MERRY FREAKS IN TROUBLOUS TIMES: [comic opera] Lib. Charles Nagel; Mus. Isaac Nathan

1843

Isaac Nathan, 1843
♫ Isaac Nathan (Sydney), 1851
♫ Cramer, Addison and Beale (London), 1851

Despite a number of indications that the opera (completed in 1843) would be performed, first at the Royal City Theatre and later at the Royal Victoria Theatre, only extracts have been performed in public. In 1843, the editors of the New South Wales Magazine; Or, Journal of General Politics, Literature, Science, and the Arts twice stated that they had seen a copy of Merry Freaks. In the "Colonial Literature" section the editors record: "We have been favoured with a copy of an 'Historical Operatic Operatic Drama,' in two Acts, entitled Merry Freaks in Troublous Times, written by a gentleman named Nagel. The plot, founded upon the adventures of Charles II, when escaping the Puritans, is well written, some of the scenes being highly humorous. Mr Nathan has composed the music for the songs, and we understand that it will shortly be performed. The type, and appearance of the book, are by no means creditable to the printer" ("Colonial," 565). No copy of this publication has yet been located. Nathan published the vocal score in Sydney in 1851 (he even set up the moveable type) and it was then published in London that same year.

The plot commences after the defeat of Charles II at the battle of Worcester, whence the King and Rochester escape under the assumed names of Jacob Tompkins and Peregrine Samson. The first act exhibited their "Merry Freaks" at the seat of Sir Henry Milford in which they are assisted by that indispensable hero of Comic Opera, a mischievous page who becomes instrumental in the King's safe escape to the continent. The second act takes the narrative several years hence, opening with Charles' small court of exiled Royalists in Holland. An under-current of that "course of true love which never does run smooth," flows in sinuous windings through the piece which, in its denouement, terminates at Milord Hall, whither the King and his faithful adherents return previous to the Restoration. The authors are also said to have humorously portrayed and contrasted the characteristics of the Cavaliers and Puritans of that age ("Music and Musicians: New Historical," 2).

"Isaac Nathan Manuscript of E flat Clarinet Part from the Overture of his Opera, Merry Freaks in Troublous Times." "Manuscripts, Oral History and Pictures" Collection. State Library of NSW.
"Music and Musicians: Mr Nathan's Opera." Australian 12 July (1843), 2.
THE CURRENCY LASS:  [ballad opera]  

The lively and light-hearted story of The Currency Lass (subtitled "My Native Girl") concerns a rich uncle (Sir Samuel Simile) who mistakenly believes that his nephew is going to marry a “native” Aboriginal girl, when the lad is in fact to marry Susan Hearty - a currency lass (white girl born in Australia). Picturing himself as the grandfather of a string of piccaninnies the uncle is put through a good deal of torment before being told of his error.

Edward Geoghegan, the Irish convict who rose to prominence as a playwright with The Hibernian Father, wrote The Currency Lass for a popular young actress called Tilly Jones, herself one of the first native-born Australian actresses. Jones never performed the work, however. The play was staged three times during its premiere season. It fared somewhat less well than other productions presented by Samuel Lazar at the Royal Victoria, however. More popularly received, for example, were plays such as Humphrey Clinker (farce), Twins of Warsaw, Sworn at Highgate, The Beehive (musical farce), The Executioner, Aladdin, and Turning the Tables, and Geoghegan’s big success, The Hibernian Father.

The fourteen songs used in the original production have had new lyrics set to pre-existing tunes, as is traditionally the case with the ballad opera style (see note below). The tunes used - the details of these are more fully explored in the 1976 Currency edition of the play - are mostly that of traditional Irish, English or Scottish songs. The choice of songs of songs was not undertaken without some degree of deliberate humour, as Roger Covell notes, in his preface to the Currency edition. He points to the use of the air "A Fine Old English Gentleman," the tune coming from an Irish dialect song, which Geoghegan uses to recall the "supposed" golden age of English gentry. Covell also suggests that the actor playing the role of Susan requires agility and accuracy in both her singing and dancing (these are sometimes required with much vigour at the same time). This is particularly the case in a pivotal scene in Act Two where she performs a sequence of five characterised songs and dances. Although many of the songs used by Geoghegan are no longer well-known, there are several tunes that are reasonably recognisable today - these being, "Malbrook" (a French melody used by English-speaking people when they sing "For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow"); "Over the Hills and Far Away" (from John Gay’s The Beggar’s Opera); and "The Lincolnshire Poacher" (its melody is also used for the Australian folksong, "The Murrumbidgee Shearer").

The 1966 Jane Street production was part of a trilogy of plays presented each night as a launch for the theatre’s season of Australian plays. The other two plays were I've Come about the Assassination by Tony Morphett, and The Pier by Michael Thomas. All three plays utilised members of the same company.

The 1989 Q Theatre production, which kept the lighthearted, comic feel of Geoghegan’s original, cast Aboriginal actor Justine Saunders in the role of the bigoted uncle, Samuel Similie, in an attempt to re-orientate Geoghegan’s theme towards one of race. The stage also featured a ground plan of Aboriginal dots and circle motifs.

