIS presents

**The World's Entertainers**  
 MUSICAL COMEDY COMPANY.

**THE GOOSE THAT LAID THE GOLDEN EGG,**  
 the greatest Musical Comedy of the day, presented by a full Company of  
 10 STAR ARTISTS 10  
 —and—

**ON THE BRAIN,**  
 Nonsensical Piece of Absurdity. Performed for 100 nights at the Theatre Royal,  
 Manchester. Introducing all the latest Songs and Dances.

Prices—3s. and 2s. Aramac Box Plan at Lawrence's.  
 Touring Manager, JACK EMSWORTH.

*Western Champion and General Advertiser for the Central-  
 Western Districts (Barcaldine, Qld) 13 Mar. 1915, 5.*

Reis is believed to have had disbanded the World's Entertainers sometime between June and September 1915, at which time he returned to legitimate theatre. His first established engagement was in the [George Marlow](#) Dramatic Company's production of *The Rosary*, staged at the Princess Theatre, Melbourne beginning 25 September. The company later played Adelaide, Broken Hill and Sydney. The latter season saw the Marlow initially lease the Palace Theatre from Boxing Night before transferring to the New Adelphi on 12 February the following year. For the debut Adelphi production, *Mavouneen*, Reis was cast as Billy Button.

<sup>12</sup> "Princess Theatre: *Luck of the Roaring Camp*." *Argus* (Melbourne) 6 Feb. 1911, 9.

1917 saw Reis take up an engagement to tour New Zealand with Brandon Cremer's Dramatic Company. *Australian Variety* records in late-May 1917 that he had recently appeared in *Margaret of the Red Cross* during the company's season at the King's Theatre, in the Auckland suburb of Newtown.<sup>13</sup> In January 1918 Reis appeared in and produced Walter Melville's melodrama *The Girl Who Took the Wrong Turning* at the Victoria Theatre, Newcastle, for **Dix-Baker**.

### 1919 - 1935

By 1919 Reis had returned to the variety industry, establishing a suburban circuit in Sydney and later in several South-west New South Wales towns. In July *Australian Variety* noted: "Frank Reis has three nights vaudeville now at Manly, Balmain and Paddington, and with the show that this fine showman puts over he will soon have the full week, and good luck to him, too."<sup>14</sup> The three Sydney shows were then being played at the National Theatre (Balmain), Oxford Theatre (Paddington)<sup>15</sup> and the Britannia Theatre (Manly). The Balmain venue appears to have been used as his base of operations. A little over a month later he opened at Wollongong, and by November the circuit had expanded to include Corramal (near Bulli) and Woonona. The South Coast circuit did not last long, however, with Reis reporting that although his shows had drawn good houses, "they did not pay for the high-class shows" he was presenting. "The city for mine," he told *Australian Variety* shortly after closing that circuit down.<sup>16</sup>

True to his word, Reis steadily expanded his Sydney suburban circuit during 1920, opening new shows at Mascot and Chatswood from April; Ryde, Enmore, Hurstville and Haberfield from July; and Katoomba in the Blue Mountains from October. Another development was the establishment of the Frank Reis Revue Company - with **Ted Tutty**, Muriel Esbank and **Ida Jarvis** being prominent members around May. The Enmore Theatre venture appears to have been particularly successful, with Reis initially booking acts for the newly-built venue's owners, the Szarka Brothers. After opening his own show there in July *Australian Variety* noted that people were regularly being turned away when Reis's vaudeville show played there on Thursday nights. "Believe me," the writer goes on to say, they are going to continue doing so while they put artists of Joe and Vera White and Devron Brocks' standard on the Bill."<sup>17</sup> Packed houses were also being reported at Mascot on Saturday nights. Some credit for this was directed towards Reis's two publicity men - Paddy Detman and Snowie Munroe.<sup>18</sup>



*Sydney Morning Herald* 16 Nov. 1920, 14.

