

1855

W. M. Akhurst's *Rolla of Ours* (1851) is staged, possibly for the first time, at Queen's Theatre, Melbourne on 8 January, and several nights afterwards. A burlesque on R. B. Sheridan's *Pizarro* (1799), *Rolla of Our* ruthlessly exposes the faults and follies of the current local government. The burlesque was first made public when Adelaide's *Mercury and South Australian Sporting Chronicle* published it in installments in 1851 (15 February and 8 March). No details of a stage production prior to 1855 have yet been located.

A COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO THE STATE OF UNCLE TOM'S CABIN:

[burlesque] **Txt.** F. M. Soutten; **Mus.** [n/e]

A burlesque on Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel about "the late affair at Ballarat" and performed by the Nelson Family in aid of the Ballaarat [sic] Defence Fund. Using an allegorical opening which represents Britannia, Colombia and Australia, the narrative sees Uncle Tom metamorphosed into a broken-down Ethiopian serenader. In its 6 March edition the *Age* records: "This piece called forth repeated rounds of applause from the delighted audience. Some of the strictures wore most telling; and severe hits were given with great effect at the Government. Allusion was made to the incapacity of naval men for managing the affairs of the nation, and marked hits about the late affair at Ballarat. Altogether, the piece is well got up, and reflects great credit on the talented author, Mr. Louthon [sic]."

- 1855:** Bendigo (Victoria); 1 Mar.
- **Troupe:** Nelson Family.
- No details regarding the venue have yet been located.

"[Bendigo \(From Our Correspondent\)](#)." *Age* 6 Mar. (1855), 5.

"[Bendigo \(From Our Correspondent\)](#)." *Argus* 8 Mar. (1855), 6.

Kelly, Veronica, ed. [Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1850-1869](#). (1995), v. pags.

THE MIRROR OF BEAUTY; OR, LITTLE SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN

DWARFS: [burlesque] **Txt.** W. M. Akhurst; **Mus.** incl. E. J. Loder (Overture)

Advertised as "burlesque extravaganza" and "operatic and romantic burlesque extravaganza," *The Mirror of Beauty* is a parody of G. V. Brooke's tragic style.

- 1855:** Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 5-11 Oct.
- **M Arr.** B. Thorn; **S Art.** Henry Holmes, Charles Fry and Mr Wyatt.
- **Cast:** G. H. Rogers (His Majesty Humph the First), Mrs A. Phillips (Snow White), Mrs Thom (Prince) Dednutz), A. Phillips (Fidelfadel), Lachlan McGowan (Baron Bosh), Mr Chapman (Count Von Bunkem), Mr Salem (Count Mixpickel), Mr Burford (Grunt), Kate Royal (Villikins), Juliana King (Lillikins), Miss Smith (Millikins), Miss Brown (Sillikins), Miss Jones (Pillikins), Miss Robinson (Killikins), Miss Hotham (Billikins), Mrs Chester (Queen Gramaer), Mrs Moore (Catherine Fagan), Mrs Chichester (The Mirror), Mde Strebinger, Mde Antoinette Berg, Signor Carandini (dancers)

Kelly, Veronica, ed. [Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1850-1869](#). (1995), v. pags.

"[Theatre Royal](#)." *Age* 6 Oct. (1855), 4.

"[Theatre Royal](#)." *Argus* 6 Oct. (1855), 5. [see also advert. 5 Oct. 1855, 8]

THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL: [musical entertainment] **Txt.** James Mulholland; **Mus.** [n/e]

Written expressly for actor Mr Barlow, the musical element saw seven songs and several character dances, incorporated into the narrative. These songs were: "The Fall of Sebastopol," "The Light Brigade," "Red, White and Blue," "Romans and Greeks," and "The Union of England and France" (*Argus* 12 Nov. 1855, 8).

- 1855:** Salle de Valentino, Melbourne; 8-10, 12, 21 Nov.
- **Cast** incl. Mr Barlow.

[Argus](#) 8 Nov. (1855), 8. [see also advert. - 12 Nov. 1855, 8]

Kelly, Veronica, ed. [Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1850-1869](#). (1995), v. pags.

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| <p>SALLE DE VALENTINO. This Evening, First appearance of the celebrated, popular, and inimitable BARLOW, The well-known "Blue-tailed Fly," Who will have the honor of introducing for the first time a new and brilliant entertain- ment, entitled THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL, Written expressly by Mr. James Mulholland for Mr. Barlow, Who will open his series of entertainments on this evening with some of the richest of his comicalities, and appear again the favorite performer of this city. "As he used to was about two years ago." Doors Open at Half-past Seven o'clock. Barlow's Entertainment at Eight o'clock. Dancing, as usual, at Nine. Boxes, 2s.; Front-rows, 1s. 302</p> |
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Argus 8 Nov. (1855), 8.

