

TRILBY TOURISTS

A short-lived vaudeville company set up especially to take advantage of the public's interest in the *Trilby* phenomenon, The Trilby Tourists principal city engagement was in Brisbane in early 1896. A re-constituted troupe also later played at least one regional NSW centre. The initial line-up included Tracey and Adson, Carlton and Sutton, George Dean, and the Chard Sisters. The second troupe included W. Horace Bent, Harry Clay, Hosea Easton, McKisson and Kearns, Ida Rosslyn, Franks and Williams, and Carlton and Sutton.

The Australian theatre industry of 1896 could be perhaps best known as the year of *Trilby*, or to be more precise, the year of multiple "Colonial" versions of Du Maurier's famous 1894 novel.¹ The first apparent interest in the story came in December 1895, when two productions - *Pat; Or the Bells of Rathbeal* (Theatre Royal) and *Robinson Crusoe* (Her Majesty's) both featured Trilby ballets. The Sydney-based Australian Theatrical Agency subsequently formed the Trilby Tourists variety company for a season in Brisbane.² The engagement, which began in late January 1896 was possibly followed by a tour through northern Queensland.³ A reconstituted, and smaller, troupe also played Bathurst (NSW). That company is believed to have been organised by Mr R. Kinna to play Bathurst during the town's show week (possibly by arrangement with the Australian Theatrical Agency).

The Brisbane public first became aware of the Tourists impending visit in mid-January when the *Brisbane Courier* reported that they would be arriving on 20 January aboard the steamship Leura, and opening on the 22nd. The initial publicity focused on the production of a series of ballets, most notably the Trilby Ballet, and the strength of the company - which comprised some 40 artists.⁴

T H E A T R E R O Y A L.
THE TRILBY TOURISTS HAVE ARRIVED.
TO-MORROW (Wednesday, 22nd January,
TRILBY TOURISTS,

Embracing the very Pick of the Profession in their Respective Lines.

First Appearance in Brisbane of
MISS LOUISE MAYO,
The Delightfully Sympathetic Contralto.
Special Engagement of the Favourite
and Accomplished
Lily | **SISTERS ANDERSON.** | Minnie
The Dashing Serio-Comic Duettists and
Dancers.

First Appearance in Brisbane of
MISS PHOEBE LEVY,
Burlesque Artist and Skatorial Queen.
First Appearance in Brisbane of the
Kings of Comedy and Terpsichore,
Dan | **TRACEY and ADSON.** | Steve
First Time here of the Latest Craze, the New, Novel, and Exciting

First Appearance in Brisbane of
MR. FRANK ADAMS,
The Popular Operatic Tenor, from the
Principal London Theatres.

First Appearance in Brisbane of
MISS EILEEN LESLIE,
The Charming Soprano, from the Town
Hall Concerts, Sydney.

First Appearance at this Theatre of the
Popular Actor Vocalist,
MR. GEORGE DEAN,
Who will Nightly introduce a Selection
from the very latest Songs of the day.

TRILBY BALLET,

Interpreted by the following specially selected Corps of Ballerinas, from the principal Sydney Theatres :- Miss May Edwards, Miss Grace Elvey, Miss Nellie Wynn, Miss Maud Broughton, Miss Phyllis Gilberte, Miss May Navarro, Miss Beattie Lamonde, Miss Hilda Bolders, Miss Ida Bryers, Miss Jennie Matthews, Miss Florence Harland, Miss Hettie Fuller.

Special Engagement of
MR. JACK EVANS,
America's Greatest Buck and Clog
Dancer.

First Appearance in Brisbane of
PROFESSOR GIBSON,
In his Great Battleaxe Juggling Act and
Fire Club Swinging.

First Appearance here of
CHARD SISTERS,
The Fascinating Serio-Comics and
Dancers.

First Appearance here of the Charming
Premier Danseuse,
MDLLE. BARTELLE,
In the Very Latest "Cuckoo" and Skirt
Dances.

Special Engagement of the Ethioptian
Monarchs,
CARLTON and SUTTON,
The Inimitable Knock-about Comedians,
"None but themselves can be their
parallel."

Complete Orchestra, under the direction of Mr. VICTOR BENVENUTI.
Entirely New Scenery! Novel Limelight Effects!! Prices of Admission :-
2s., 1s., and Sixpence. Box Plan at Nicholson's Music Warehouse, Queen-
street. Stage Manager....Mr. GEORGE DEAN.

Brisbane Courier 21 Jan. 1896, 2.

¹ Maggie Moore's 1896 dramatic adaptation was undoubtedly the premiere Australian production, and indeed she is known to have continued playing it through until at least 1898. Among the other productions were burlesque versions by Charles Godfrey (revived in 1897 by *Delohery, Bovis and Deane*), and Melbourne journalist J. North. The Gourleys, touring with *Tommy Hudson's Surprise Party*, also presented a sketch entitled, "Trilby and Svengali."

² "Dramatic Notes," Supp 2.

³ "Theatre Royal Engagements." *Brisbane Courier* 3 Feb. 1896, 4.

⁴ [no title], 5.

The entertainment provided by the Trilby Tourists appears to have been in the minstrel format, with a reference to [Steve Adson](#) being the most successful of the cornermen. One of the highlights of the second week according to the *Brisbane Courier* was the elegant first part depicting the deck of the H.M.S. Trilby.⁵ Following the first part minstrel semi-circle a select number of performers presented their specialty acts, including various dance sequences performed by the ballet corps. The evening then concluded with an afterpiece (or farce) - with these including "McGowan the Millionaire," "The Dummies," "An Artist's Models" (by [George Dean](#)).