In September 1920 one industry writer suggested that Reis was rapidly becoming a "vaudeville king," and that he was expected to be operating at least 20 shows a week along his circuit.<sup>19</sup> Advertisements for several Sydney suburban theatres in 1921 (Randwick, Hurstville and Drummoyne) indicate that Reis's vaudeville company remained active up until at least November. How extensive his circuit was by that time is unclear due to limited advertising in suburban and metropolitan-wide newspapers. While Reis, as with most other suburban entrepreneurs tended to rely less on newspapers as a publicity option in favour of cheaper and locally-focused options, the fact that his name has not been identified with variety entertainment in Sydney again after November 1921 suggests that he withdrew from the business. To date his name has only been located in connection with one theatrical enterprise between late-1921 and 1925, with this being his Dramatic Players' revival of *The Face in the Window* in October 1922.



*Sun* (Sydney) 28 Oct. 1922, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Australian Variety and Show World* (Sydney) 30 May 1917, n. pag.

<sup>14</sup> *Australian Variety and Show World* (Sydney) 18 July 1919, n. pag.

<sup>15</sup> Reis also reportedly staged shows at the Paddington Picture Palace at some stage.

<sup>16</sup> *Australian Variety and Show World* (Sydney) 1 Jan. 1920, n. pag.

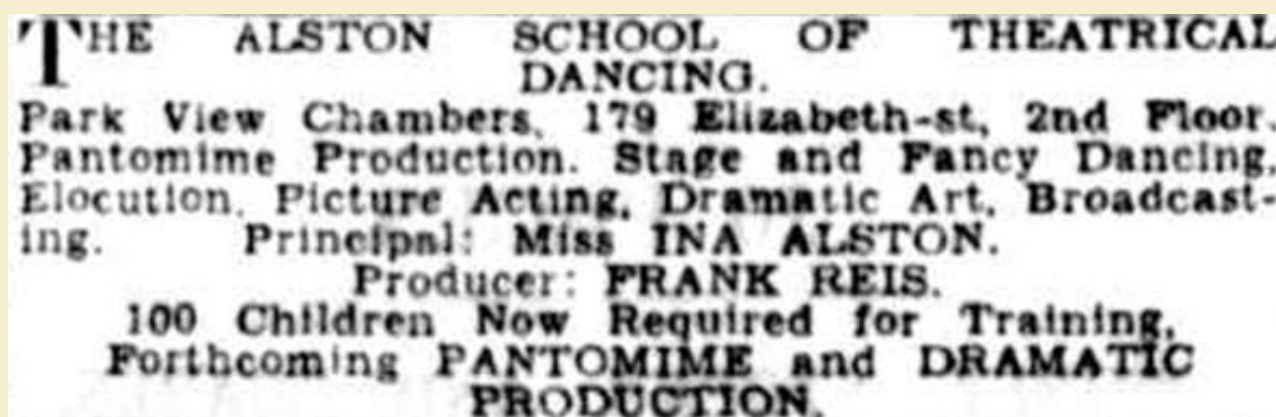
<sup>17</sup> *Australian Variety and Show World* (Sydney) 22 July 1920, 21.

<sup>18</sup> *Australian Variety and Show World* (Sydney) 23 Apr. 1920, n. pag.

<sup>19</sup> *Australian Variety and Show World* (Sydney) 17 Sept. 1920, 7.

Details of Frank Reis's career from the mid-1920s onwards are also currently few and far between. He is known to have returned to acting and stage managing in 1925 through his involvement with the Cameos revusical company during its season in Brisbane. Sometime later that year, or in early 1926 he also became a partner with Brandon Cremer in a venture that involved touring several comedies, including *Charlie's Aunt*, *What Happened to Jones*, *The Private Secretary*, *Tons of Money* and *Tilly of Bloomsbury*. The company they engaged included Leslie A. Jones, Max Sorrell, Cyril Gardner, Scott Watson, Bert Frawley, Gertie Cremer, May Granville, Dorothy Moore, Therese Desmond and Kathleen Arnold.<sup>20</sup> By the early-1930s Reis appears to have taken on the role of producer for his wife's School of Theatrical Dancing.

Interestingly, in 1935 Reis was called a witness on behalf of actor, writer, producer and director Arthur Shirley who was then suing two Sydney detectives for wrongful arrest and assault. A report in the *Truth* newspaper identifies Reis as then being employed as publicity manager of the District Messenger Service in Rowe Street.<sup>21</sup>



*Sydney Morning Herald* 2 Aug. (1933), 2.