HARLEQUIN £ s. d; OR, THE FAIRY QUEEN OF THE DIAMONDS AND THE LORDS OF THE MINERAL KINGDOM: [pantomime] **Lib.** W. M. Akhurst; **Mus.** [n/e]

With its story concerning the Realm of Copper revolting against being supplanted by the Realm of Gold, *Harlequin £. s. d.* is said to have contained substantial topical content – both social and political. The pantomime also presented a whole series of metaphors based on different kinds of currency within the narrative, with the story focusing on the friction between various minerals and coins. This leads to the Golden Palace of Auriferosa sentencing all parties to Victoria. Topical allusions were made to Governor, the Mayor, Mr Grimes (Town Clerk) and several other prominent public figures, while the local settings included the Treasury in William Street, the interior and exterior of the Exhibition Building, Cobb's Coach Office and Bourke Street. The pantomime ended with the traditional harlequinade.

The medley, overture and music of the pantomime, selected and arranged by Frederick Coppin, included "The Mistletoe Bough" ("with the usual time-honoured accompaniment"), "The Chimes" ("a seasonal sound"), "The Roast Beef of Old England" ("which all acknowledge seasonable"), "The Roger de Coverly" ("who has not danced it"), "Yankee Doodle," "The Marseillaise" and "Rule Britannia" ("a formidable trio of nationalities") winding up with the "Hurry-Scurry" (A: 27 Dec. 1892, 8).

1855: Coppin's Olympic Theatre, Melbourne; 26 Dec. 1855 - 21 Jan. 1856 [18 pfms]

- **Dir.** Richard Younge; **M Dir/Arr.** Frederick Coppin; **S Art.** William Pitt and Mr Opie; **Cost.** Mr Matthews and Mrs Jager; **Com Sc.** Charles Young.
- **Cast** incl. Mrs R. McGowan (Columbine), Mrs W. Hill (Miss Silver Sixpence), Julia Matthews (Fairy Queen of Diamonds), Miss Herbert (Auriferosa), Thomas Nunn (Harlequin), F. Dherang (Pantaloone), Charles Young (Clown), C. Dherang (Sprite), Richard Younge (Malachite), Mr Murray (Sulphuret), Robert McGowan (Penny-Piece), Mr Webster (Quicksilver), Walter Hill (Master Shilling), Mr Leslie.

"[Coppin's Olympic](#)." *Age* 27 Dec. (1855), 4-5.¹

"[Coppin's Olympic](#)." *Age* 28 Dec. (1855), 4.

"[Coppin's Olympic Theatre](#)." *Argus* 27 Dec. (1855), 5.

Kelly, Veronica, ed. [Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1850-1869](#). (1995), v. pags.

THE MAGICIAN'S DAUGHTER; OR, HARLEQUIN KING OF THE GOLDEN ISLAND AND THE FAIRY RIFLE CORPS: [pantomime] **Lib Adapt.** Thomas

Pavey; **Mus.** [n/e]

A pantomime adapted by Thomas Pavey from William and Robert Brough's extravaganza, *The Enchanted Isle* (itself a burlesque on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*). The production was described as "being a picture of life in Victoria some fifty years ago or thereabouts," and advertised the use of "elaborate mechanical transformations, tricks, machinery [and] costly decorative appliances never before attempted in this Colony" (*Age* 27 Dec. 1855, 4).

T H E A T R E R O Y A L.

Second Night of the Grand and Successful
PANTOMIME.

This Evening,
THURSDAY, 27th DECEMBER,
A Petite Comedietta, called the
WIFE'S SECRET.

Mons. Vermeil Mr. G. H. Rogers,
Madame Darbert... .. Mrs. Charles Poole.

To conclude with a grand
PANTOMIME,
entitled
**THE MAGICIAN'S DAUGHTER, OR HAR-
LEQUIN KING OF THE GOLDEN
ISLAND AND THE FAIRY RIFLE
CORPS.**

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| Harlequin | Sig. Carandini. |
| Clown | Mr. J. E. Renno. |
| Pantaloone | Mr. J. Fry. |
| Columbine | Mdme. Strebinger. |
| Harlequina | Mdlle. Berg. |

Twenty New Scenes!
Elaborate Mechanical Transformations,
Tricks, Machinery, Costly and Decorative
Appliances.
Never before equalled in this Colony. !

