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## **Come Over Here! The Local Hybridisation of International ‘Ragtime Revues’ in Australia**

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*Two entertainments advertised as ‘revues’ premiered in Australia 1913-14; Come Over Here and Hullo Ragtime, both advertng to West End revues of the same titles. The immediate contexts of these productions exemplify the lines of local flow and blockage in the processes of the international circulation of personnel and genres of popular commercial entertainment, with its musical, visual or choreographic texts. Revues in this period were closely related to ideas of generic rule-breaking and cosmopolitan modernity. They are also intricately linked with the technologies of recorded sound which now complemented the sale of sheet music for domestic consumption and leisure. The main musical vehicles of revue are ‘ragtime’ music and its associated popular dances, and also the tango, whether in theatrical display or as social practice. Veronica Kelly is Emeritus Professor in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History, University of Queensland. Her most recent book is *The Empire Actors: Stars of Australasian Costume Drama 1890s-1920s*, (Sydney: Currency House, 2009).*

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Figure1, Feminised modernity: J. C. Williamson's poster for *Come Over Here*. State Library of NSW, Poster Coll. 1597/2.

<http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au/search~S2?/cPOSTERS+1597%2F2/cposters+1597%2F2/-3,-1,0,E/1856~b2535476&FF=cposters+1597%2F1&1,1,2,0>

On 20 December 1913 the spectacular revue *Come Over Here* premiered at Her Majesty's Theatre in Sydney and ran in the traditional pantomime season. It was produced by the 'Firm' of J. C. Williamson Ltd (JCW) and its industrial significance as 'the First Australian Revue Season' is clearly proclaimed in advertising. In order to contextualise this event, I will examine the Australian productions of two shows ostensibly based on major London revues, themselves hybrids of American, European and native British performance practices and personnel. These are *Hullo, Rag-Time!* produced by Albert de Courville as his first Hippodrome revue, opening on 23 December 1912: a spectacle which drew international attention for its scenographic innovation, its all-American star cast, and above all for its tuneful ragtime music. The other London hit is *Come Over Here*, opening at Oscar Hammerstein's London Opera House on 19 April 1913 and produced by Wilson Mizner and Max Pemberton.

It is typical of the adventitious and asynchronous fortunes of national performance histories that *Come Over Here* was produced in Australia before the earlier revue *Hullo, Rag-Time!* The Australian significance of the two events produced locally under these titles lies in their framing through the industrial practices of differently focussed entertainment organisations. *Come Over Here* was created with the lavish house style but rather cautious aesthetic ethos of the dominant Australasian commercial chain, typically offering the allurements of a West End success and new imported star personalities. *Hullo Ragtime* (its Australian title) followed instead the production practices of Harry Rickards' Tivoli Theatres Ltd, then under the new management of Hugh D. McIntosh, using his available local and touring American variety stars and experimenting with an open-air venue to offer a new audience experience. *Hullo Ragtime* provided an opportunity to signal McIntosh's determination to expand his operations beyond variety and to compete with Williamson's in its own field of lavish musical spectacles. An international sports caterer and promoter, 'Mac' used his revue production to launch tango teas in the capital cities, thus forging bonds with local fashion emporia and promoting his operations to affluent female audiences. In their local versions, these two 'first' revues display significant investment in exploiting the entrepreneurial and marketing opportunities inherent in revue's international fame as the pre-eminent vehicle of novelty and modernity. This glamour was signified to the public by the personalities of its stars, and not least by its displays of popular dance forms and music which both modeled and followed Australian tastes and social activities. In this exploitation of the attractions of revue, as we will see, the work of Williamson's and of Tivoli Theatres may have disappointed some Australian interests, but the new form soon succeeded in engaging both the enthusiasm of audiences and, equally significantly, the commercial collaboration of fashion retailers, dance instructors, music publishers and sellers of recorded music technologies.

JCW's claim for the national inauguration of 'West End revue' offers an opportunity to examine some of the processes by which the genres of international commercial entertainment may be realised in different reception environments, particularly when the generic components of a particular genre are already embedded in multiple practices and sites of origin. The coming of Australian revue is not, then, a simple story of ready-made importation, nor of cultural imposition, nor even of the routine 'localisation' of extant overseas productions. Indeed, for its initial revue venture, the Firm's production culture did have instinctive recourse to many of these habituated craft models, widely recruiting varied specialist experts like the Drury Lane pantomime producer and composer Frank Dix and its house choreographer Minnie Hooper. But for such composite international forms as revue there can be no unitary point of national or dramaturgical origin. Revue's main trump card is its enthusiastic claims for cosmopolitan eclecticism, both in its personnel and in the varied national characteristics displayed by its contents.

Such spectacles can be broken down into fluid and discrete modular components – whether these be persons (performers and production experts), musical and choreographic texts, visual images or spectacular technologies. The discrete historical trajectories of these components are governed by the

prevailing international cultural or political pathways: the British Empire or the Anglo-American world being two instances of such global dominance before the World War 1. The trajectories of the elements of spectacle are enabled also by technological infrastructures: for example, owing to accessibly priced recorded sound devices, American popular dance and music had by 1914 achieved unprecedented international social, theatrical and domestic presence in countries such as Australia. But while each component may typically choose to claim, or to have applied to them, a particular label of national identification, or an exotic origin validated by a high-profile production such as de Courville's *Hullo, Rag-Time!*, the actual national origins of international performance practices are dispersed and hybrid. Herr Van Tromp's multi-media train-race sensation from Amsterdam, used in both the British and Australian productions of *Come Over Here*, is such an example; and its classically-trained Austrian musical director Emil Biermann's expertise in ragtime was validated, not by Vienna, but by his work in the United States.

### ***The pre-war revue boom***

19th-century *revue* developed in French minor theatres as an episodic satirical entertainment which 'reviewed' the follies and events of the day in the manner of a living newspaper. Charles Cochran, a major producer of early-20th English revue, defines it as "any kind of mixed entertainment, drawing on all the elements of theatre and music hall without a connected thread or story." In 1995 the Australian historian John West described revue as he knew it as "a mixture of satire, songs and sketches" having "a company of performers working together, a strong comic presence, a backing chorus, plenty of music and a structure of sketches and songs."<sup>1</sup> Overall, its generic development exemplifies what Michael Booth, describing the earlier 19th-century evolutions of pantomime, extravaganza and burlesque, calls "the continuous evolution and the reworking of inherited traditions and modes of dramatic writing."<sup>2</sup>

Revue's perceived ultra-modernity and self-conscious metropolitan glamour, along with its popular impact, made it a decisive game-changer for 20th-century popular performance. In its hybrid Franco-Anglo-American-European versions, revue first swept the theatres of the world during the decade before World War 1, and it maintained its dominance up to the 1960s. Obviously, its component elements of song, dance, comedy and spectacle and episodic dramaturgy can each trace long pre-histories in various forms of popular theatre. In terms of its disjunctive structure, revue shares some formal aspects with 19th-century variety and with satirical story-based burlesque. With various degrees of force, pantomime, minstrelsy and variety also deployed the topical and satirical. But despite the familiarity of its components, in the decades before the first war, 'revue' was understood as the newest new thing, epitomising cosmopolitan and even revolutionary modernity in both mode and content. Australian journalists in this period tried to explain revue's thrill of novelty by measuring it against the yardsticks of the familiar and defining it by comparison with what it was not – or rather, what it was not quite: "it is not a musical comedy, it is not a ballet, it is not a succession of music hall turns, but is a mixture of all. It can best be described as

a very clever, very tuneful, and very splendidly mounted Christmas Pantomime.”<sup>3</sup>