### SEE ALSO

- [World's Entertainers](#)

### ADDITIONAL QUOTATIONS AND ANECDOTES

- 1905:** Mr Frank Reis, the erstwhile stage manager of the Anderson Dramatic Company... was undoubtedly the most important member of that organisation, his ability in stagecraft being fully borne out by the magnificent spectacular displays seen in the staging of the various pieces during the company's itinerary under his supervision. Born in Cape Town in 1871, Mr Reis made his first appearance on the boards at the age of fifteen years, and has been right through the theatrical profession, commencing at the bottom of the ladder and, dint of hard work, climbed up steadily to his present position. He was director for Messrs Holloway and Anderson for over six years, made a trip to South Africa, and recounts some good stories of his eight months in the Boer States. Ever since his return to Australia Mr Reis has been acting for Mr William Anderson and so successfully did he tackle and execute the various onerous duties which from time to time devolved upon him in the various capacities of trust which he held that he won the golden opinion of everyone with whom he had contact. In recognition of his signal ability, Mr Anderson appointed him stage manager of his company, and as he can claim to have been the youngest stage manager of any important theatrical venture in Australasia, it is proof positive of his merits... When Mr Anderson determined on sending his combination through Maoriland, on several occasions, Mr Reis was chosen as the reliable man for discharging the important obligations incidental to the stage manoeuvres. Off the stage he possesses many sterling qualities, which cause him to be very popular. The stage hands say he is the best man they have ever had to deal with, and coming from this quarter, it is praise indeed. Mr Reis is now director of the Academy of Dramatic Art, and has a large number of pupils in rehearsal for several well-known dramas, shortly to be produced in the city ([no title] *The Theatre: An Illustrated Monthly Devoted to the Stage* July 1905, 16).
- 1910:** Mr Frank Reis a clever comedian, who stage-managed for Mr. William Anderson for many years, has been secured by Mr George Marlow for his dramatic organisation ("[Music and Drama](#)." *Mercury* 6 Sept. 1910, 2).

<sup>20</sup> "*Charlie's Aunt*." *Brisbane Courier* 16 Feb. 1926, 11.

<sup>21</sup> "[Sydney Film Actor Sues Police](#)." *Truth* (Sydney) 15 Sept. 1935, 1, 14. For further details on the Shirley case see "[Causes in No 3 Court](#)." *Sydney Morning Herald* 17 Sept. 1935, 6.



- 1920: Sydney:** They turn people away from the Szarka Brothers' fine new Theatre every Thursday evening who want to see Frank Reis' vaudeville show, and believe me, they are going to continue doing so while they put artists of Joe and Vera White and Devron Brocks' standard on the Bill (*Australian Variety and Show World* 23 Apr. 1920, 5).
- 1920:** Frank Reis has kept his suburban shows open in the suburbs right through the prince's visit, and although not making a fortune, he kept the ball rolling for his actors (*Australian Variety and Show World* 24 June 1920, 7).

## HISTORICAL NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

- Roland Reis:** While little is known about Roland Reis's personal life or career at this stage, it is likely that he also came to Australia from South Africa with his brother, Frank, or followed shortly thereafter. His name has first been connected with the Australasian theatre industry he acted as the advance rep for the [William Anderson Dramatic Company's](#) 1905 tour of New Zealand (led by Frank Reis). In 1912 Roland toured with J.D. Pilcher's *Vagabonds* through Queensland<sup>22</sup> and the following year he reportedly acted as the advance rep for the *Otto Schmidt Company*.<sup>23</sup> The following year he set up his own school of dramatic art. *Australian Variety* records in February 1914 that he had recently moved into a larger premises at 51-52 Rawson Chambers, Rawson Place (2<sup>nd</sup> floor) due to increased business.<sup>24</sup>

Intermittent reports published in *Australian Variety* and the *Green Room* indicate that "the well-known" teacher of stage aspirants" continued operating his school well into the 1920s, and that he had some success around the turn of that decade as the producer of an act known as *The Dandy Dancers*. A writer for the *Green Room* noted in 1919, too, that as a producer and pedagogue Roland Reis was playing a significant role in the development of young performers:

Probably for the first time in its history St James Hall (Sydney) housed a minstrel show, when Mr Roland Reis and his pupils staged an old-time black-face show at the house on December 2. The programme, comprising no less than forty-four items, reflected much credit on Mr Reis, the producer. The curtain rose revealing the stage, on which sixty performers including six juvenile cornermen were artistically arranged. Space will not permit a review of the individual numbers. Suffice it to say, that managers of theatres will find that they have much to thank Mr Reis for, as his entertainment has shown us how carefully he is modelling stage careers for a host of young Sydneyites. He has accomplished big things, and it is to be hoped that he will continue the good work he is doing with young Australia.<sup>25</sup>

- Ina Alston:** As the wife of Frank Reis, Ina Alston was also heavily involved in the theatre industry as a dramatic and comedy actress, specialty dancer and teacher. Several reports in Perth's *Sunday Times* indicate that she was a member of the "the famous White family," which "produced several fine dancers, no less than three of the same being star-leg twirlers in the Lonnen-Hood Gaiety Co" ca. 1907. Two other sisters were part of an act known as the *Four Rosebuds*, also working the variety circuit around the same period.<sup>26</sup> In addition to Ina, the established identities of two of the other White sisters are Rosie White and Mrs Stanley Grant. Their mother died in February 1909.<sup>27</sup>

**S** **STAGE** **DANCING.**  
**Miss INA ALSTON,**  
**BALLET MISTRESS.**

Pupils trained for the Lyric and Variety Stage, BAL-  
 LETS ARRANGED. The work of my pupil Miss ROSIE  
 WHITE, of the Famous Rose Quartette, Stephenson's  
 Musical Comedy Company, is a testimonial of effi-  
 ciency. Lessons given in all kinds of Stage and Na-  
 tional Dancing. Juvenile Classes Daily. C.o., ACA-  
 DEMY OF DRAMATIC ART, Dalwood-chambers, 117  
 Bathurst-street. Telephone, 4458.

*Sydney Morning Herald* 8 July 1905, 2.



**Miss Ina Alston (Mrs Frank Reis)**  
**Anderson's Dramatic Company.**  
*Mirror* (Perth) 2 Mar. 1907, 21.

<sup>22</sup> *Gympie Times* (Qld) 13 July 1912, 2.  
<sup>23</sup> *Australian Variety* (Sydney) 10 Dec. 1913, n. pag.  
<sup>24</sup> *Australian Variety* (Sydney) 24 February 1914 n. pag.  
<sup>25</sup> *Green Room* (Sydney) Jan. 1919, 9.  
<sup>26</sup> *Sunday Times* (Perth) 24 Nov. 1907, 17.  
<sup>27</sup> *Sunday Times* (Perth) 21 Feb. 1909, 14.

Alston opened her own teaching academy at the National Theatre, Balmain, in March 1920, offering private and class tuition in stage and fancy dancing. The academy was still operating in the early 1930s out of premises in the city. Although called the Alston School of Theatrical Dancing, it also offered training in elocution, picture acting, dramatic art and broadcasting.

