

1858

W. M. Akhurst's burlesque *Rolla of Ours* (1851) was revived for several nights at Melbourne's Theatre Royal (19-22 Jan.). Although published in Adelaide's *Mercury and South Australian Sporting Chronicle* in 1851 *Rolla of Ours* was not produced for the stage until 1855. The 1858 Melbourne season included a benefit night production in which George Coppin appeared as a guest cast member.

Joseph Simmonds, lessee/manager of Sydney's Royal Victoria Theatre, continued to present *Beauty and the Beast* over the New Year holiday period (as a second part entertainment). The authorship of this pantomime is yet to be determined.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: [burlesque] Lib Adapt. [n/e]; Add Lib. George Fawcett [Rowe]; Mus. [n/e]

An adaptation of J. R. Planché's burlesque pantomime, *Beauty and the Beast*, this version was presented "for the first time in these colonies" during a season of theatricals starring the Gougenheim sisters, Josephine (aka Joey) and Adelaide.¹ The *Age* records that the local hits, "written we understand by Mr Fawcett... are plentifully interspersed throughout the piece, and many of them were very smart and pointed." There was, however, one particular criticism put forward by the reviewer. This concerned the obvious want of judgment displayed in "putting them all into the mouth of one performer, and in modernising a portion of the extravaganza so as to render the dialogue a curious jumble of allusions to two distinct epochs and to antipodean localities with nothing whatever to justify the forcible association of the defunct George Robins with the living Samuel Bottomley; or of Imperial incidents many years old with Mr Fellows and the squatters" (18 Jan. 1858, 5).

The *Argus* review also notes that "two or three new songs have been introduced" among them "a parody upon "Old Dog Tray." Performed by Joey Gougenheim, who presented a "capital imitation of [George Coppin] our favourite comedian, the song was described by one reviewer as being as inane and as pointless as the original, [and] elicits a corresponding amount of applause." The lyrics of the song, which paraphrased a recent speech by Coppin, are said, on the other hand, to have been "received with such shouts of applause and laughter" that it had to be repeated. In another scene Miss Joey is reported to have "especially served out to out ministry some admirably new views for petticoat government" (*Age* 18 Jan. 1858, 5).

The scenery for the Princess Theatre season, described as excellent despite the limited area of the stage, and as "reflecting great a credit on the pencil of Mr Hennings" included a "capitally arranged" snow storm (5).

1858: Princess's Theatre, Melbourne; 16-27 Jan., 2 Feb.

- **S Art.** John Hennings.

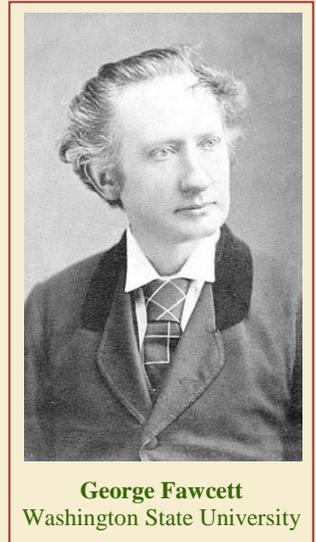
- **Cast** incl. Joey Gougenheim (Beauty), George Fawcett [Rowe] (The Beast), Adelaide Gougenheim, Mr Rogers (Sir Aldgate Pump), Lachlan McGowan (John Quill), Mrs Lachlan McGowan.

- Presented initially as a first part entertainment. From 23 January, however, it became the second part entertainment.

The 2 February production was presented as part of a benefit to Joey Gougenheim.

"[Princess's Theatre](#)." *Age* 18 Jan. (1858), 5. (incl. plot synopsis)

"[Princess's Theatre](#)." *Argus* 18 Jan. (1858), 5.



COPPIN IN CAIRO; A ROMANCE OF THE MAIL SERVICE: [farce with music] Txt. W. M.

Akhurst; Mus. [n/e]

Presented during the final weeks of George Coppin's last season as an actor, this farce with numerous local allusions saw him perform multiple roles, including that of himself. The story begins with the enterprising manager en route to Europe. He is forced to wait in Cairo, however, when the steamer he is travelling on breaks down. After an interview with an officer of the Company's service who tries to borrow fifty pounds off him without success, Coppin throws himself on the sofa in his room at Shepherd's Hotel and goes to sleep. It is following this that he dreams of adventures in Egypt.

The production called for Coppin to sing and parody numerous real life characters. One of these was Lola Montez, (through the persona of Scrumptious Katinka, Professor of the Spider Dance). This was an obvious send-up of the notorious exotic dancer whom he had often imitated on stage. His performance also included the character, Billy Barlow, a 'colonial stick in the mud' described as one of Coppin's 'old favourites' (ARG: 25 May 1858, 5). Another character was All Coppin Beg (an orange-vendor). After a series of adventures and mishaps the dream climaxes with Coppin's decapitation. Upon waking he realises that he is still in Melbourne.