NB: The Currency Lass has been described in generic terms as musical play, operetta and even opera. Although Roger Covell argues that the term musical play "communicates a better idea today of the nature of [the work] and would have been understood in the eighteen-forties in much the same way... [particularly as] ’ballad opera' was no longer a current theatrical term” (xvi), the insertion of traditional Irish, English or Scottish songs. The choice of songs must be undertaken without some degree of deliberate humour, as Roger Covell notes, in his preface to the Currency edition. He points to the use of the air "A Fine Old English Gentleman," the tune coming from an Irish dialect song, which Geoghegan uses to recall the “supposed” golden age of English gentry. Covell also suggests that the actor playing the role of Susan requires agility and accuracy in both her singing and dancing (these are sometimes required with much vigour at the same time). This is particularly the case in a pivotal scene in Act Two where she performs a sequence of five characterised songs and dances. Although many of the songs used by Geoghegan are no longer well-known, there are several tunes that are reasonably recognisable today - these being, "Malbrook" (a French melody used by English-speaking people when they sing "For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow"); "Over the Hills and Far Away" (from John Gay’s The Beggar’s Opera); and "The Lincolnshire Poacher" (its melody is also used for the Australian folksong, "The Murrumbidgee Shearer").

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1844:  Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 27-28 May, 4 June
- Mgr/Prod.  John Lazar.
- Cast incl. Mr Fenton (Samuel Simile), J. G. Griffiths (Harry Hearty), Mr James (Edward Stanford), Mme Louise (Susan Hearty), Joseph Simmons (Lanty O’Liffe), Mrs Wallace (Jenny), Mrs Torming (Miss Dormer).

- Dir. Robin Lovejoy; Des. David Copping.
- Cast incl. Gaye Anderson (Susan), Martin Harris (Harry), Edward Hepple (Samuel), Beverley Kirk Catherine (Dormer), Ross Thompson (Edward), Anthony Thurbon (Lanty) Anne Bannon (Jenny).

1989:  Q Theatre, Penrith (New Sotuh Wales); 26 Aug. -
- Cast: Laurence Clifford, Melinda Marcellos, Luciano Martucci, Michelle Pettigrove, Justine Saunders, Carman Tanti, Michael Turkic.
“New Colonial Play.” Australian 30 May (1844), 311.
Williams, Margaret. Australia on the Popular Stage. (1983), 30-1.
A five act tragedy by David Burn (author of *The Bushrangers*), *The Queen's Love* premiered in Sydney as a first part entertainment, and was given a production in Melbourne with an entirely new cast (as the second part) under the auspices of George Coppin. A review in the *Port Phillip Patriot* describes the work as Miss Corbett’s tale of Margaret Swinston dramatised, and that serves to introduce the characters of James VI, The Earl of Moray (the rival for the Queen’s affections), and the Queen herself. The narrative, which follows the court intrigues that arise through love, jealousy, enmity and tender passion, also features an epilogue and prologue.

Although the musical element of the play is largely incidental, it includes at least one song, described in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as an "olden romance," called "Sir Wilfred He Mounted His War-Steed True," which was sung by Mrs Ximenes.

**1845: Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 29 Sept.**
- **Music Dir/Arr.** Isaac Nathan.
- **Cast** incl. J. G. Griffiths (James VI), Mr Deering (Gordon), Mr James (James Stuart), John Howson (Sir Patrick), Mde Louise (Anne of Denmark), Mrs Stirling (Margaret), Mrs O’Flaherty (Lady Magdalene), Mrs Ximenes, Mrs Thomson, Mr Saville, Mr Grove, Mr Douglas.
- Prologue spoken by Mrs O’Flaherty, Epilogue spoken by Mr Griffiths.

**1845: Queen’s Theatre, Melbourne; 1 Nov.**
- **Dir/Prod.** George Coppin; **Orch Ldr.** Mr Megson; **S Art.** Mr Opie.
- **Cast:** Mrs Coppin (Lady Magdalene), Mr Nesbitt (James Stuart, Earl of Moray), Mr Cameron (James VI of Scotland), Mr Hambleton (Gordon, Earl of Huntley), Mrs Cameron (Anne of Denmark), Mr Wilkes, Mr Rogers, Mr Thomson, Mr Watson, Mr Opie, Mrs Mereton.
- Epilogue spoken by Mr Cameron.


"Local Intelligence: *The Queen’s Love.*" *Port Phillip Patriot* (Melbourne) 3 Nov. (1845), 2.

*Sydney Morning Herald* 29 Sept. (1845), 2. **Advert.**
DON JOHN OF AUSTRIA: [opera] Lib. Jacob Levi Montefiori; Mus. Isaac Nathan

# ANL, ca.1846/7 [score]
# Nathan, Isaac. The Southern Euphrosyne (1849) [score extracts]
# NSW Archives [SZ.57] (manuscript)
♫ ABC, 1988 (overture); and 1996 (overture).
♫ Sound Heritage, 1996 (overture).

A three act opera based on Casmir Delavigne's Don Juan D'Autriche, the Australian Journal reports that this opera, "the first [to be] written, composed, and submitted to an Australian Theatre," is "the work of a gentleman and a scholar [and] the music the outpourings of a Maestro, whose effusions have delighted both hemispheres, and the whole arranged with a degree of energy and power rarely, if ever, witnessed on these boards" (29 Apr. 1847, 2561). A few days later the same journal records: "It is by no means the first opera which has failed to dazzle and astonish on its first appearance; but like many productions, now of standard excellence, it awakens attention, excites pleasurable emotions, and commands approbation" (11 May 1847, 2581).

Some debate exists in relation to the claim that Don John was the first opera composed in Australia. There is evidence to suggest that Nathan's Merry Freaks in Troublous Times (1843) was the first to achieve this honour. However, because this work has never been performed before the public, Don John of Austria does have the distinction being the first Australian-written opera ever performed in the country.¹

A vocal score (by an unknown copyist, with additions and corrections by Nathan), ca. 1846-7 is held in the Australian National Library. The overture and four arias in vocal score were published in Nathan's The Southern Euphrosyne (1849). The overture has been released as part of several compilation albums - including: John Cargher Presents Music for Pleasure (ABC, 1988), Wild Rhapsody (ABC, 1996), Classical Musical of Colonial Australia (Sound Heritage, 1999).