## FRANK REIS'S ENTERTAINERS

Incl. **World's Entertainers (1914-1915)**

### 1. Artists and Acts included:

- A:** Madame Adel (1919), [Arthur Alberts](#) (1919), Joe Almsley (1921), Ina Alston (1914-15), [Joe Archer](#) (1919-20), The Automatons (1920).
- B:** Banbury Troupe (1921), Verlie Barclay (1919), Ernest Barraclough (1920), Lottie Beaumont (1919), Gladys Bertram (1914-15), The Bonstellas (1920), Devron Brocks (1920), Edna Brown (1920), Musical Blanchards (1920), Buckley and White (1921).
- C:** Billy Carroll (1920), [Denis Carney](#) (1921), [Cass and Cass](#) (1921), Sam Chester (1914-15), Percy Clifton (1919), Crackerjack Orchestra (1920), The Cracknells (1919), Muriel Creber (1919), [Marshall Crosby](#) (1920).
- D:** Daisy Dale (1920-21), Eugene Damon (1920), The Darraghs (1921), The Darwinians (1921), Hilda Davis (1920), [Percy Davis](#) (1919-20), Desmond and Jansen (1921), Harry Dicconson (1914-15), Doris Docksey (1920), Dozey and Dora (1919), [Driscoll Boys](#) (1920), Louie Duggan (1919), Durno (1921), Will Dyson (1919).
- E:** Eclair Bros (1919), Lulla Elliot (1920) Muriel Esbank (1919-20).<sup>28</sup>
- F:** Prof. Felix's Dogs and Monkeys (1919), Joyce Fidden (1919-20), Lilian Fontenoy (1919), The Four Craydons (1919), Four Dixie Girls (1919).
- G:** [Jim Gaffney](#) (1919), John Gainsford (1921), Stan Gibb (1920), Little Lily Glover (1921), Golden Duo (1921), Beatrice Gordon (1919), Douglas Graham (1920), The Two Greshams (1920).
- H:** [Nat Hanley](#) (1921), Sisters Hardy (1919), Frank Herberte (1919-20), Fred Holland (1919), Gladys Holmes (1919), Homaz Trio (1919), Digger Hughes (1919), Hyman-Uren Troupe (1919).
- J:** [Ida Jarvis](#) (1919-20), [Josie Johnson](#) (1919), The Four Johnson (1921).
- K:** Kauwa (1921), [Jack "Porky" Kearns](#) (1920-21).
- L:** Larvarto and Freddie (1921), [Joe Lashwood](#) (1920), Ernie Laurie (1921), Merle Lawrence (1920), [Ernest Lauri](#) (1919), May Lazern (1919), [Ward Lear](#) (1919), Lee Chee Loon Troupe (1920), Will Leslie (1921), The Lesters (1921, Levarto (1919), Little Maise (1921).
- M:** Four Wee McColls (1919), McColl Family (1920), Sadie McDonald (1921), Stella Mack (1921), Marjorie McInnes (1919), The Two Macs (1920), [Cass Mahomet](#) (1921), Iris Mancer (1920), Two Manchurians (1919), Marguerita (1920), The Dancing Martinis (1919), Nell Matheson (1914-15), Avril Mayne (1919), Marie Maxwell (1921), Mona Maxwell (1919), Melva Trio (1920), Elsie Mitchell (1920), Gertie Murdoch (1914-15), Vera Murray (1914-15, 1919-20).
- N:** Stella Noon (1919).
- O:** Queenie O'Brien (1920), Dud Osborne (1921).
- P/Q:** Pinto (1920), [Grace Quine](#) (1920).
- R:** Violet Randall (1914-15), Raynor and Brennan (1921), Roland Ries (1914-15), Ritson and Knowles (1920), Bella Robertson (1920), Harry Rocks (1919), [Wal Rockley](#) (1920), [Joe Rox](#) (1920).
- S:** Frank Sidney (1919), Eileen Shepherd (1920), Shipp and Little<sup>29</sup> (1921), Six National Girls (1920), The Great Sloggett (1921), Jack Smith (1919), May Smith (1919), Laura Smith (1919), Madge Smithson (1920), Sam Stanley (1914-15), St Leon Boys (1920), Daisy Sylvester (1919).
- T:** [Arthur Tauchert](#) (1919-20), Eloise Taylor (1919), The Tickle Toe Trio (1919), Tilly and Doris (1919), [Ted Tutty](#) (1919-20).

<sup>28</sup> See entry for [Ted Tutty](#).

<sup>29</sup> See [Les Shipp](#) and [Harry Little](#)

**V:** [Joe Valli](#) (1921).

**W:** Walsh and Walsh (1919/1921), Walsh Wilson Trio (1919), Vera Walton (1920), Watts and Maurice (1920), Joe and Vera White (1920), George Whitehead (1921), Upside-down Wight (1919), Peggy Wilson (1919), Winfred and Lumley (1921), Capt. Winters' cats and Dogs (1921), Witt and Sang (1920).

**Z:** [Zigomar](#) (1919).

**2. Production teams included:** H. Cummings (orchestra leader, 1914).

### 3. Additional Notes and Historical Clarification:

- **Orchestra:** Comprised 7 musicians.
- **Frank Herbert:** Also employed as stage manager in 1920.