In his *British Theatre in the Great War*, Gordon Williams analyses revue’s disjunctive modernist form with its montage structure, its frequent paratheatricity (revues about the making of revues were common), its intermedial use of cinema, and its restless driving pace and unmotivated leaps of locale and mood. He gives a seriously considered interpretation of the domination of revue during that conflict, when it was hailed “as much a part of modern life as the cinema, the motor-car, the aeroplane and wireless telegraphy”<sup>4</sup> – as integral to modernity, indeed, as the war itself. He summarises pre-war revue as a revolutionary innovation “colouring all theatrical forms”:

Dissonance and illogic had already invaded the European theatre; and in Britain innovators like Poel and Barker [...] had rejected the dominance of the proscenium in favour of fluidity, continuity and closer links between stage and audience. But it was the revue which forced these things into the conservative heartland of the West End, stealing the avant-garde’s thunder with a dramaturgy whose only rule seemed to be ‘the more revolutionary the better.’<sup>5</sup>

Modernity was seen as rushing forward breathlessly to ever-more wonderful devices and technological possibilities. During the run of the Australian version of *Come Over Here*, its principal comedian Jack Cannot interpolated a skit about a supposed new invention “announced as the latest from the brain of ‘Macaroni,’” by which, at any time, one could contact anyone in any part of the world.<sup>6</sup> Revue itself was such a modern globalising communicative invention, variously channeling multi-directional cultural flows of Black American musical rhythms and ragtime dances, international stars, modernist fashions, ultra-modern scenic abstraction, the tango, and lavishly choreographed ballet sequences. Set-piece specialty acts, as well as dancers, comedians and singers, moved freely between (for example) Paris, Berlin, Vienna, New York, London, Sydney or Melbourne, and its performers typically worked also in adjacent forms such as musical comedy, pantomime or the French music hall.

The London productions of both *Come Over Here* and *Hullo, Rag-Time!* were highly cosmopolitan in their creative teams, and they show-cased American stars, dances and music. Anna Held and Fanny Brice were amongst the players of *Come Over Here*, while its musical director was Max Steiner, the Austrian composer and conductor who was brought to London by George Edwardes to direct *The Merry Widow*, and who would later become a major Hollywood screen composer.<sup>7</sup> *Hullo, Rag-Time!* attained 451 performances and showed London such popular songs as ‘Alexander’s Rag-Time Band,’ ‘Everybody’s Doin’ It,’ ‘Waiting for the Robert E. Lee,’ and ‘Row, Row, Row.’ *Come Over Here* used ‘Robert E. Lee’ and ‘On the Mississippi.’ We clearly see typical theatrical satire in a turn called ‘My Sumurun Girl.’ This is a typical intertextual revue reference to Max Reinhardt’s oriental spectacular musical pantomime *Sumurun*, seen in London in 1911. For this artistic modernist dance-drama Reinhardt introduced the famous *hanamichi* walkway adapted from Japanese theatre. Upon its

introduction in *Hullo, Rag-Time!* revue producers seized upon this physical feature for their own use, not as a specialist turn, but throughout the entire spectacle. The 'plank,' as it was now prosaically called, stretched across the stalls from back of house to front-stage, enabling performers to move over the heads of the orchestra and the audience.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 2, Shirley Kellogg and Chorus on the plank in *Hullo, Rag-Time!* at the Hippodrome, 1912. Joe Mander and Raymond Mitcheson, *Revue: A Story in Pictures* (London: Peter Davies, 1971).

We have now touched upon two salient features of revue. The first is that its final artistic responsibility centrally devolves on the producer, who is responsible for concept co-ordination and casting, probably also for production finance, and for establishing the all-important running order which essentially makes or breaks the revue experience.<sup>9</sup> The great British revue producers were Albert de Courville, Andre Charlot, Charles Cochran, Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge, to name but a few in this long-lived enterprise. A pre-war revue was typically given an arresting but thematically unrestricting catch-phrase title (*Hullo, Tango!, Kill That Fly!, Not Likely!*) and then created in rehearsal through the collaboration of its performers, composers and arrangers, designers and choreographers. It rarely displays a single author for book, lyrics and music; one prominent exception being Noel Coward, whose 1928 revue *This Year of Grace* defied that particular convention in being sole-authored and sole-composed. The second salient feature is revue's modernist provocation in the field of format, for example adapting the plank as a physical feature which punctured the fourth wall and brought the action into the audience space in what many regarded as a rather scandalous way. The plank that was first seen in *Hullo, Rag-Time!* was taken into many successive Australian revues. The final decisive markers will be more fully considered at the end of this paper. These are revue's impact on

popular music and social dancing practices; its mediatory function in translating and popularising Black American music; and its technological “symbiotic relationship”<sup>10</sup> with recorded and sheet music and with cinema.

### ***Revue comes to Australia and the Bulletin's intervention***

*Come Over Here*, with its West End imprimatur, was showcased as a signal Australian event, and as such it followed into His Majesty's another such notable landmark: the Thomas Quinlan Opera Company's first Australian production of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. Further, the revue's premiere date was chosen to synchronise with the inaugural production of the Firm's South African subsidiary, thus appropriately celebrating its own international activities. By the end of October the artistes of the new sensation were arriving in Australia for rehearsals, as did the show's co-producer, adaptor and lyricist Frank Dix, with his strong track record in both musical comedy and, significantly, in Drury Lane pantomime. Reviews of the production suggest a strong affinity with contemporary spectacular pantomime practices. Dix's responsibilities for localising the show and writing new songs were such that Clyde Meynell sent the Gaiety dancer and comedian Oscar O'Dee from London as joint producer. The show's scenic artistes Leslie Board and William Little were home-based, as was Williamson's powerful choreographer Minnie Hooper, while the musical director was the Austrian ragtime enthusiast Emil Biermann.

In 1913, before revue had been officially produced in Australia, it was explained to South Australian newspaper readers that this entertainment is “more irresponsible than musical comedy (if anything of the kind can be imagined), and contains even less in the way of a plot.”<sup>11</sup> Here we see musical comedy being distinguished for expectant Australian audiences as a main generic reference point, which requires some immediate historical contextualisation. Its historians have in fact identified early English revue as sharing a particularly immediate historical and formal relationship with 1890s Gaiety musical comedy.<sup>12</sup> The Gaiety shows after *In Town* (1892) were not the tightly scripted and produced narrative-based book musicals that later dominated the popular musical theatre field. During the three decades preceding the war, European operetta of the *Merry Widow* type fulfilled that function. Pre-war English musical comedy used a constantly updated combination of players, songs, spectacular scenes and ensemble pieces, dominated by improvising comedians and trademarked by the beauty chorus. The songs of musical comedy were the work of numerous hands, the developmental process collaborative and the plot haphazard, thus its internal format altered considerably over the length of their long runs. Only the title remained stable and patrons could revisit the show numerous times and enjoy new acts and jokes and fresh faces.<sup>13</sup> Upon seeing *Come Over Here* in Adelaide in June 1914, the *Advertiser* was now able to assess revue first-hand as a quintessentially contemporary form, this time electing to reference pantomime as the generic point of comparison:

Here is doubtless another evidence of the complete supremacy of the all-pervading spirit of hustle; which has now invaded the realm of the imaginative, and threatens to bring about a revolution in men's minds as



complete as the change which has been wrought by its influence in the sphere of the actual. On the twentieth century stage things, must happen quickly and keep on happening. And it does not seem to matter very much what happens! *Come Over Here* is emphatically a mirror of public taste. It furnishes the play-going public with just that which it has demanded, incoherently perhaps, but consistently, for many months. It reaches the new ideal and very generously 'goes one better' in several directions. As a matter of fact, it is ultra-modern and elaborate pantomime, with some new features.<sup>14</sup>

One influential weekly journal, the Francophile Sydney *Bulletin*, was meanwhile promoting its own opinions about what Australian revue should mean, and running an interested agenda of its own. The *Bulletin's* essentially literary and critical modernising project was not compatible with the actual practices of commercial producers who maintained their own industrial definitions of the 'modern.' As early as July 1913 it was publishing potted histories of the form stressing its French satirical origins, as a spectacle conveying a "sort of sublimated gossip." Alluding to Aristophanic precedent, the *Bulletin* wrote that:

Australians, in their passion for broad humour and bitter satire; in their national self-consciousness; and in their love of seeing their own institutions burlesqued, bear a close resemblance to the Greeks, who first discovered the usages of the Review.

Within the context of Australian journalism, this form of oppositional scrutiny closely describes the ideological niche assumed by the *Bulletin* itself. The coming Australian theatrical 'review,' it prophesied, will have "something in the nature of a coherent plot. The humor and language will be such as Australians are familiar with. It will show places that everybody knows, and faces that 90 per cent of the audience will delightedly recognize."<sup>15</sup> These predictions are being fairly confidently made since, at that very time, two prominent literary men (and *Bulletin* journalists) were engaged in writing the script for precisely such a revue. These writers were John Bede Dalley and Ernest O'Ferrall: the latter under the name 'Kodak' wrote many of the *Bulletin's* theatrical items. Revue writing would have been well within this pair's competence and interests.<sup>16</sup>

Their account of this undertaking, as presented at a subsequent court case, is that in April 1912 they were approached by Hugh Ward, JCW's managing director, to write an Australian revue, and "subject to suitability" JCW would stage it. The project was given the working title 'Have You Seen Bodger?' and was set around Sydney and its resorts, precisely as *Come Over Here* would prove to be. Ward saw and encouraged the work in progress, and the manuscript was completed around July or August. Thereupon Ward informed the authors that JCW had purchased the rights to *Come Over Here*, but if that were successful the 'Bodger' script would be staged afterwards. In February 1914, when *Come Over Here* was indeed proving successful, Dalley and O'Ferrall demanded that it be stopped and sought legal compensation for extensive plagiarism from their



script, claiming it materially damaged their property and compromised its chances of production.<sup>17</sup> Nothing further came of this litigation, nor was 'Bodger' produced. It is, however, clear from press reports that Frank Dix's attempts at script adaptation to Sydney (and later Melbourne and Adelaide) in the routine mode of pantomime localising were considered by most commentators as inadequate old hat, and that more had actually been hoped for in that respect than the Firm was willing to supply. Its immediate model, British revue, was in any case blocked by the Lord Chancellor from developing French topicality to its full capacity, and its satires tended to be confined to theatrical burlesques and in-jokes.<sup>18</sup>

So it is not at all clear just how Machiavellian Ward was being by encouraging the completion of a 'ghost' revue script from leading Australian comic journalists, during just the very months when the Firm's own new venture was in the adaptation and rehearsal processes. However one of the *Bulletin's* most famous visual signatures was actually realised onstage in *Come Over Here*. This was the 1885 creation by the American cartoonist Livingston Hopkins ('Hop') of the iconic figure the Little Boy at Manly, created as a satirical comment on colonial enthusiasm for the Soudan campaign. The only vestige of revue *à la française* was the character Little Australia, played by a youthful Gertie Cremer and costumed as the *Bulletin's* famed cartoon creation. This character functions as the Commère, one of French revue's two commentator characters, the Compère and Commère, the former being a worldly-wise guide to the revue's action for the benefit of the naïvely innocent Commère.<sup>19</sup> The Little Boy breaks up a dispute between the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition: "When you've done calling each other names, perhaps you'll do something for me!"

Given their likely authorship, the *Bulletin's* critiques of *Come Over Here* in production were predictably sceptical: it had "no original humour" and "the girls were even better painted than the scenery."<sup>20</sup> The staid and Anglophile *Sydney Morning Herald* also found the premiere so slow that it suggested as an alternative title 'Stay Over There.'<sup>21</sup> But even the *Bulletin* agreed that by late March the production, cut and re-paced, had become a different and smarter show for its Melbourne run. The principal comedian Jack Cannot had 'written' himself a new part and it had the advantage of three months' 'rehearsal' in Sydney: "a show which is tried for months on one dog is likely to be well received if it is submitted later, in its perfected form, to a very similar variety of dog."<sup>22</sup> The *Bulletin's* modernist dreams of an original satirical revue on the French pattern on the commercial stage had little weight given the house practices of the Firm, which typically sought to assure its audiences that they would simultaneously experience the essentially 'new' and a tried and respectable international hit. It was performers such as Cannot, rather than literary journalists, who were commercial revue's real 'authors.'



Figure 3, Jack Cannot

<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/pictoria/gid/slv-pic-aab74572/1/b28966>  
(May and Mina Moore Coll., State Library of Victoria)

### ***The personnel and production of Come Over Here***

Williamson's *Come Over Here* starred comics Charles Stone and blackface comic Johnny Osborne, both of whom had been connected with the musical comedy *The Arcadians* in Australia or the USA.<sup>23</sup> The seemingly incongruent presence of a blackface performer links the ultra-sophisticated new revue to traditional minstrelsy, since this local 'flow' was, at least initially, too strong for revue to resist. Minstrelsy in its Australian format remained a favourite entertainment at that period, which reminds us, as Richard Waterhouse has demonstrated, of the extent of "American cultural penetration" of Australian popular entertainment since the 1870s at least. In the pre-war decades Harry Rickards' variety shows for his Tivoli circuit still used blackface minstrel performers and were deeply influenced by minstrelsy format and content.<sup>24</sup> Favourites from Williamson's Savoy-focussed New Comic Opera Company performed in the cast of *Come Over Here*. Ten handsome English showgirls also arrived to wear the outré fashions of the plank parade, half of whom had performed in London's *Come Over Here* and half in its *Hullo, Rag-time*. This astute publicity move triggered the usual complaints that there were already plenty of gorgeous girls in Sydney, which were offset by eagerness to study the assets of the newcomers.<sup>25</sup>



Figure 4. Daisy Jerome. Author's coll, n.d.