1858: Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 24-29 May, 5 June

- **S Art.** B. Tannett.

- **Cast** incl. Miss Morgan, Frau. Fannie [Mrs Tom Leopold] (dancer), Mde Strebinger (dancer), George Coppin, Henry R. Harwood, Frederick Younge.

¹ The Gougenheim season, which started on 2 December 1857 and concluded on 6 March 1857, involved quite a deal of controversy, the result of Josephine Gougenheim having being sued twice by one performer for non-payment of wages and with insinuations levelled by another over the same issue.

"[Amusements: Royal, The.](#)" *Age* 25 May (1858), 6.

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

"[Theatricals and Music: Theatre Royal.](#)" *Bell's Life in Victoria and Sporting Chronicle* 29 May (1858), 2.

"[Theatre Royal.](#)" *Argus* 25 May (1858), 5.

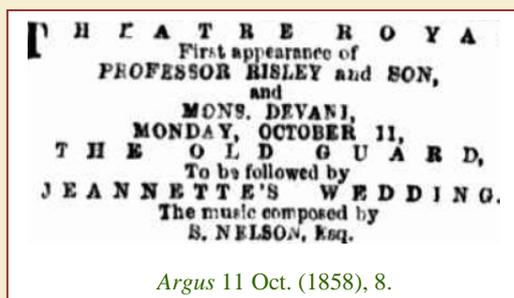
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: [burlesque] **Lib/Mus.** [n/e]

Another localised adaptation of J. R. Planché's burlesque pantomime, *Beauty and the Beast*, this version was presented by Fanny Young at Bendigo's Haymarket Theatre. Although the authorship of the adaptation remains unknown the Bendigo Advertiser refers to "the allusions to Mr. Fellows' Act, Sir. Ireland, and other local jokes [that] called for the loud applause of the audience." The reviewer went on to note: "We have no doubt the piece will become a favourite, as it has always been on the London boards" (3).

1858: Haymarket Theatre, Bendigo (Victoria); 7 Aug.

"[Haymarket Theatre.](#)" *Bendigo Advertiser* 9 Aug. (1858), 3.

JEANETTE'S WEDDING: [burletta] **Txt Adapt.** [n/e]; **Mus.** Sydney Nelson



Adapted from an unknown French operetta (or similar musical work), the story concerns marital misunderstanding and reconciliation. Described in *Bell's Sporting Life in Victoria* as "a curious melange of jest and earnest," the action of the piece sees Jean, on the verge of matrimony, abruptly drew back from the precipice. After being "coaxed into screwing his courage once more to the necessary sticking place [he is] entrapped into signing the marriage contract previously repudiate, and immediately afterwards takes to breaking crockery by way of safety valve. The rejected Phyllis, while her swain's distinctive propensities are being allayed by tired nature's sweet restorer [alcohol], replaces the fractured utensils and furniture with a stock evidently treasured for some

such occasion, and with a woman's intuitiveness prepares a capital supper for her recusant benedict. He wakes, comes down stairs, stuns himself, and persists in his refusal of the amiable creature's hand, until suddenly awakened to a sense of the enormity of his conduct he becomes suddenly just as conscious for the consummation of her wishes, as he lately showed a disposition to counteract all tenderness towards such a desirable conjecture" (2).

1858: Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 11-16 Oct.

- **M Arr.** Sydney Nelson.

- **Cast** incl. Mr and Mrs Frederick Younge.

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

"[Theatres, The.](#)" *Argus* 12 Oct. (1858), 5.

"[Theatricals and Music: Theatre Royal.](#)" *Bell's Life in Victoria and Sporting Chronicle* 16 Oct. (1858), 2.

HARLEQUIN AND LALLA ROOKH: [pantomime] **Lib Adapt/Mus.** [n/e]

A pantomime with local allusions possibly adapted from William Brough's extravaganza *Lalla Rookh; Or, The Princess, the Peri and the Troubadour* (1856).

1858: Prince of Wales Opera House, Sydney; 27 Dec. 1858 - 15, 26-29 Jan. 1859 [21 pfms]

- **Lse.** Charles Poole; **M Arr.** Mr Winterbottom.

- **Cast** incl. Ada Hart, Mr and Mrs Twilight, Mde Lee, John Mungell, Mr McLean, Mr Walker.

1859: Prince of Wales Opera House, Sydney; 23-26 Feb.

- **Cast** and production mostly as for previous Sydney season.