## ENGAGEMENTS CHRONOLOGY

This chronology should be considered very incomplete. New details will be added as they are located.  
See the bottom of this biography for last update details

**1895:** [OLIVIA KEMP](#) **Brisbane** (Gaiety Theatre; 9 Mar. - > as Advance Rep for Olivia Kempf Dramatic Co) ► [DAN BARRY](#) **Melbourne** (Alexandra Theatre; 26-31 Dec. > Dan Barry Dramatic Co).

**1896:** [DAN BARRY](#) **Melbourne** (Alexandra Theatre; 1 Jan. -).

**1897:** [WILSON FORBES & ERSKINE SCOTT](#) **Melbourne** (Alexandra Theatre; ca. 9 Oct. - > Alexandra Dramatic Co).

**1899:** [GEORGE WARD](#) **Queensland** (regional tour; ca. Mar-Apr. > Ward's Metropolitan Dramatic Co) ► [PHIL WALSH](#) **Queensland** (regional tour; ca. July-Aug. > Walsh's Dramatic Co).

- George Ward's Queensland tour incl. **Rockhampton** (Theatre Royal; ca. early Apr.).
- Walsh's Dramatic Co Queensland tour incl. **Rockhampton** (Theatre Royal; 14 Aug. -).

**1900:** [WILLIAM ANDERSON](#) **Brisbane** (Opera House; 10 Mar. - 2 Apr. > William Anderson's Famous Dramatic Co) • **Melbourne** (Theatre Royal; 30 June - 27 July > William Anderson's Famous Dramatic Co) • **Melbourne** (Theatre Royal; 20 Oct. - 2 Nov. > William Anderson's Famous Dramatic Co).

- Brisbane season comprised: *The Ladder of Life* (10-19 Mar.), *The World Against Her* (20-23 Mar.-), *On Active Service* (24-30 Mar.), and *Two Little Drummer Boys* (31 Mar. - 2 Apr.).
- Melbourne (mid-year season): Although Anderson's company continued on at the Theatre Royal until 14 September, Reis's name does not appear in any cast lists after 27 July (the final night of *The World Against Her*).

**1901:** [WILLIAM ANDERSON](#) **Sydney** (Lyceum Theatre; 6 Apr. - 23 Aug. > William Anderson's Famous Dramatic Co) • **Sydney** (Lyceum Theatre; 21 Sept. - 26 Dec. > William Anderson's Famous Dramatic Co).

- Sydney: Maggie Moore's dramatic company any interrupted the season between 24 August and 20 September.
- Sydney: Although Anderson's Famous Dramatic company continued to perform well into 1902, Frank Reis' name disappears from cast lists after *World's Verdict* ended its return season on 26 December
- Sydney: Reis appeared in every production up until 26 December. These were: *World's Verdict* (6-26 Apr.), *My Jack* (27 Apr.-10 May), *Night Birds of London\** (11 May-21 June), *The Favourite* (22 June-13 July), *Serving the King\** (13-27 July), *The King of Crime* (27 July-10 Aug.), *The Mariners of England\** (10-23 Aug.), *The Orphan Heiress* (21 Sept.-4 Oct.), *The London Arabs\** (5-25 Oct.), *The 10.30 Down Express* (26 Oct.-15 Nov.), *Ladder of Life* (16-29 Nov.), *Honour Thy Father\** (30 Nov.-13 Dec.), *World's Verdict* (14-26 Dec.). NB: Works with an \* were Anderson's Australian premieres.

**1904-05:** Reis returned to South Africa for about eight months, leaving ca. September 1904. He came back to Australia ca. April/May 1905.

**1905:** [FRANK REIS](#) **New Zealand** (Dominion tour; ca. Feb. - > Frank Reis Dramatic Co) • **Sydney** (Palace Theatre; 25 Aug. - > Frank Reis Academy in association with Stella Chapman) ► [J.L. LE BRETON](#) **Sydney** (Palace Theatre; ca. Nov. - > Lily Dampier Co) ► [WILLIAM ANDERSON](#) **Adelaide** (Theatre Royal; ca. 26-31 Dec. > William Anderson's Dramatic Co).