The revue's headliners were the brilliant English comedian Jack Cannot and the American *diseuse* Daisy Jerome. Cannot really ran his own show and its ultimate success was partly due to this performer's responsive ability to read an audience and upgrade his material accordingly. Jerome was an individualist whose huge personality made up for her vocal deficiencies as a singer. She arrived in Australia in the best star style, "dripping with rajah's jewels" and expensive dresses, and soon put the local press in its place, respectfully listening at her feet.<sup>26</sup> The red-haired Daisy spoke more than sang her numbers in a rasping accent as a solo act on the forestage and the plank. During her idiosyncratic renditions of 'Row, Row, Row' or 'The Press, the Pulpit and the Petticoat', Daisy would wink naughtily while messing with the conductor's hair or embracing enraptured male audience members. The show's stand-out act was however the novelty dance piece 'The Spider's Web' with dancers Fred Leslie and Ivy Schilling,<sup>27</sup> in which Leslie as the Spider enticed the butterfly Schilling into his web, a huge rope construction backed by a colourfully changing illuminated backcloth. This act from the Marigny Theatre in Paris was also used in the London revue *Eightpence a Mile* in May 1913.<sup>28</sup> The musical director Biermann transposed Mendelssohn's 'Wedding March' into ragtime, and new local songs (e.g. 'Taking Tea at Farmer's') were written by Biermann and Frank Dix.



Figure 5. 'Come Over Here Tango': <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn1491151>

*Come Over Here* was a tribute to urban bourgeois consumption, leisure and technological up-to-dateness. Thanks to Messrs Pathé Frères' cinematograph, the cast were first seen arriving outside Her Majesty's before entering the stage door to prepare for the performance. The revue had the usual lightly-applied frame plot, in this case, a pair of lovers on their wedding day who rush through the sights of Sydney and of many other noted locales of pleasure and leisure, encountering not only the city's fashionable present but its past and future. The delightful sites include a French beach, the Roof Garden Theatre in Farmer's Sydney emporium, and the ski slopes of Mt Kosciusko. For the wedding scene in the vestibule and interior of the Hotel Australia, the cast danced rags and tangos, including "the much debated scissors step."<sup>29</sup> In their journey back to the past, the cast encounter panoramas of Circular Quay from pre-settlement time onwards, while in the future they witness a 'Venetian Fete' at Manly Beach set in 1990: both these time-shift spectacles are standard nationalist pantomime panorama features. The revue's big scene, besides the 'Spider and the Fly', was a race between a car and a train using cinema and lighting effects from the Deutsches Theater in Amsterdam and supervised by its creator Mr Van Tromp. This was a speciality of the London *Come Over Here*, as was the 'Venetian Fete': a specialty act featuring a huge water tank act in which beauties in futuristic 1990 bathing costumes descended and then mysteriously disappeared. Orientalism received its due in the ballet 'The Flowers of Allah' danced to music of "Slav brass style" in costumes of "weird Bakst design", wherein dancer Vera Pearce 'reviewed' Adelaide Genée's eastern *ballets d'action*, recently seen in Australia.<sup>30</sup>

As the show transferred to Melbourne and Adelaide it was re-written, in the mode of touring pantomime, with localisations, novelties and new songs which fitted it to each new city; a move to accommodate a 'London' success to the expectations of specific local audiences. After Christmas an acrobatic ballet of girls trained by Minnie Hooper and a Tiller-style Pony Ballet were added.<sup>31</sup> As Harry Lauder was due in the country in April, Jack Cannot pre-empted him with a song 'My Wee Australian Lassie', written by Biermann. Cannot did his Lauder impersonation while a small child (Jennie Keith) danced the Highland Fling in a kilt: upon seeing this act in Melbourne Lauder applauded liberally.<sup>32</sup> For Melbourne the sites, scenery and targeted politicians were re-localised, and an audience plant gag was introduced where individuals cause interruptions and a 'policeman' intervenes. All turn out to be cast members who join in an on-stage bell-ringing act: an example of revue's frequent breaking of the proscenium boundary and destabilising of roles between audience and actors.<sup>33</sup> Then Adelaide audiences enjoyed their own localisation of the modern and historical scenes, but like all the Australian reviewers the Adelaide press didn't think much of the very perfunctory political satire, which was basically just recognition of prominent politicians played by actors in character make-up. Again, Daisy Jerome's risqué style took some getting used to, but she worked hard and successfully to win over her audiences, and indeed remained an Australian variety artiste until 1922.<sup>34</sup>

### ***The 'first' Australian 'revue'? Rival claims and productions***

As Tracy C. Davis claims, the 'West End' had become the leading authenticated "trade mark" within the distribution of modern entertainment – and it certainly held that status for J. C. Williamson's – so in this industrial sense *Come Over Here* is indeed Australia's first such revue.<sup>35</sup> But given the rich mixture of theatrical and performance elements which already existed in Australia, its claim was of course challenged by the Firm's entrepreneurial rivals. For example, the manager William Anderson opened show *A Day at the Races*, performed by his American Musical Burlesque Company, at Brisbane's His Majesty's on 13 September 1913, three months before *Come Over Here* premiered in Sydney. Advertised as "the favour [sic] of New York for two seasons",<sup>36</sup> this entertainment had already begun its Australian run in Melbourne on 15 March; part of the Australasian and the Far Eastern tour of W. R. Hughes' Oriental Amusement Company. It was a fast-paced comic musical play set in New York leisure resorts, with lots of work for ethnic comic types including the Hebrew comic (and later major Australian variety star) Bert Le Blanc, and the 'Dutch' comic Frank Vack. A review states that this production showed 'the class of entertainment which finds favour in the United States, in contrast with the musical comedy and burlesque which we get from the other side of the Atlantic.'<sup>37</sup> This tells us something about how popular genres can be classified by their supposed base of distribution, but the word 'revue' is not yet in play.

After an Adelaide season advertised as a 'burlesque',<sup>38</sup> the show moved to Melbourne to open at the King's Theatre for the racing season on 1 November 1913, the Saturday before Melbourne Cup Tuesday. By that time the *Argus*

reviewer could credibly link *A Day at the Races* with West End precedents, calling it “the avant courier of the ragtime revues of which ‘O, I Say!’, ‘Come Over Here’ and ‘Eightpence a Mile’ are the leading ornaments.” Its performers appeared to follow no book and improvised as they pleased, with lots of ‘coon’ songs, ragtime and slit-skirted tango, the whole producing “a strenuously droll, preposterous orgy of musically-animated disorder.”<sup>39</sup> Loose and arbitrary scenic locales veering from Hell to high society, strong comic independence and above all ragtime music, were formal features which this directly imported entertainment shared with those shows explicitly labeled ‘revues’ which mediated their own American influences via London, or indeed Vienna.

But the principal Australian manager who jostled with J. C. Williamson’s for the distinction of introducing revue was Hugh D. McIntosh, the new owner of Rickards’ Tivoli vaudeville circuit and a long-time enthusiast of American novelties – these being cheaper imports than English ones due to the shorter travel distance. At Christmas 1913, during a particularly torrid Adelaide heatwave, ‘Mac’s variety troupe was operating at his New Tivoli Theatre.<sup>40</sup> In February he announced that he would inaugurate an open-air theatre at the Adelaide Oval, to be called the New Tivoli Gardens, and that its chief attraction would be a revue *Hullo Ragtime!* Alfred de Courville’s London revue *Hullo, Rag-Time!* had indeed commenced its run at the Hippodrome over the previous Christmas, but what, if anything, had Mac’s Adelaide show to do with it? The main features stressed in the Tivoli’s pre-publicity are “the latest London and New York song successes ... which will probably be whistled by everybody in Adelaide before the company have been appearing a week” – that and its hopefully cooler open-air venue.<sup>41</sup>