1847: Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 3-11, 17 May [7 pfms]
- Dir/M Dir. Isaac Nathan. Orch. Leader Mr Gibbs.
- Cast incl. Mr Neshitt (Brother Carlos/Charles V), John Howson (Philip II), Mr Spencer (Don Quixada), Mr Fenton (Don Ferdinand de Valdez), Mrs Guerin (Agnes), Mrs Gibbs (Dorothy).


"Local Intelligence - The Theatre." Australian Journal (Sydney) 29 Apr. (1847), 2561.  [NB: page is missing from Trove]
"Local Intelligence - The Theatre." Australian Journal (Sydney) 4 May (1847), 2569.
"Local Intelligence - The Theatre." Australian Journal (Sydney) 11 May (1847), 2581.


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¹ Reportedly, only extracts from Merry Freaks in Troublous Times have been performed.
Several music theatre productions, including musical entertainments, operas, and musical dramas, were staged at Sydney's Royal Victoria during the year, although most of these were no doubt mainly of British origin. In many instances the authors were mentioned, but in some cases this is not made clear. Those productions staged, but for which the authors have not been identified include: *This House to be Sold (the Property of the Late William Shakespeare)*, *Inquire Within*, a musical drama said to have been produced "for the second time in this colony" (Sydney Morning Herald 16 May 1848, 2); *For England Ho!*, an operatic drama in two acts; and *The Exile*, "performed for the first time these five years," and described as musical play (Sydney Morning Herald 7 Aug. 1848, 2).

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**THE CORSAIR; OR, CONRAD AND MEDORA:** [opera] Lib. [n/e]; Mus. John Howson

Based on the same poem which had been the source of Verdi's *Il Corsaro*, this "new Grand Opera in three acts" was staged for the first time at a benefit evening for its composer. The opera was preceded by Herold's overture to *Zampa*, and during the course of the production a new grand Turkish Pas de Trois was presented by the Misses Griffiths and Signor Carandini.

1848: Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 4 Dec.
- Cast incl. John Howson (Conrad), Mr Rogers (Epaminondas), Mrs Guerin (Medora), Mrs Rogers (Zoe), Frank Howson (Pacha Seyd), Misses Griffiths (2), Signor Carandini.


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**ROYAL VICTORIA THEATRE**

**THE EVENING, SATURDAY**

**M. J. HOWSON's BENEFIT.**

Mr. J. Howson hopes most respectfully to inform his patrons and friends, that his Services is fixed for this evening, when he submits a continuation of their kind patronage and support.

The evening performances will commence with the whole of the music composed by Mr. J. Howson, called the CORSAIR; or, CONRAD AND MEDORA. Conrad, Mr. J. Howson; Epaminondas, Mr. Rogers; Medora, Mrs. Guerin; Zoe, Mrs. Rogers; Pacha Seyd, Mr. Frank Howson; Consul, Madame Carandini. The Operas will be preceded by Herold's overture to "Zampa." In the course of the opera, a new grand Turkish Pas de Trois was performed by the Misses Griffiths and Signor Carandini.

"When I performed Othello," Mr. Hambleton, New Pa de Deux, El Castilian, for the first time, by Miss Mart. The celebrated Nopper Melody, "Chop de Moumou," with the home castanets, Master Walter Howson. The "Aurannah of St. Anthoney," Mr. Rogers, Scotch Pa de Deux, Madame Guerin.

The evening concludes with the fine canto.

**THE FIRST OF APRIL.** Sir Humphry Dallaston, Mr. Roger; General Blandford, Mr. Spence; Colonel Arts, Mr. Hyde; Major Hardford, Mr. Hambleton; Captain Ormonde, Mr. Adair; Hourstond, Mr. P. Howson; Mrs. Bellamy, Mrs. Utile; Misses Xinteron.

Tickets to be had of Mr. J. Howson, at his residence, Park Cottage, near Lynamerton; Mr. Coots, Music Saloon, George-street; and of Mr. Wyat, Victoria Hotel, whose prices may be assured.

*Sydney Morning Herald* 4 Dec. (1848), 2.
THE GOLD DIGGER’S SPELL; OR AVARICE, INTEMPERANCE AND RUIN: [aka SPIRIT OF THE GOLDFIELDS] [play with music] Txt/Mus. [n/e]

Written by a “local author,” and advertised as “an entirely new and original drama,” the story according to Coppin’s playbills, combined morality and fairytale, and concerned the fortunes of Herbert, a humble woodcutter “deluged by a golden prospect.” He leaves his family for the distant gold fields and the hard life of a prospector. Eventually finding success through hard toil his life takes a downward spiral when an intemperance-induced quarrel leads to robbery and finally murder. The final of the fourteen tableaux shows the bereaved widow and children. The cast included mortals, nymphs, bacchantes and spirits and was to become a forerunner of the numerous gold demons and imps of later pantomimes.

The musical element included dance numbers and incidental music.