*Quiz (Adelaide) 11 Sept 1903, 13.*

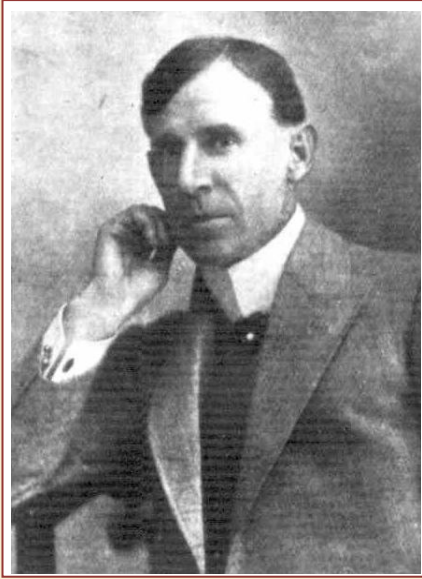


**1906:** WILLIAM ANDERSON Melbourne (Theatre Royal; 1 Jan. - > William Anderson's Dramatic Co) • **Tasmania** (tour; 14 Apr. - > William Anderson's Dramatic Co) • **Victoria** (regional tour; ca. Dec. > William Anderson's Dramatic Co).

- Tasmanian tour included: **Hobart** (Theatre Royal; 14 Apr. -).
- Victorian tour included: **Bendigo** (Royal Princess Theatre; 26-31 Dec.).

**1907:** WILLIAM ANDERSON Victoria (regional tour; 1 Jan. - 28 May > William Anderson's Dramatic Co) • **Perth** (His Majesty's Theatre; 28 Jan. - > William Anderson's No 2 Dramatic Co) • **Fremantle** (King's Theatre; 29 May - 1 June > William Anderson's No 2 Dramatic Co) • **Western Australia** (Eastern goldfields tour; ca. 5 June - > William Anderson's No 2 Dramatic Co) • **Fremantle** (King's Theatre; 24-29 June > William Anderson's No 2 Dramatic Co, return season) • **Sydney** (Criterion Theatre; 26 Oct. - ca. Dec. > William Anderson's No 2 Dramatic Co).

- Victorian tour included: **Bendigo** (Royal Princess Theatre; 1 Jan. -).
- Western Australian goldfields tour included: **Kalgoorlie** (Her Majesty's Theatre; 5 June -).



**1908:** WILLIAM ANDERSON Adelaide (Theatre Royal; 1 Feb. - > William Anderson's No 2 Dramatic Co) • **Tasmania** (state tour; 3 Mar. - ca. Apr. > William Anderson's No 2 Dramatic Co) • **Melbourne** (New Bijou Theatre; 18 Apr. - > William Anderson's Australian Dramatic Co) • **Adelaide** (Theatre Royal; 27 June - > William Anderson's Australian Dramatic Co) • **New Zealand** (Dominion tour; 26 Oct. - > William Anderson's Australian Dramatic Co).

- Tasmanian tour included: **Launceston** (Academy of Music; 3 Mar. -) • **Hobart** (Theatre Royal; 11-21 Mar.) • **Queenstown** (Metropole Theatre; 24-27 Mar.) • **Zeehan** (Gaiety Theatre; 28 Mar.-).
- New Zealand tour included: **Auckland** (26 Oct. -).

**Frank Reis, stage manager with William Anderson's new Australian Dramatic Combination at the new Bijou Theatre, Melbourne.**

*Punch* (Melbourne) 7 May 1908, 17.

**1909:** WILLIAM ANDERSON Adelaide (Theatre Royal; 27 Feb. - 12 Mar. > William Anderson's Famous Dramatic Co) • **Victoria** (regional tour; ca. May-June > William Anderson's Famous Dramatic Co) • **Queensland** (regional tour; ca. June-July > William Anderson's Famous Dramatic Co) • **Brisbane** (His Majesty's Theatre; 5 July - 11 Sept. > William Anderson's Famous Dramatic Co).

- Victorian tour included: **Colac** (Victoria Hall; 10 May -).
- Queensland tour included: **Rockhampton** (Theatre Royal; 26 June-).