On 28 February *Hullo Ragtime* opened and reviews make it clear that many of its vaudeville turns had merely been diverted from the New Tivoli troupe then working in Grote Street. Its author and producer was Hugh Huxham, a comedian and singer who worked in Australasia and the Far East for three decades after 1900.<sup>42</sup> All that it had in common with the London show were the title, generic ragtime and tango, runaway hit tunes such as ‘You Made Me Love You’,<sup>43</sup> and the plank used for the singers to deliver their numbers using the audience as chorus. McIntosh’s biographer Frank Van Straten records that, even though thousands clamoured for admission, the New Tivoli Gardens was not a financial success. Alas, members of the South Australian Cricket Club already had the right of free admission to the Adelaide Oval, so Mac’s take was a mere £29. After a ‘second’ and ‘third edition’ of the show turning over fresh material in the mode of change-weekly variety, it ended mid-March.<sup>44</sup>



VICTOR RECORDS FOR AUGUST—1911

**Two New Greene Records**

"Gene" Greene, Comedian

	<p>5853 <b>Cancel That Wedding March</b>      Ted Snyder      10</p> <p>5854 <b>King of the Bungaloes</b>              Greene-Straight      10</p>	
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Greene

The August records by Mr. Greene will be found most amusing. "Cancel That Wedding March" is the touching story of a broken engagement, wherein Ephraim Jackson requests the organist to play a funeral dirge instead of the Mendelssohn Wedding March which had been decided upon!

In the "King of the Bungaloes" Mr. Greene relates that he has been notified of his accession to the title of Gazoo in a South Sea isle; and the narrative is accompanied by some of the remarkable stunts for which the singer is famous, and which no one could possibly describe!

Figure 6. Gene Greene, recording star, Victor Records promotion,  
<http://www.mainspringpress.com/greene.html>.

The most outstanding and significant performer in McIntosh's *Hullo Ragtime* was the American singer Gene Greene (1881-1930), hailed in the USA as the Emperor of Ragtime. Historian John Whiteoak calls Greene "the most influential ragtime singer to tour Australia." He was not a new engagement since by early 1914 he had been playing for McIntosh all of the previous year, along with his accompanist the pianist Charlie Straight. Together they both performed ragtime standards and ragged popular songs at audience request (as Emil Biermann did more formally with his Mendelssohn rag in *Come Over Here*), and Green's records were already widely known in Australia.<sup>45</sup> During the war Greene popularised the pacifist song 'I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier', which was banned in British Empire regions. His less controversial pre-war repertoire comprised solid ragtime classics such as Irving Berlin's 'I Want to be in Dixie' and 'International Rag'. Ragtime hits were recorded for the Gramophone, as Al Jolson did with 'You Made Me Love You' in June 1913, so were able to be heard, played or danced to at home, thus familiarising them further for popular usage. Greene's presence in the show was fleeting, yet, seen with the example of *A Day at the Races*, it confirms that Australian theatre had ample direct access to live performance of up-to-date American musical culture and its stars without their necessarily having being cycled through West End revues.



### *Recorded entertainment media and social practices*



*Figure 7. Multi-mediated entertainment; Nicholson's Music Shop, Sydney 1905, displaying sheet music, musical instruments and phonographs. Nicholson's also sold theatre tickets.*

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-vn4776847>

Let us now consider revue's key function in synching with popular international trends in music-making, technological reproduction and consumption, and in revolutionising of social as well as theatrical dance. The average three-minute average playing times of the new recording media of the Phonograph and the Gramophone defined the format of popular songs for the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup> Ragtime music and ragtime dance are umbrella terms covering a wide variety of urban Black American practice originating in the late 1870s. Two decades later ragtime music was again popularised by the compositions of Scott Joplin and by vaudeville and minstrel show performers, and was danced in restaurants and public dance halls. As ragtime internationalised, its composers could be black or white, American or not. Ragtime had a third, dance-related revival in the early teens of last century, led by the European immigrant composers who inhabited New York's Tin Pan Alley, exemplified by Irving Berlin, whose 'Alexander's Ragtime Band' of 1911 set the new tone. This song, it was said, lifted ragtime "from the depths of the sordid dives to the apotheosis of fashionable vogue."<sup>47</sup> To quote American dance historian Eve Golden:

The spread of this new music for a new century was helped partly because of the new technology: older forms of music had been disseminated through sheet music, local composers and musicians, and band concerts, but with the invention of the Gramophone and the Victrola, music came into the home with no effort (and in a more professional, unadulterated form).<sup>48</sup>

This, then, is the style of music that went viral during the revue era. Music and dance forms were dispersed by revue, demonstrated and rendered fashionable across continents as the vital signature of international modernity and youth culture, chiming with the irreverent restlessness of a generation facing terrible new problems.

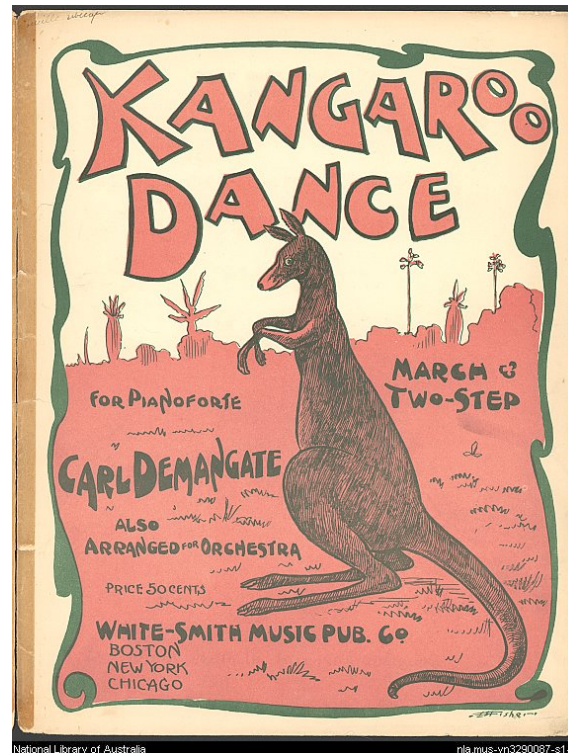


Figure 8. 'Grizzly Bear' sheet music with star endorsement: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-an13479569>

Thanks to the athletic and graceful style of the Anglo-American dancing team of Vernon and Irene Castle, the new social dances of the ragtime era caught on as a worldwide rage. These were the one-step (to become the post-war foxtrot), the hesitation waltz, the Texas Tommy and Gaby Glide, plus a large variety of 'animal dances': the Bunny Hug, Turkey Trot, Kangaroo Dip, Chicken Scratch and Grizzly Bear. These all moved way from formal steps towards walk dances, which could be learned quickly and enjoyed at home (accompanied by piano sheet music or recorded disc or cylinder) and practised for public social use.<sup>49</sup> They invited personal or idiosyncratic innovations and embellishments on the part of the dancers, to the despair of dance teachers and enraged retired colonels who suspected (respectively) that they were losing control of a traditional formal art to individualistic and morally dubious bodily invention, or that something was happening in the public sphere that they didn't like.<sup>50</sup> Many onlookers decided to believe that the protestations that ragtime was just good clean youthful fun were actually disingenuous. One viewer of Melbourne's first