Stage Manager Mr. Charles Poole.

Argus 27 Dec. (1855), 8.

tical of the production (along with the first part entertainment *The Wife's Secret*), [with] the only redeeming feature in the piece [being] the scenery, which we are but then went on to suggest that "we are not unwilling to make every allowance for a utmost, we confess we never saw a pantomime go off so ill upon any stage... some dreary attempts there were at tricks, and a melancholy failure at acrobatism... the time-honoured 'Tippitywichety' was ignominiously hissed... the stereotyped shaving scene was 'goosed,' seeing that the barber had mislaid his razor; everything halted and fell short, and the audience loudly expressed their dissatisfaction. Harlequin was nowhere... Signor Carandini's dancing days are over [and] Pantaloone was a thing not to be laughed at" (4).

Local scenes included "By the Sad, Sea Waves Somewhere near St Kilda," "The Village Wash-Houses," and "Tops of the Houses."

1855: Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 26 Dec. 1855 - 4 Jan. 1856

- **M Arr.** Herr Strebinger and Herr Printz; **S Art.** Henry Holmes and Charles Fry; **Cost.** Mrs Lawrence and Mrs Earle; **Chor.** Mde Strebinger and Signor Carandini; **S Mngr.** Charles Poole.
- **Cast** incl. Madame Strebinger (Columbine), Mde Antoinette Berg (Harlequina), Mrs Moore, Miss Sinclair, Mrs Chester (Polyanthraesar), Signor Carandini (Harlequin), John E. Renno (Clown), J. Fry, G. H. Rogers (King Orfwithishead), Mr McGowan (Signor Jacobs), Mr Moore (Alfonsonodoubt).

Kelly, Veronica, ed. [Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1850-1869](#). (1995), v. pags.

"[Theatre Royal](#)." *Age* 27 Dec. (1855), 4.²

"[Theatre Royal, The](#)." *Argus* 27 Dec. (1855), 5.

¹ **NB:** Pages 4 and 5 in Trove's digitised reproduction of the 27 December 1855 edition of the *Age* have been published in reverse order. To identify the correct page refer to the actual newspaper not the Trove publication details header.

² As for above note.

HARLEQUIN JACK AND THE BEANSTALK; OR, THE INHABITANTS OF THE MOON AND FAIRIES OF THE GOLDEN CATARACT: [pantomime] **Txt.** R. J. Osborne; **Orig Mus.**

Mr Thompson; **Add Mus.** [n/e]

1855: Royal Victoria Theatre, Hobart; 26-28 Dec.

- **Dir.** R. J. Osborne; **S Art.** J. Lewis; **Machinery/Transformations** Messrs. Turner and Thompson; **Cost.** Mrs Watson; **Masks** Mrs Upson.
- Cast incl. Mons. Klaer (Quicksilver/Thunderbolt, Imp of the Gloomy Gap), Francisco Jnr. (Sprite/Sparkle, a mischievous Imp), Mr Lewis (The Moon, Veryhotemcatchemhavom/Demon of the Gloomy Gap), Mr Newton (Jasper, his attendant), Mr Ellis (Ore), Mr Wall (Smelt/Millem), Mr Turner (Hela), Mr Arabin (Firebrand, Demon of the Devil's Furnace), Mr Smith (Ogle, Giant of Brazon Castle), Mr Upson (Gobleumup), Mr Jones (Grindtheirbones), Mr Adams (Ogeress, Queen of the Brazon Castle/Thasbem), Master Spruce (Monster Cat), Mr Heywood (The Earth/Gaffer Graball, a farmer), P. Watson (Clodhopper, his son), R. J. Osborne (Eatem), Mrs Harward (Jack), Miss Harward (Rosaline), Miss A. Watson (The Planet Venus/Florinda, Queen of the Golden Cataract), Miss L. Watson (Streamlet), Miss Jones (Dewdrop), Miss Jones (Ripple), Miss Robsinson (Starlight), Miss Smith (Venus); Harlequinade - Francisco Snr. (Harlequin), Miss Harwood (Columbine), R. J. Osborne (Clown), Mr Newton (Pantaloon).
- Other characters: Vulcan, Rapine.

Courier (Hobart) 22 Dec. (1855), 2. Advert.

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Expanded and updated from Clay Djubal, "What Oh Tonight" (Appendix C), Ph D Diss (2005) U of Qld.

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