1852: Royal Victoria Theatre, Adelaide; 12-13 Apr.
- Dir/Prod. George Coppin.
- Cast incl. George Coppin (Herbert), Mr Oppie (Bill Towzer), Mr James (Bob Rasper), Mr Jacobs (Jack Hayman), Mr Meadows (George Willis), Mr Turner (Plutus, God of Gold/John Jones), Mrs Stubbs (Berther, Herbert’s wife), Mrs Webster (Laurette, a coquette), Mr Shearcroft (Aquatina, Spirit of Temperance), Mr Holloway (Aleolina), Mr Webb (Spirit of Averice), Mde Veilburne (Drunkina, Spirit of Ruin), Master Stubbs (Jasper), Master Davis (Peter), Miss Veilburne (Bertha).
- Other characters incl. Bachants, Bacchanalians, Fiends, Wood nymphs, Demons of Gold and Native Spirits.

1852: Theatre Royal, Geelong (Victoria); 25 July [as Spirit of the Gold Fields]
- Dir/Prod. George Coppin.

1853: Theatre Royal, Geelong (Victoria); 14 Feb.
- Dir/Prod. George Coppin.

1857

**THE AUSTRALIAN BUNYIPS:** [play with music] **Txt.** Mons. Ricard; **Mus.** [n/e]

Described as a bush melodrama in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, this production was part of the sixty-ninth anniversary celebrations of New South Wales. The storyline included a villainous squatter, a hero (who is saved by an Aboriginal chief), and a sensation scene of a falling bridge. It also featured a group of Aboriginal performers engaged to give authenticity to the corroboree dances which occurred in the bush scenes. Other scenes presented were the post office in George Street and Griffith's Public House at Manly.

**1857:** Lyceum Theatre, Sydney [aka Malcolm's Amphitheatre]; 24 Jan. -


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**THE FALL OF SEBASTOPOL; OR, THE CAMPAIGNERS:** [play with music] **Txt.** W. M. Akhurst; **Mus.** [n/e]

Also known as *The Battle of Inkermann*, the story of this a three act drama concerns an Englishman, Norton, who with his Irish servant and French friend, Adrian, is exiled to Siberia. There they find Norton's fiancée, Leila, and a renegade Pole. After many adventures they end up at the Crimea just as the allied forces are landing and subsequently take part in such stirring scenes as the Battle of Alma which leads to the fall of Sebastopol.

The musical element involved a number of dances and choruses. One of the dance highlights was a *pas de deux*, performed by Madame Streibinger and Mr Edouin, which was introduced in a trench scene.

**1857:** Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 17-22 Aug.

- **Cast** incl. Miss Herbert (Leile de Nésti), Richard Younge (Norton), Mr Sefton (Adrian), Mr Webster (the Pole), Carrie Nelson, Mr Gordon, Mr Murray, Mr Wilson (dancer/hornpipe), Mde Streibinger (dancer), Mr Edouin (dancer), Major Leslie and Officers of the 40th Regiment.


THE GENTLEMAN IN BLACK: [opera] Lib. Edward Searle; Mus. Stephen Hale Marsh

An adaptation of James Dalton's novel of the same name, the story is set in France and contains a Faustian plot in which an English gentleman sells himself to the devil for a large sum of money. He is later absolved from the bargain by the love of the heroine. Imprisoned in the Bastille she is later released during the French Revolution.

The overture from the opera was presented on 24 October 1866 as part of a Grand Concert held during the Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition. The Argus records: "The overture to the opera, The Gentleman in Black, by Mr S. H. Marsh, a musician of high class, long resident in these colonies, was next performed, and fully sustained the reputation achieved many years since by him as a composer" ("Concert," 4).

1861: Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 24-26 July
- Dir/Prod/Lse. W. S. Lyster; S Art. John Hennings; M Arr/Cond. A. Reiff Jnr.
- Troupe: Lyster's Grand Opera Company,
- Cast incl. Mde. Lucy Escott, Georgia Hodson, W. S. Lyster, Henry R. Harwood, Mr Farquharson, H. Squires, Mr Kitts.

1861: Prince of Wales Theatre, Melbourne; 19-20 Aug.
- Mngr. Harriet Gordon [Hyde].

THE DUKE'S MOTTO: [play with music] Txt Adapt. George Ross Morton and Charles Dillon; Mus. [n/e]

Adapted by Charles Dillon from Morton's translation of Frédéric Soulier's play *Le Bossu: Or, The Hunchback*, this drama with music concerns Prince de Gonzagues who coverts the inheritance of his cousin, the Duke of Nevers. The heiress, Blanche, is abducted, however, by Lagadère who raises her as his daughter. Gonzagues meanwhile marries Blanche's mother and passes off a gypsy as her daughter. Lagadère declares his love of Blanche (which is reciprocated by her) to a disguised Gonzague. They are permitted to marry and she is found to be the true heiress.

1863: Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 17 June - 11, 16 July [13 pfms]
- Mgr. Mr Boam; Lse. Raphael Tolano; Cost. Mrs Stapleton; S Art. Mr Burbury; S Mngr. C. W. Barry.
- Cast incl. Miss Dixon, Mrs Charles Poole, Mrs Charles Dillon, Mrs Charles Jones, Jennie Nye, Mrs McGowan, Mrs Yeomans, Fanny Brice, Miss Jacque, Miss Murphy, Charles Dillon, Mr West, Mr Appleton, C. H. Burford, J. J. Welsh, H. N. Warner, Mr Selwyn, Mr Harlowe, Mr Hall, Mr Graham, Mr Clifford, C. W. Barry, Frederick Younge, Mr Daniels, Mr Palmer, James Hasker, Sam Howard, Mr Ashcroft, Mr Braid, Mr Marsh, Mr Addison, Mr Stephens, Mr Emery, Mr Douglas.