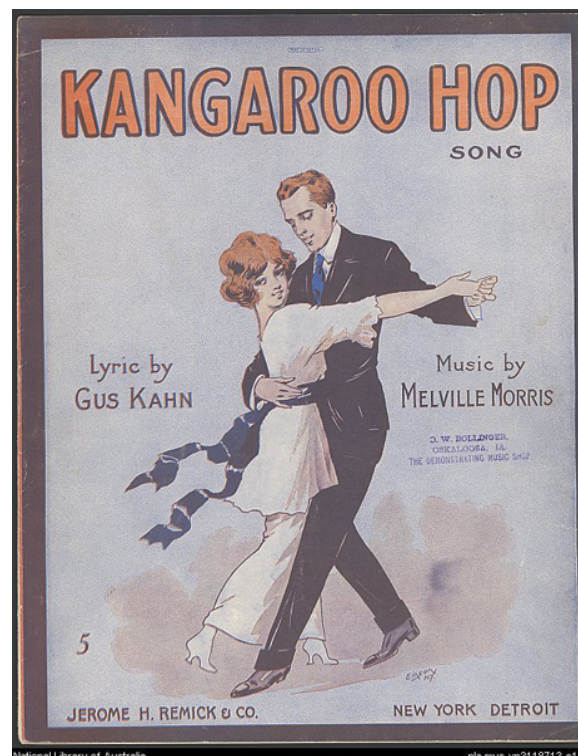


tango tea, held at the Opera House, witnessed the dance demonstrations held onstage. While the event's compere declared that the Turkey Trot was above moral suspicion, to the reporter the ensuing demonstration rather suggested the opposite.<sup>51</sup>



National Library of Australia

nla.mus-vn3290087-st-v



National Library of Australia

nla.mus-vn3118713-st-v

Figure 9 & 10. Internationalising of popular 'animal dances': 'The Kangaroo Dance' and 'The Kangaroo Hop Fox Trot': <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn3118713>; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn3290087>

### *Take me to that tango tea*

This phase of ragtime music and dance is inseparable from recorded music, and here it moves in tempo with theatrical display, particularly that of the ragtime revue. But the ragtime dances were not the only pre-war international craze showcased in the revue. Argentinian tango was popularised and mediated in Europe around 1911 into an acceptable ballroom version. It too proved the kind of popular passion that arouses official condemnation. In November 1913, just one month before *Come Over Here* opened in Sydney, the dance was predictably banned by the Vatican, and in the same month Kaiser Wilhelm also forbade his officers to dance the tango in public while in uniform. This signals the high popularity of the dance in Germany; where, as elsewhere, tango was eagerly embraced by high social classes and danced in the big hotels, restaurants and ballrooms, especially during Europe's wild 'tango year' of 1914.<sup>52</sup> It must be recalled that the Valentino-type tango familiar from 1920s films, with its swoop and dip style and long elegant legwork, comprises only one variation of a dance which over a century has diverged into numberless styles, both in Argentina itself and the international ballrooms and stages. For the purposes of the pre-war revue, the tango was danced as a kind of waltz variation, and 'tango' rivalled 'ragtime' or 'cubist' as synonyms for those social expressions of modern sophistication that were also fun. Profitability also played its part, as tango and ragtime proved in spin-offs by the retail, fashion, theatrical and the hospitality industries.

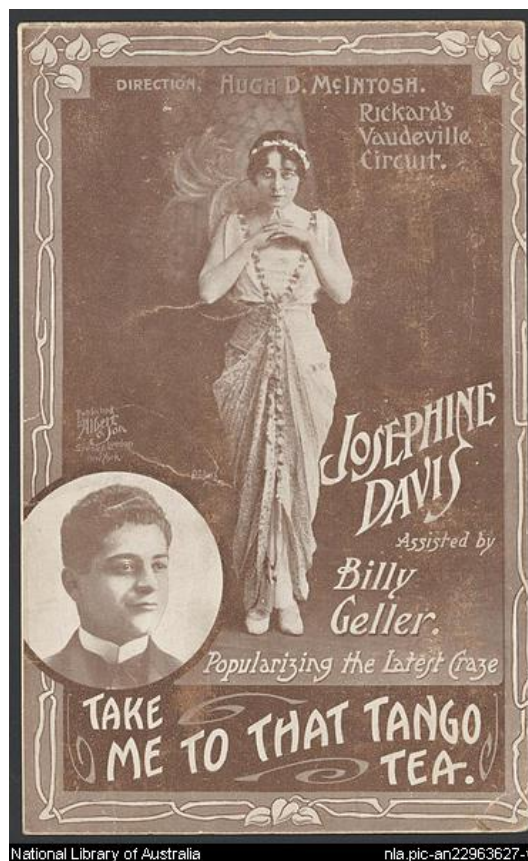




Figures 11 & 12. 'The Bunyip Tango' (English composer) and 'The Tango Rag' (Australian composer)] <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-an5863502> and <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn342755>

The witness of the allegedly dubious Melbourne tango tea, mentioned above, was attending just such a diversifying commercial initiative of the energetic Hugh D. McIntosh, who introduced these events in Australia. In other regions and times, tango teas might take the form of an afternoon *thé dansant* held in hotels or ballrooms, but McIntosh's version was both more expansive and less loftily sited than this. Mac held his events in theatrical stalls and foyers, thus maximising the use of his theatre spaces in the daytime hours. His tango teas consisted of exhibitions of the new dances by current Tivoli dance stars, with the audience invited to try some novel steps partnered by the instructors. Added were top-line vaudeville acts, refreshments, and girls parading the latest fashions in corsetry, night attire, kimonos, millinery and the new American underwear. All these were advertising tie-ins not only with theatrical shows but with local frock emporia (like Farmers and the other capital-city department stores represented in *Come Over Here*). And these models paraded on the plank, just as the revue showgirls did.<sup>53</sup> The tango teas were a huge success, making of the theatres a highly feminised space dedicated to pleasure, entertainment, consumption and fashion.





Figures. 13 & 14. McIntosh and his entertainment tie-ins  
 'Take Me to That Tango Tea' <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an22963627>  
 'That Tango Tea Tango' <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn422288>

Shortly, and by means of the portable gramophone, the hit songs of revue followed the soldiers of all nations from the home front into the war. “Lively selections from favourite musical revues wafted through the battlefields of Ypres and the Somme.”<sup>54</sup> Revue and ragtime music was part of soldiers’ leave-time entertainments, and in both major wars they would produce revues for their own amusement, whether in front lines, barracks or as prisoners.<sup>55</sup> For Australian homefront commercial theatre during the War, revue was almost the only game in town. Both McIntosh and the Williamson organisations laid on revue after revue, and not merely because the overseas specialised acts that had been the backbone of variety were now hard to secure under wartime travel conditions.<sup>56</sup> Popular, modular and flexible and relatively cheap to produce, the now locally-scripted revues were a wartime cash-cow of commercial managements, including Williamson’s and the Tivoli.



