Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4861

Landau, Yetty

(1895 - 1971)

Born	18950606, Bendigo Victoria Australia
Died	19710907, Canberra Australian Capital Territory Australia
Occupation	Actor, Broadcaster, Teacher

Summary

Yetty Landau was an actor and comedian who worked in Melbourne and with travelling companies. She was a popular broadcaster in Melbourne and Canberra and with her actor husband set up schools which taught drama, elocution and public speaking. After her husband’s death Yetty continued teaching verse speaking, training choirs and successfully preparing students for the examinations of Trinity College, London.

Details

Yetty Landau was born on 6 June 1895 in Bendigo, Victoria to Samuel, (also known as Simon or Yeshiyahu) Landau a 60-year-old hawker and his wife 34-year-old Dora, the daughter of Zebulun Miller and Sophia Muskovitz.

From childhood Yetty showed talent as a performer. Competing against adults from all over Australia, she won the Grand Championship for Elocution at the South Street Eisteddfod, Ballarat, Victoria.

She began acting professionally under the direction of Gregan McMahon and then joined the Ian McLaren Shakespeare Company. By 1915 she was working with Harry Craig's Australian Players on their three-month Tasmanian tour.

When she married the actor and sometime lion tamer Frank James Pearson (born Francis Bernard Vaughan) in Melbourne on 24 January 1916, they both gave their usual addresses as 'constantly travelling'.

Yetty played comedy with Bert Bailey's Australian Company for five years creating the role of Amelia Banks in *Grand-dad Rudd* and Sara in *On Our Selection*. She went on to contracts with the Fuller Management and Rickards Tivoli Theatre Circuit. In her last Melbourne performances in 1926 she shared the stage with the famous theatre entrepreneur J.C. Williamson himself, in a play called *The Farmers Wife*.

Yetty taught drama and elocution and her pupils won prizes at the eisteddfods in Victoria. By 1926 Yetty and her students were involved in radio broadcasts. Although apparently popular with listeners, such a public career was not entirely welcomed by her family.

Yetty and Frank ran the Landau-Pearson Academy of Combined Arts from the home they named *Franyette* in Preston. They taught elocution, dramatic art, public speaking and musical monologues. Yetty's niece tutored piano.

Yetty and Frank visited Canberra for 6 weeks in 1934, but stayed and continued their acting and teaching careers. Yetty appeared with Canberra Repertory and in 1935 briefly presented a children's programme on local radio.

By 1936 the Landau-Pearson Modern School of Voice Culture taught speech-craft, drama, broadcasting and talking picture technique to pupils in Canberra's Civic Centre in suburban Manuka and in nearby Queanbeyan, New South Wales. As in Melbourne, pupils were successfully prepared for examinations set from London.

Yetty continued to teach after Frank's death in 1944. She taught verse speaking as well as choirs at St Benedict's Convent in Queanbeyan, St Christopher's and St Peter Chanel's in Canberra. Her pupils were very successful in the Trinity College, London examinations with Robert Crew being the first Canberra student to win the NSW State medal for speech in the Advanced Preparatory Division in 1960 and Merrilyn Jones passing the Intermediate Speech exam in 1964. One of her past pupils, Rosemary Heming, was admitted to Trinity College to train as a teacher of speech.

She continued as a radio presenter and her midday programme on 2CA *Woman about the Shops* ran for twelve years. She also created the Women's Session on the National Station and broadcast it for eight years.

Yetty died from stomach cancer on 7 September 1971. Her ashes were spread at Norwood crematorium. She had no children.

Published resources

Resource Section
Yetty Landau: A Woman of Canberra

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition
From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2013,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg

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Digital resources



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