1863: Royal Victoria Theatre, Melbourne; 10-11 Nov., 2 Dec.
- Cast incl. Mrs Charles Dillon, Harriet Gordon [Hyde], Mrs Jones, Mr Charles Dillon.

1864: Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 25 Jan. [benefit]
- Cast incl. Harriet Gordon [Hyde], Charles Dillon.

1864: Prince of Wales Opera House, Sydney; 28, 30 Apr., 5, 27 May
- Cast incl. Mr and Mrs Charles Dillon, Mrs Charles Poole, Emma Neville, Mr Appleton, Mr Bartlett, G. H. Rogers, C. Walsh, Lachlan McGowan, Samuel Howard.


"Royal Victoria." Bell's Life in Victoria and Sporting Chronicle (Sydney) 20 June (1863), n. pag.

THE DUKE'S MOTTO: [play with music] Txt Adapt. James Smith; Mus. [n/e]

A five act play with music adapted by Smith from Frédéric Soulier's *Le Bossu: Or, The Hunchback*, and produced in Melbourne at almost the same time as the George Morton and Charles Dillon adaptation.

1863: Haymarket Theatre, Melbourne; 6-10 July
- Cast incl. Dolly Green, Rose Edouin, Julia Matthews, Mrs Stoneham, Julia Edouin, Marian Dunn, Frau. Fannie [Mrs Tom Leopold] (dancer), Henry Edwards, Richard Younge, Mr Emery, Mr Douglas, Mr Keogh, Mr Wilmot, Mr Carter, Mr Stanley, Mr Bartlett, John Edouin, James Milne, Mr Stoneham, Mr Jones, George Fawcett [Rowe], Richard Stewart, Mr Daniels, Mr Palmer, Willie Edouin, Mr Lyons, Mr Maynard, Mr Stephens, Mr Leopold (dancer).


**THE TWO FIGAROS:** [comic opera] **Txt Adapt. A. Reiff; Mus. [n/e]**

Possibly adapted from J. R. Planché's vaudeville *The Two Figaros* (1836), it was advertised as a comic opera arranged for Harriet Gordon [Hyde] by Reiff, himself the conductor for W. S. Lyster's Opera Troupe.

**1864:** Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 12 Jan. [benefit]
- **Mngr/Lse.** Raphael Tolano; **M Arr.** A. Reiff;
- **Cast incl.** Harriet Gordon [Hyde].


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*Sydney Morning Herald* 12 Jan. (1864), 1.
**1865**

**NO NAME:** [play with music] **Txt Adapt.** Kate Warde; **Mus.** [n/e]

Adapted from Wilkie Collins novel of the same name, it was advertised as a play in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (15 Nov. 1865, 8). The adaptor, Kate Warde was also known as Mrs J. H. Vinson.

The music element was presented as accompaniment to some dance sequences.

1865:
- **Prince of Wales Opera House, Sydney; 15-16 Nov.**
- **Cast** incl. Kate Ward, Mrs Charles Jones, J. H. Vinson, Mr Barry, Mr Welsh, Mr Miran, Mr Burford.

1866:
- **Victoria Theatre, Brisbane; 23-24 Jan.**
- **S Art.** T. S. Wilkinson.
- **Cast** incl. Louise Arnot, Mrs Wilkinson, G. H. Rogers, J. H. Vinson, William Coote.


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*Sydney Morning Herald* 11 Nov. (1865), 12.
SOUTH SEA SISTERS: [lyric masque] Lib. Richard Hengist Horne; Mus. Charles E. Horsley

Written in verse form, *The South-Sea Sisters* was commissioned for the opening of the Intercolonial Exhibition of Australasia, Melbourne in 1866. Richard Fotheringham, in his introduction to the masque in *Australian Plays for the Colonial Stage: 1834-1899* (2006), asserts, however, that "it was almost certainly" Charles Horsley who commissioned it. As a masque there were no acting, dancing or stage settings as such, but while barely qualifying as drama, the spectacle presented in its performance resonates more closely with theatre and theatricality. Unaccompanied sections were read by the singers.

The *Argus* critic wrote of the work's debut: It is "a lyric masque of unquestionable merit... [the symphony of which] intended to convey the idea of the primeval wilderness [in] Hayden's Chorus, but without the appropriation of a single phrase. The somber character of the music was sustained by striking and original passages in the first chorus "Deep in the Stony Silence of the Earth, The Wealth of Nations Lies" ("Concert," 7). Following the recitative, "The Deep Hoarse Mirth Quells," sung by Mr Angus, comes the second part, beginning with "The Rolling Ships and the Rolling Sea." The second part also contains "The March of all Nations," in which Horsley manages to introduce and combine with surprising ingenuity several popular airs. Another chorus, "The Corroboree Chorus," is described in the *Argus* as being "intended to musically imitate the native corroboree, and shows wonderful versatility... the words were so rendered by the chorus as to electrify the audience, and bring down thunders of applause" (ibid, 7).

The *Age* records that *South Sea Sisters* was encored three times ("Concert," Supp. 4) and in her biography of R. H. Horne, Ann Blainey further notes: It "delighted audiences... it's aboriginal choruses, rhythmically designed to suggest a corroboree, brought the audience to its feet, a triumph that no bewailing of critics next day could destroy" (234).

The 'South Sea Sisters' in the title refers to the seven Australasian colonies (including New Zealand). In his libretto, Horne calls for 'a young and vigorous new nation to replace the "ponderous paws" and "gorged body and brain" of the grey old lion of Britain' (ctd. in Fotheringham 196).