PERSONNEL

Performers (Brisbane) incl. Rosie Abbott, Frank Adams, [Steve Adson](#), Jack Evans, [Anderson Sisters](#), Mdlle Bartelle, [Carlton and Sutton](#),⁶ Chard Sisters, [George Dean](#), [Professor G.W. Gibson](#), Louis Mayo, Eileen Leslie, Phoebe Levy, [Dan Tracey](#).

Corps of Ballerinas (Brisbane): Hilda Boulders, Maud Broughton, Beattie Lamonde, Ivy Bryers, May Edwards, Grace Elvey, Hettie Fuller,⁷ Phyllis Gilbert, May Novarro, Florence Harland, Jenny Matthews, Nellie Wynn.

Associated Practitioners (Brisbane): incl. Victor Benvenuti (conductor/music director); George Dean (stage manager); George Perriman (scenic artist).

Performers (NSW) incl. [Steve Adson](#), [W. Horace Bent](#), [Carlton and Sutton](#), [Chard Sisters](#), [Harry Clay](#), [Maggie Clive](#), [Hosea Easton](#), [Gus Franks](#), [Blanche Montague](#), [Gray Sisters \(Aggie and Anne\)](#), [Mons. Hyman](#), [Arthur Hunter](#), [Master F. Jefkins](#), [Jack Kearns](#), [Albert McKisson](#), [Ida Rosslyn](#),⁸ [Herbert Rowley](#), [Lillie Rowley](#), [Little Stella Tracey](#), [Jack Williams](#), [W.J. Winton](#)

Associated Practitioners (NSW) incl. R. Lockhead (Conductor/music director); J.W. Rhodes (pianist).

ENGAGEMENTS CHRONOLOGY

1896: [AUSTRALIAN THEATRICAL AGENCY](#) Brisbane (Theatre Royal; 22 Jan. - 12 Feb.) ► [R. KINNA](#) (in association with Australian Theatrical Agency) [Bathurst, NSW](#) (School of Arts; 14 Apr. -)

NB: Although the *Brisbane Courier* of 3 February records that the company was to "take a trip to the Northern towns" and that "all arrangements" had "already been made" (4), no details of this tour have yet been located.

FURTHER REFERENCE

"Amusements: Theatre Royal." *Brisbane Courier* 25 Jan. 1896, 5.

"Dramatic Notes." *Mercury* (Hobart) 1 Feb. 1896, Supp. 2.

"Evening Entertainments: Theatre Royal." *Brisbane Courier* 28 1896, 3.

[no title] *Brisbane Courier* 17 Jan. 1896, 5.

"Theatre Royal: Trilby Tourists." *Brisbane Courier* 23 Jan. 1896, 6.

"Trilby Tourists, The." *Bathurst Free Press* (NSW) 15 Apr. 1896, 2.

TRILBY ←
TOURISTS!
30 Star Artists 30

By Special Arrangement with Mr. HARRY RICKARDS, Tivoli Theatre, Sydney, and at an enormous cost,

MR. J. W. WINTON,
In his original entertainment introducing McGinty, the Talking Automaton, ENGLAND'S PREMIER VENTRILOQUIST.

Miss Ada Rosslyn,
The Pleasin; Serio-Comic and Song and Dance Artist.

STEVE ADSON,
The Popular Dialect Comedian and Premier Dancer.

Aggie (Gray Sisters) Anne
The Charming Duetists and Dance Artists.

Horace Bent
Buff. Eccl!

Miss Lillie Rowley,
The Brilliant Soprano.

McKisson & Kearns,
Albert] [John
The Unrivalled and Knock-out Comedians.

Little Stella Tracey,
The Phenomenal Serio-Comic and Dancer.

Hosea Easton,
America's Representative Classical Solo-Banjoist End-man and Comedian.

Miss Blanche Montague,
Balladist and Irish Patriotic Vocalist.

MONS. HYMAN,
The Human Serpent, acknowledged to be the Greatest European sensation of the Age. Direct from the Paris Hippodrome.

Miss Maggie Clive,
The Fascinating Tyrolean Vocalist.

Franks and Williams
GUS] [JACK
The Clever Double Acrobatic Song and Dance Artists and Jugglers.

Chard Sisters
In their pleasing and latest London Specialty "Her Christian name was Mary, but she took the Bawdy."

Harry Clay,
The Silvery Tenor.

Herbert Rowley,
Tenor Vocalist

Carlton and Sutton
HARRY] [TED
Refined Song and Dance Artists, introducing their Marvellous Statue Clap Dance.

Arthur Hunter,
The Dramatic Baritone, late of Mr. Edward's "Gaiety Girl Co."

Master F. Jefkins,
The Marvellous Juvenile Cornet Soloist.

Arthur Hunter,
The Dramatic Baritone, late of Mr. George Edward's "Gaiety Girl Co."

Master F. Jefkins,
The Marvellous Juvenile Cornet Soloist.

Full and Efficient Orchestras, under the Baton of
L. LOCKHEAD.

MR. J. W. RHODES PIANIST

POPULAR PRICES: 3s 2s & 1s
BOX PLAN AT HEARNE'S, CHEMIST.
Doors open at 7 p.m. "Smiling" at 8 sharp.
Carriages 10.30.

Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal 11 Apr. (1896), 3.

⁵ "Theatre Royal, 6.

⁶ Harry Carlton and Ted Sutton.

⁷ Daughter of John Fuller Snr, and sister to Benjamin, John Jnr and Walter Fuller.

⁸ Aka Ida Tauchert / Mr Jack Kearns.