**1910:** CHARLES STANFORD Sydney - Lse. Harry Clay (Royal Standard; 9 July - > Charles Stanford Dramatic Co) ► GEORGE MARLOW Brisbane (His Majesty's Theatre; 24 Sept. - > George Marlow Dramatic Co) • **Rockhampton** (Theatre Royal; 29 Sept. - > George Marlow Dramatic Co).

**1911:** GEORGE MARLOW Melbourne (Princess Theatre; ca. 4 Feb. - > George Marlow Dramatic Co) • **Sydney** (Criterion Theatre; 5 Apr. - ca. Aug. > George Marlow Dramatic Co) • **Brisbane** (His Majesty's Theatre; 9 Sept. - > George Marlow Dramatic Co) • **Rockhampton** (Theatre Royal; 29 Sept. - > George Marlow Dramatic Co).

**1913:** GEORGE MARLOW Sydney (Adelphi Theatre; 19 Apr. - ca. May > George Marlow Dramatic Co, 12 nights only) ► FULLER-BRENNAN Melbourne (Princess Theatre; ca. July-Aug.) ► GEORGE WILLOUGHBY Sydney (Adelphi Theatre; ca. 4 Oct. - Nov.).

**1914:** FRANK REIS Queensland (regional tour; ca. Mar - Oct. > Frank Reis's Company of Entertainers) • **New South Wales** (regional tour; ca. Oct. - Dec. > Frank Reis's Company of Entertainers).

- Queensland regional tour included: **Warwick** (Town Hall; 23 Mar. -) • **Rockhampton** (Princess Court; 7-8 May) • **Aramac** (Shire Hall; 21-23 May) • **Townsville** (Theatre Royal; 6 Aug. -) • **Charters Towers** (Theatre Royal; 3-5 Aug.) • **Cairns** (Palace Theatre; 13-15 Aug.) • **Ipswich** (ca. Oct.).
- New South Wales regional tour included: **Grafton** (Theatre Royal; 26, 28 Dec.).

**1915:** FRANK REIS New South Wales (Northern Rivers tour; ca. Feb. - Mar. > World's Entertainers) • **Queensland** (regional tour; ca. Mar. - May > World's Entertainers) ► GEORGE MARLOW Melbourne (Princess Theatre; 25 Sept. - > George Marlow Dramatic Co) • **Adelaide** (Theatre Royal; 12 Oct. - > George Marlow Dramatic Co) • **Broken**

Hill, NSW (Crystal Theatre; 23 Oct - > George Marlow Dramatic Co) • Sydney (Palace Theatre; 26-31 Dec. > George Marlow Dramatic Co) • Sydney (New Adelphi Theatre; 12 Feb. - > George Marlow Dramatic Co).

- New South Wales Northern Rivers tour included: Grafton • Lismore.
- Queensland tour included: Southport • Dalby • Roma • Mitchell • Charleville • Aramac (Shire Hall; 17-19 Mar.) • Barcaldine (Shire Hall; 20-23 Mar.) • Ilfracombe (24 Mar.) • Charters Towers (Theatre Royal; 12-13 Apr.) • Cairns (Palace Theatre; 13 May -).

1916: GEORGE MARLOW Sydney (Palace Theatre; 1 Jan. - 5 Feb. > George Marlow Dramatic Co).

1917: BRANDON CREMER New Zealand (Dominion tour; ca. April - June > Brandon Cremer Dramatic Co).

1918: DIX-BAKER Newcastle, NSW (Victoria Theatre; ca. Jan. > as director).

1919: FRANK REIS Sydney and New South Wales South Coast (circuit).

- Incl. Balmain, Manly, Paddington, Wollongong, Corramal, Woonona.

1920: FRANK REIS Sydney and New South Wales (western circuit).

- Circuit incl. Balmain, Chatswood, Enmore, Haberfield, Hurstville, Leichhardt (Coronation Theatre), Manly, Paddington, Mascot, Ryde, and Katoomba).

1921: FRANK REIS Sydney (suburban circuit)

- Circuit incl. Drummoyne (Drummoyne Theatre) • Hurstville (Queen's Theatre) • Randwick (Randwick Theatre).

1925: n/e Brisbane (Bohemia Theatre; 3 Oct. - > Cameos Co, as actor/stage manager).



Brisbane Courier 29 Sept. 1925, 18.

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