The "Corroboree Chorus" was later incorporated into Helen Benlow's drama *For Sixty Thousand Pounds*, first staged at the Princess's Theatre, Sandhurst (Victoria) on 2 November 1874. The masque itself has also been translated into French and German verse.

1886:
- **Central Hall, Intercolonial Exhibition, Melbourne; 24 Oct.**
  - **Cond/M Dir.** Charles E. Horsley; **Choir Mast** James Ratcliffe.
  - **Cast** incl. Bertha Wilson (soprano), C. A. Donaldson (Tenor), Silvanus Angus (bass).
  - **Musicians** incl. Edward King (1st Violin), David Lee (organist).


Source: State Library of Victoria.
ROSANO THE BRIGAND CHIEF: [play with music] Txt. W. R. Honey; Mus. [n/e]

Advertised as a musical drama in Hobart's Mercury (8 Jan. 1869, 1).

1869: Theatre Royal, Hobart; 8 Jan.

Walter H. Cooper's sensation drama, *Sun and Shadow; Or, Mark Stornway's Nephews*, which premiered at the Royal Victoria Theatre in March, contained the song "There's a Path by the River," (sung by character Tabitha Truckle). The play was taken to Melbourne by George Leopold in October that year and staged under the direction of Henry H. Harwood. It was produced again in Sydney, at the Prince of Wales Theatre, in June 1871.

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**MORDGRUNDBRUCK [aka MURDER VALLEY BRIDGE]:** [opera] Lib/Mus. Carl Putman

Translated as *Murder Valley Bridge*, it was described by the *South Australian Advertiser* as both a "romantic opera" and a "burlesque opera."

**1870:** Theatre Royal, Adelaide; 22 Nov.
- **Troupe:** Adelaide Liedertafel.

*South Australian Advertiser* (Adelaide) 22 Nov. (1870), Advert (see right).
CAZILLE: [operetta] Lib. Richard Hengist Horne; Mus. Carl Schmitt

The story concerns a peasant girl named Cazille who is in love with a young man of her social station. Tension arises, however, when Cazille's foster-mother arranges for a wealthy, but much older, miller to be her future husband. When the miller overhears a conversation between Cazille and her young suitor he realises that he has no hope of securing her affection and hatches a plan to blow up the boat the lovers intend using to elope. The plan is foiled by some boatmen, and his treachery is discovered, allowing Cazille and her sweetheart to eventually marry.

The libretto and music for Cazille is believed to have been completed prior to Richard Horne's return to England in 1869. Schmitt tried unsuccessfully to get the opera produced in its full theatrical form, and thus the only performance involved extracts only. These were performed during a benefit concert held for the composer at the Masonic Hall in Sydney in 1872.

Eric Irvin notes in "Nineteenth Century English Dramatists in Australia" that Cazille was "little worse but certainly no better than the average opera libretto of the period" and that while "the story was melodrama at its most unconvincing... perhaps the music, as it does in so many operas, was able to rise above it" (28).

1872: Masonic Hall, Sydney; 8 Apr.
- M Dir. Carl Schmitt.
- Cast incl. Andrew Fairfax, Miss James, Mrs Conduit, Miss Maud, G. F. Jackson, M. Younger, E. A. Roper.
- The extracts from the operetta were presented as the second part of the evening's entertainment, with the first part made up of various musical selections from composers such as Auber and Mendelssohn.
- The orchestra comprised some 30 instrumentalists, while the chorus was made up approximately 50 singers.

1874

1874 saw the arrival in Australia of James Cassius Williamson for the first time, along with his Maggie Moore (Margaret Virginia Sullivan). Williamson, born in Pennsylvania, USA, in 1845, the son of a physician, was a leading comedian in both New York and California. Sometime previous to his engagement in Australia for George Coppin, he had (so the story goes) acquired the rights to a play written by an old miner, S. Smith, titled The German Recruit. Initially re-written with the assistance of a friend C. Greene, and retitled Struck Oil, the work became the most successful enterprise of his career as an actor. It is said to have premiered to immediate success in Salt Lake City (Utah) on 23 February 1874 not long before Williamson set sail for Australia. The first production of the work in Australia was at the Theatre Royal (Melbourne) on 1 August 1874. There is, however, some conjecture as to whether the play should be included as an Australian-written music theatre work. What is unclear is how much of the work was undertaken by Williamson, and when this was done. In an interview with A. G. Stephens he records that the play was "in great measure written upon the stage. My part was not even committed to paper until we had taken it around Australia. We used what we called a skeleton manuscript, with only the cues given... we would invent a little bit of business and so on, until the whole things was different from the play as conceived by the original writer" (qtd in Harold Love, Towards an Australian Drama, 56). Contrary to his claim, however, are the archival records in located in the Patents Office cache (discovered in 1986 by academic Richard Fotheringham) which reveal that Williamson arrived in Australia with an already-written version of the play. The extent to which this copyrighted version was changed during the initial and subsequent tours of this country is unknown. In this respect the various and numerous revivals of Struck Oil over the next three decades (both by Williamson and Moore together and in later years by Moore and H. R. Robert) did highlight a number of "original" dances which were incorporated in the narrative as vehicles for Moore in the character, Lizzie Stofel [see for example the 1897 Moore/H. R. Roberts production at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, beginning 11 September].

RAYMOND AND AGNES; OR, THE TRAVELLERS BENIGHTED: [opera] Lib/Mus. William Russell
- Sc Art. Mr Fry.