Figure 15. Wartime recruiting poster based on an English design, Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, 1916, State Library of Victoria (H2000 212/17)

[http://digital.slv.vic.gov.au/view/action/nmets.do?DOCCHOICE=950423.xml&dvs=1351211991930~351&locale=en\\_US&search\\_terms=&adjacency=&usePid1=true&usePid2=true](http://digital.slv.vic.gov.au/view/action/nmets.do?DOCCHOICE=950423.xml&dvs=1351211991930~351&locale=en_US&search_terms=&adjacency=&usePid1=true&usePid2=true)

Hence, the conditions of revue’s official Australian debut at the end of 1913 signal an important regional marker exemplifying the flows and blocks typifying the circulation of international theatrical modernity in the 20th century. And as we have seen, this debut, though branded with the reliable ‘West End’ tag, was itself ‘previewed’ by the contextual matrix of local performance



practices and audience knowledge horizons. Subsequently, its various components were claimed, mediated, replaced, appropriated, ignored or adapted to the industrial and historical conditions it would encounter in its new site. As a theatrical genre, revue proved hugely successful in Australia during the first half of the 20th century: blended, rifled, re-made or adapted to local preferences, favourite performers and economic fluctuations. While international commercial modernity danced to American ragtime rhythms and was marketed as fashionable, technologically up-to-date and cosmopolitan, it soon assumed a strong Australian and local emphasis which sorted through the particular formats and cultural influences desired at its own site of reception. During the ensuing half-century there flourished such variants as intimate revues, student revues, magical revues, satirical and leftwing political revues, as well as native comedian-centred comic work<sup>57</sup> and Palladium-type commercial spectaculars, ice follies and glamorous nudie shows with showgirls, staircases and towering feather head-dresses. Rather than 'staying over there', revue had truly 'come over here'.

This study of the 'first' ragtime revues in Australia offers an example of the multiple energies and trajectories of early-20<sup>th</sup> century commercial international forms. Upon their syntagmatic reassembly and mobilisation in a new site, the fate of each of a genre's distinctive suite of performance or textual components – personnel, texts, dramaturgies, technologies, practices, aural or visual images – is subject to locally and historically contingent forces. This may result in its successful new recombination and embedding within the complex of transnational genealogies of connection and flow, or, less often, in its partial or total blockage. We have seen also that a dominant repertoire of cognate generic material, and even sporadic activity opportunistically identified as 'revues', were current before the 'First Australian Revue Season' of *Come Over Here*. The managerial claims to be offering revue for the 'first' time, both in the case of this show and of *Hullo, Rag-Time!* are basically topical advertorial tributes to the international prestige of this form as it evolved in the West End in the first decade of the century. The form's subsequent rapid assimilation in Australia is an effect of the strong performance traditions of those topical and musical spectacular genres which preceded revue – forms which include minstrelsy, variety, pantomime and musical comedy – but also to the region's half-century of sustained exposure to American live popular entertainment.

I am grateful for the feedback given to this work by Dr Jonathan Bollen of Flinders University, Adelaide. The paper based on this research was delivered at the conference 'Race, Nation and Empire on the Victorian Stage' in Lancaster, UK, 11-14 June 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Cochran, *Cock-a-Doodle-Do* (London; Dent, 1941), 301; John West, "Revue," *Companion to Theatre in Australia* ed. Philip Parsons and Victoria Chance (Sydney: Currency, 1995), 500.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Booth, 'Introduction to Volume Five,' *English Plays of the Nineteenth Century. Vol. 5: Pantomimes, Extravaganzas and Burlesques* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), 20.

<sup>3</sup> "In Theatre Land," *Sunday Times* (Perth), 11 January 1914, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Sydney W. Carroll, *Some Dramatic Opinions* (White, 1923), 84, cited in Gordon Williams, *British Theatre in the Great War: A Re-evaluation* (London: Continuum, 2005), 52.

<sup>5</sup> Williams, *British Theatre*, 21.

<sup>6</sup> "New Revue Feature," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 February 1914, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Tony Thomas, "Biographical History," *Register of the Max Steiner Collection*, MSS 1547, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, 1996, accessed 7 May 2012. <http://files.lib.byu.edu/ead/XML/MSS1547.xml>.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, *British Theatre*, 24.

<sup>9</sup> For the importance of the running order, see Noel Coward, "Foreword," in R. Mander and J. Mitchenson, *Revue: A Story in Pictures* (London: Peter Davies, 1971), vii-vii. The big nodal points are the first-half finale and the second number in the second half, so spectacular that "the stragglers from the bar will settle back comfortably in their seats, happy in the knowledge that the second half is going to be even more brilliant than the first." Albert de Courville, familiar with revues at the Folies Bergère and Ziegfeld and Schubert in New York, also had his format: "every revue should have at least four big full stage spectacular effects and that these effects should be developed in the course of a musical number," with the main air repeated with variations "until it became popular." *I Tell You*, cited in Harry Stone, *The Century of Musical Comedy and Revue* (Central Milton Keynes: Authorhouse, 2009), 23.

<sup>10</sup> D. L. Lemahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars* (Oxford: OUP, 1988), 93.

<sup>11</sup> "The Revue," *The Register* (Adelaide), 22 July 1913, 4. Historians of popular theatre have explicitly linked revue as coming immediately out of musical comedy in the Gaiety mould. See Harry Stone, *The Century of Musical Comedy and Revue* (Central Milton Keynes: Authorhouse, 2009); Ronald Pearsall, *Edwardian Popular Music* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1975).

<sup>12</sup> Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson provide a revue genealogy descending from Planché's and Buckstone's burlesques of the 1840s and Byron's extravaganza, and whose theme was mostly theatrical satire. When these forms were nearly finished, topical satire was revived in the 1890s by Seymour Hicks and Charles Brookfield, whose *Under the Clock* played at the Royal Court in 1893, which was an attempt to acclimatise Parisian satirical revue minus the politics, hence consisting mostly of theatrical in-jokes and parodies. *Revue: A Story in Pictures*, 1-20.

<sup>13</sup> Pearsall, *Edwardian Popular Music*, 26, 43.

<sup>14</sup> *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 8 June 1914, 18.

<sup>15</sup> *Bulletin*, 17 July 1913, 10.

<sup>16</sup> O'Ferrall's "helped to diminish the *Bulletin's* emphasis on the bush [and] promote an inner-city and suburban comic mythology." Ken Stewart, "O'Ferrall, Ernest Francis (1881-1925)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed 7 May 2012. <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/oferrall-ernest-francis-7883/text13705>.

<sup>17</sup> "Law Report. Supreme Court. In Equity," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 February 1914, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Mander and Micheson, *Revue*, 24; Charles Cochrane, *Cock-a-Doodle-Do*, 301ff. gives a good potted history of English revue's beginnings.

<sup>19</sup> *The Mail* (Adelaide), 30 May 1914, 12S.

<sup>20</sup> *Bulletin*, 2 April 1914, 9.

<sup>21</sup> "'Come Over Here.' Australia's First Revue," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 December 1913, 3.

<sup>22</sup> 'Blogs,' *Bulletin*, 7 May 1914, 9.

<sup>23</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 1913, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Richard Waterhouse, *From Minstrel Show to Vaudeville: The Australian Popular Stage 1788-1914* (Sydney: NSW University Press, 1990), 121-26. In 1901 Rickards introduced a 'revue' format to the minstrel show first half, this being "an extended series of acts linked by a theme." In 1912 H. D. McIntosh banished this 'revue' format and returned to a first half consisting of a series of turns (122-23). But by that time Mac was distinguishing his own 'revue' productions as something different and new, neither of which they in fact were.

<sup>25</sup> *Examiner* (Launceston), 27 November 1913, 8, gives these women's names.

<sup>26</sup> "Miss Daisy Jerome. Arrived Today," *The Mail*, 29 November 1913, 5S.