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

Sydney Morning Herald 1 Jan. (1859), 4. [NB: Trove is having ongoing problems with the metadata for this - ctd. 8/12/2015]

HARLEQUIN ROBIN HOOD; OR, THE BOLD HUNTSMAN OF SHERWOOD AND THE FAIRY LOCALLOTTA: [pantomime] **Lib.** W. M. Akhurst; **Mus.** Frederick Coppin

A burlesque pantomime set in "merry" England, but also containing a corroboree and numerous topical hits (including several political attacks on the Victorian ministry), *Harlequin Robin Hood* is described in the *Argus* as "one of those absurdities which are not to be judged of by any rules of dramatic art. *Dramatis Personae* who are always involving themselves in ridiculous complications; giving utterance to jokes and perpetuating puns good and bad; hits at the men and manners of the day; virtuous people and villains, fairies and fools, songs and dances, transformations and scenic effects; make up a complete jumble of incongruities, which the critic ought by every canon of his craft to condemn, but at which people who go in for amusement will laugh in spite of him. If you attempt to describe the plot it will appear very silly. If you put the puns into print, nothing could be demonstrably more absurd. Yet the audience - children both young and old - were amused and merry" (27 Dec. 1858, 5).

In addition to the original incidental music by Frederick Coppin, the production also burlesqued a number of well-known operatic songs, including some from *Il Trovatore*.

- 1858:** Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 27 Dec. 1858 - 22 Jan. 1859 [19 pfms]
 - **Dir.** Richard Younge; **M Arr.** Frederick Coppin; **Chor.** Mons. Schmidt; **S Art.** B. Tannett, W. J. Wilson and Mr Hobbs;
Com Sc. Tom Leopold.
 - **Cast** incl. Frau. Fannie [Mrs Tom Leopold], Mdlle Theresa, Miss Morgan, Miss Mortimer, Miss Milne, Henry, Tom and George Leopold, Mons. Schmidt, Henry R. Harwood, Frederick Younge, Mr Webster.

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

"[Theatre Royal](#)." *Argus* 28 Dec. (1858), 5.

"[Theatre Royal](#)." *Age* 28 Dec. 1858, 5.

"[Theatricals and Music: Theatre Royal](#)." *Bell's Life in Victoria and Sporting Chronicle* 1 Jan. (1859), 2.

Argus 27 Dec. (1858), 8.

T H E A T R E R O Y A L.
 First Night of the
 New, Romantic, Legendary, and Local
CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME,
 Invented and written by Mr. W. M. Akhurst.
 New, Local, Beautiful, and Gorgeous Scenery,
 By Messrs. P. M. Tannett, Wilson, and Hobbs.
 Wonderful Machinery, Transformations, &c.,
 By Mr. Reno.
 The music composed, arranged, and selected
 By Mr. F. Coppin.
 The Tricks, Properties, and Paraphernalia
 By Mr. Charles de Grosse.
 The Toxophilite Ballet.
 Arranged by Mons. Schmidt.
 The Trips, Cascades,
 By the Brothers Leopold.
 The Comic Business arranged
 By Mr. Tom Leopold.
 The whole produced under the direction of
MR. R. YOUNGE.
 Monday Evening, December 27,
 The Performances will commence with
CHARLES THE SECOND;
 To conclude with the New Pantomime, entitled
HARLEQUIN ROBIN HOOD,
 or
THE BOLD HUNTSMAN OF SHERWOOD,
 and the
FAIRY LOCALLOTTA.

CAMERALZAMAN AND BADOURA; OR, THE PERI WHO LOVED A PRINCE:

[burlesque] **Txt Adapt.** G. S. Hough; **Mus.** [n/e]

A localised Christmas fairy extravaganza adapted from William Brough's *Cameralzaman and Badoura; Or, The Peri who Loved the Prince* (1848).

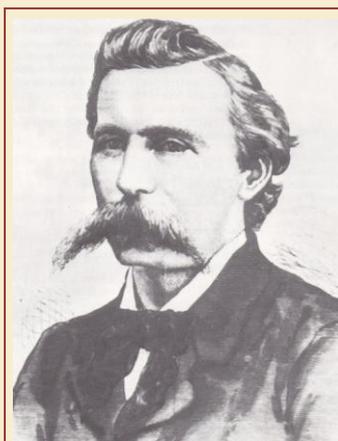
- 1858:** Princess's Theatre, Melbourne; 27 Dec. 1858 - 26 Jan. 1859 [16 pfms]
 - **Mngr.** J. R. Greville; **S Art.** John Hennings.
 - **Cast** incl. Carry, Sara and Marie Nelson, J. R. Greville, George Fawcett [Rowe].
- 1860:** Royal Pantheon, Cremorne Gardens, Melbourne; 4-15 Dec.
 - **Mngr.** J. R. Greville; **S Art.** John Hennings.
 - **Cast** incl. Carry, Sara and Marie Nelson, J. R. Greville, George Fawcett [Rowe].

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

"[Princess's Theatre](#)." *Argus* 28 Dec. (1858), 4-5.

"[Theatres: Princess's Theatre, The](#)." *Age* 28 Dec. (1858), 5.

"[Theatricals and Music: The Princess's](#)." *Bell's Life in Victoria and Sporting Chronicle* 1 Jan. (1859), 2.



John Hennings
 Erin Irvin, *Dictionary of Australian Theatre*, 1985, 123.



J. R. Greville
 State Library of Victoria.

Last updated: 25/04/2016

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

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