LES FLEURS DE SAVOIE: [operetta] Lib/Mus. Henry Hughes
An operetta written by Henry Hughes for his pupils, the story is set in the costume workroom at the Milan Opera House. Seamstress's are sewing the prima donna's costume for that evening's premiere. A flower girl tells them of her longing to return to Savoy and they take up a collection for her. She returns later, believing she has been given too much money, and meets the prima donna, only to find out that they are long-lost twins.

Hughes followed the 1874 premiere with at least two more productions, both in 1875. The first was again produced at the Athenaeum (12, 15 and 28 May), with his pupils including Miss Ikin and Miss Blackham. Another student production was staged at Hocking's Assembly Rooms (Melbourne) on 8 July.

Mr. Henry Hughes, a music-teacher in this city, has produced a pretty little operetta, which he entitles "Les Fleurs de Savoie." Just the sort of thing for a "breaking-up" party amongst a school of girls. It was performed at the Melbourne Athenaeum, on the 3rd of this month, with great success, before a numerous audience, for the benefit of the benevolent fund of the Freemasons under the Irish Constitution in Victoria, and a week later it was repeated at the same place for the same purpose, with nearly equal success. The singers were, all of them, the wives, or sisters, or daughters of Masons.

Australasian Sketcher with Pen and Pencil 26 Dec. (1874), 155.

1874: Athenaeum Theatre, Melbourne; 3, 11 Dec. [am]
- S Mngr. Robert Percy Whitworth; M Dir. Mr Hughes.
- Cast incl. Miss Hayward, Miss Blackham.

**LA FETE DU VILLAGE:** [chamber opera] Lib. Mrs Henry Hughes; Mus. Henry Hughes and R. Down

Referred to as an opera de camera in the Australasian ("Theatres," 27 Nov. 691) and a chamber opera by the Age theatre critic (Editorial, 30 Nov. 3). La Fete du Village was presented by the students of Mr Henry Hughes, a Melbourne-based teacher of music and singing. The work comprised a musical programme of 26 or more solos and duets, choruses and other concerted numbers. The Age records that the libretto is of "a simple character" and "quite in consonance with the music." The critic goes on to note, however: "The latter, though never rising above pleasing mediocrity, is of sufficient attraction to engage the attention of both singers and public, and in some cases is very capably rendered, notably in this case of one young lady who was successful last season in a former work of this composer. One very noticeable fault in this production was the fact that scarcely a work of the dialogue could be heard at a short distance from the platform, and this made the intervals between the songs very tedious" (30 Nov. 3). The Argus critic appears to have either been more forgiving, or was seated closer to the stage, as he or she makes note of the problems that beset the original cast for the premiere and their replacements (see note below): "We can give praise for the manner in which at so short notice [La Fete du Village and Look to the End], which occupy a couple of hours in representation, were rendered… Mr Hughes has displayed a great deal of ingenuity in varying the numerous tunes contained in these two pieces, so as to avoid the effect of monotony." (Editorial, 30 Nov. 5).

The story is set during the annual fete instituted in honour of the finding of the lord of the manor's lost child. The village is visited by two ladies from the chateau, one of whom loses a ring, having accidentally taken it off with her glove when baring her hand to have her fortune told by the gipsy Cora. The belle of the village, Anna, having hastily concealed a token given to her by her lover, Bertrand, is suspected of having stolen the ring and is accused of the theft by her rival for Bertrand, Nina. The ring is eventually found, however, and all ends happily.

1875:  
Athenaum Theatre, Melbourne; 29 Nov.
- **S Mngr.** Robert Percy Whitworth; **M Dir.** Henry Hughes
- **Cast incl.** Henry Hughes' pupils.
- Presented as part of a double bill with Hughes’ operetta Look to the End.
- The Argus records that Hughes was forced to "recast the whole affair" at short notice due to an epidemic having interfered with the regular attendance at school by his pupils (Editorial, 30 Nov. 5).

**Editorial.** Age 27 Nov. (1875), 5.
**Editorial.** Age 30 Nov. (1875), 3.
**Editorial.** Argus 30 Nov. (1875), 5.  [see also prev. **Editorial.** 27 Nov. 1875, 7]

**LOOK TO THE END:** [chamber operetta] Lib. Henry Hughes; Mus. Henry Hughes

An operetta with music and libretto by Hughes, the story concerns a lady, her maid, and their lovers. The Age critic was similarly unimpressed with Look to the End, writing that "the usual complications... were worked out in a decidedly tedious manner. The ladies who supported this portion of the entertainment were fairly successful, but the gentlemen were scarcely so fortunate. However, the audience, which was numerous and good-tempered, applauded without stint, and seemed to thoroughly enjoy everything" (Editorial, 3). The Argus critic was somewhat more positive, making note of the problems that beset the original cast for the premiere and their replacements (see note below). He or she writes: "We can give praise for the manner in which at so short notice [La Fete du Village and Look to the End], which occupy a couple of hours in representation, were rendered… Mr Hughes has displayed a great deal of ingenuity in varying the numerous tunes contained in these two pieces, so as to avoid the effect of monotony." (Editorial, 5).

1875:  
Athenaeum Theatre, Melbourne; 29 Nov.
- **S Mngr.** Robert Percy Whitworth; **M Dir.** Henry Hughes.
- **Cast incl.** Henry Hughes' pupils.
- Presented as part of a double bill with Hughes' opera La Fete Du Village.
- The Argus records that Hughes was forced to "recast the whole affair" at short notice due to an epidemic having interfered with the regular attendance at school by his pupils (30 Nov. 1875, 5).