<sup>27</sup> Ivy Schilling, born in Melbourne in 1892, was an Australian-trained dancer who sustained an international career. This act, seen in Adelaide, fascinated the youthful Robert Helpmann and in the early 1930s was recreated by him partnered by Frances Ogilvie for the Melbourne Theatre Royal 1931 pantomime *Sinbad the Sailor*, and then toured on the Hoyts and Regent *ciné-variété* circuits. Anna Bemrose, *Robert Helpmann: A Servant of Art* (St Lucia: UQP, 2008), 89; 28-32.

- <sup>28</sup> In this production by George Grossmith at the Alhambra the dancers were Theodor Kossloff and Phyllis Monkman.
- <sup>29</sup> "Come Over Here.' Australia's First Revue," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 December 1913, 3.
- <sup>30</sup> "Come Over Here.' Australia's First Revue," *Argus*, 30 March 1914, 13.
- <sup>31</sup> "Another Revue Feature," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 February 1914, 13.
- <sup>32</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 February 1914, 24; *West Australian*, 18 April 1914, 9.
- <sup>33</sup> *Argus*, 30 March 1914, 13. Sheet music of 'My Wee Australian Lassie (My Bonnie Waratah)' for piano with words by Ernest Bell, music by Jack Cannot and Emile Biermann (Sydney: Albert & son, 1914), ID 2874822 is held in the National Library of Australia.
- <sup>34</sup> Clay Djubal, "1913", "Come Over Here" and "Daisy Jerome," *Australian Variety Theatre Archive: Popular Culture Entertainment 1850-1930*, accessed 8 May 2012. <http://ozvta.com/2011/05/12/australian-variety-theatre-archive-now-online/>. Jerome reports how she had to win over the audience in Sydney but less so in Melbourne, see "An Unconventional Star. Miss Daisy Jerome. Disappointed Interviewers," *Advertiser*, 9 June 1914, 13.
- <sup>35</sup> Tracy C. Davis judges West End theatre, "trade-marked as such," as supplying the predominant exportable commercial theatrical products of its age: "a solid example of the mutual determinacy of trade and culture" (*The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), 395). Yet such world centres as London are significant mostly as the distribution points which concentrate, transform and distribute not only the energies of their own provinces and empires, but which adapt and recirculate the diversely cosmopolitan cultural expressions of other such focal centres outside of its own particular political and financial sway.
- <sup>36</sup> Advertisement, *Brisbane Courier*, 12 September 1913, 2; Clay Djubal, "Bert Le Blanc," *Australian Variety Theatre Archive: Popular Culture Entertainment 1850-1930*. accessed 4 September 2012. <http://ozvta.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/le-blanc-bert-1172012.pdf>.
- <sup>37</sup> *Brisbane Courier*, 15 September 1913, 10.
- <sup>38</sup> Two photographs from the Adelaide run showing Bert Le Blanc and Frank Vack are published in *The Mail*, 18 October 1913, 12.
- <sup>39</sup> "Music and Drama," *Argus*, 3 November 1913, 12.
- <sup>40</sup> This variety house opened on Grote Street in September 1913, seating 2,000, and with modern electrical and ventilating systems. Eric Irvin, *Dictionary of the Australian Theatre 1788-1914* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1985), 23.
- <sup>41</sup> *The Mail* (Adelaide), 21 February 1914, 12; "Vaudeville de Luxe," 21 February 1914, 12.
- <sup>42</sup> "Hullo! Ragtime! Unique Entertainment," *The Mail*, 28 February 1914, 12 S. Clay Djubal, "Hugh Huxham, including Edith Huxham," *Australian Variety Theatre Archive*, accessed 11 September 2012.
- <sup>43</sup> Music James V. Monaco, lyrics Joseph McCarthy, premiered 1913.
- <sup>44</sup> Frank Van Straten, *Huge Deal: The Fortunes and Follies of Hugh D. McIntosh* (Melbourne: Lothian, 2004), 88-89.
- <sup>45</sup> John Whiteoak, "Ragtime," *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, ed. John Whiteoak and Aline Scott-Maxwell (Sydney: Currency House, 2003), 562.
- <sup>46</sup> The Phonograph, invented by Thomas Edison in the 1870s and using wax or (later) celluloid cylinders, was falling out of use in the immediate pre-war decades. Its 1890s rival and eventual displacer was the Gramophone Company with (after 1909 in Commonwealth countries) its signature 'His Master's Voice' logo of Nipper the dog listening to the machine's sound horn. This machine used flat 12-inch discs playing around four minutes, and both discs and reproduction instruments were mass-produced and comparatively cheap. Pearsall, *Edwardian Popular Music*, 132-145.
- <sup>47</sup> Eve Golden, *Vernon and Irene Castle's Ragtime Revolution* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 51-57.
- <sup>48</sup> Golden, *Vernon and Irene Castle's Ragtime Revolution*, 52.
- <sup>49</sup> Pearsall, *Edwardian Popular Music*, 181.
- <sup>50</sup> Shirley Andrews and John Whiteoak, "Social Dancing," *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, 615-16.
- <sup>51</sup> *Bulletin*, 10 February 1914, 9.
- <sup>52</sup> "1913, November 17 – Kaiser Wilhelm Bans Tango," *Today in Tango*; (<http://todayintango.wordpress.com/2010/11/17/1913-november-17-kaiser-wilhelm-bans-tango/>); "Vatican's Ban on Tango: It is Declared an Immoral Dance and is Therefore Prohibited," *New York Times*, 21 November 1913, 1; Bob Skiba, "In Philadelphia, Everybody Was Doin' It ... or

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Not," accessed 11 May 2012. *The Philadelphia Dance History Journal*, 17 April 2012.

(<http://philadancehistoryjournal.wordpress.com/tag/tango-teas/>); Williams, *British Theatre*, 1.

<sup>53</sup> See e.g. "The Giddy Tango," *The Mail*, 28 February 1914, 12.

<sup>54</sup> Lemahieu, *A Culture for Democracy*, 86-87.

<sup>55</sup> Frontline troops sang 'Tipperary' or 'Pack Up Your Troubles' as readily as they did the revue and musical hits 'If You Were the Only Girl in the World' (from the 1916 Alhambra revue *The Bing Boys Are Here*), 'Let the Great Big World Go By,' 'You Made Me Love You,' or Jerome Kern's hit 'They Didn't Believe Me' (from the 1916 musical comedy *The Girl From Utah*).

<sup>56</sup> This is the position of Valentine Napier, daughter of Charles Napier who worked up his 'Spider and Fly' act in New York in 1913. Napier is a defender of 'real' variety as 'good family fun' against rival popular forms such as revue, with its anarchic and 'blue' comedians. Charles Grahame, "Australian Vaudeville: Valentine Napier's Act as Known With Notes on Australian Vaudeville," *Australasian Drama Studies* 17 (October 1990): 58-72.

<sup>57</sup> Clay Djubal identifies a distinctively Australian form the 'revusical,' a one-act musical comedy held together by a storyline and typically the vehicle for a team of comedians such as Nat Phillips and Roy Rene. He traces its immediate origins in burlesque and musical farce, and sees Bert Le Blanc's American Burlesque Company tour of 1913 as a strong antecedent. In the 1920s 'revuette' was shortened to 'revue' and thus became confused in later memory with theme-based revue. "Revusical," *Australian Variety Theatre Archive: Popular Culture Entertainment 1850-1930*, accessed 3 September 2012. <http://ozvta.com>.