**Editorial.** Age 30 Nov. (1875), 3.
**Editorial.** Argus 30 Nov. (1875), 5.
I LADRONI [aka THE ROBBERS]: [operetta] Lib. W. Horace Lingard; Mus. G. Operti
1879: Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 16-22 May
- Prod/Lse: George Coppin, John Hennings and J. R. Greville.
- Cast incl. W. Horace Lingard (Triptolonius Figg).
- Staged on 16 May as part of a benefit to Alice Lingard.

1880: Kelly and Leon's Opera House, Sydney; 13-16 Mar.
- Lse. Kelly and Leon.
- Troupe: Lingard Comedy Opera Company.

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN: [play with music] Txt Adapt. Alfred Dampier; Mus. [n/e]
“Specially written and adapted by Mr Dampier for his daughters Rose and Lily” ("Theatre Royal," Age 3) from Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel and advertised as a drama. Dampier's adaptation saw prominence given to the character of Topsy (played by Lily Dampier), who amongst other deeds shoots dead a slaver. Eva is saved from death amidst general rejoicing. It is believed that the production may have premiered in the USA or Canada. The Age notes, too, that the chief departure from Stowe's novel occurred in the parts of Eva and Topsy. "Little Eva is not represented as having died," writes the paper's critic, while the wickedness of Topsy is greatly increased, and she is made to shoot a slave trader assisting in the hunting down of George Harris and his wife, and afterwards performs a description of fiend's dance over the body." The critic goes on to suggest that dramatization was not a successful one: "This new turn in the story is certainly not an agreeable alteration. The play also loses one of its most effective and pathetic scenes by not having the death of Eva introduced into it. The story appears to be treated mainly with the view of bringing some of the incidents in the flight and pursuit of George Harris and his wife into prominence. The slave question is [also] not taken up in that serious and earnest spirit in which Mrs Stowe wrote her book” (ibid, 3). While the Argus critic's opinion was that the production was not unacceptable, and reminded him or her of Helen's Babies in some places (particularly through the performance Lily Dampier), the review agrees with the Age that the adaptation was not without its problems ("Theatre Royal," 6).

According to the Age, the musical aspects of the drama included "some negro business (songs, dances and comedy), descriptive of a plantation festival" most of which was performed by the Virginia Minstrels ("Theatre Royal," 4 Aug. 3).

1879: Victoria Theatre, Newcastle (New South Wales); 3 July
1879: Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 2-7 Aug.
- Troupe: Gardner Brothers / Virginia Minstrels.
- Cast incl. Lily Dampier (Topsy), Rose Dampier (Eva), Alfred Dampier (George Harris), W. G. Carey (Simon Legree), Mrs Edouin Bryer, Flora Anstead (Eliza Harris), J. R. Greville (Phineas Fletcher), Frank Harcourt, Mr Appleton (Mr St Clare, a southern gentleman), Stuart O'Brien (Uncle Tom), Mr Taylor.

1880: Queen's Theatre, Sydney; 12, 14-16 June
- Lse. M. Hegarty; S Art. William Kinchela.
- Troupe: Virginia Jubilee Singers.
- Cast incl. Lily Dampier, Rose Dampier, Alfred Dampier, Miss Begly, Kate Douglass, Alice Deorwyn, , Harry Leston, Mrs Lachlan McGowan, Constance McGowan, Mrs Thomas, Charles Brown, Mr Deorwyn, Harry Sefton, Mr Sweeney, Mr West, Mr Welch, E. Holloway, Lachlan McGowan, E. RyanMr Bennett, Mr Levy, Mr Seville, Mr Gardner, J. Lee, Mr Boyle.

1881

VERCINGÉTORIX: OR, LOVE AND PATRIOTISM: [play with music] Txt Adapt/Trans. Joshua Lake; Mus. Henri Kowalski

# W. H. Williams (Melbourne), 1881
# 188-, (printed by Troedel and Co)

Advertised as a lyric drama in three parts and subtitled Love and Patriotism. The libretto was translated into English and adapted by Lake from M. Maniel's original French version. The story concerns Vercingetorix, beloved of Luctera, who is chosen by the Gauls to defend their country against the invading Romans, led by Julius Caesar. Though preferring love, he accepts the duties of leader. The Gauls are besieged at Alesia, and Vercingetorix surrenders in order to have his countymen spared. He is taken to Rome and beheaded during Caesar's triumphant return.

1881: Garden Palace, Sydney; 31 Mar; 1 Apr.
- M Dir. Henri Kowalski.
- Cast incl. Gabriella Boema, Agnes Palmer, Miss Williams, Edward Farley.
- Musicians: Austrian band.
- Performed with French text

1881: Town Hall, Melbourne; 24 Sept.
- Dir. Signor de Vivo; M Dir. Henri Kowalski and Thomas Zeplin (Orch Ldr).
- Troupe: Metropolitan Liedertafel.
- Cast incl. Gabriella Boema, Mrs Kingsland, Signor Coy, Signor Riccardi, Signor Luisetti, Mr Moyle.
- Performed with English text.

1886: Sydney University, Sydney; 1 July
- M Dir. Henri Kowalski.
- Troupe: Sydney Philharmonic Society.
- Cast incl. Miss F. Saville, Miss A. Mountcastle, Mrs C. E. Bowler, Vernon Reid, Mr Hallewell, A. E. Bowler, Mr Bushelle.

MICHAEL STROGOFF; THE COURIER OF THE CZAR:  [play with music]  Txt Adapt.

James Burdett Howe; Mus. [n/e]

Also known as Russia as it Is (Melbourne 1882), this theatrical adaptation of Jules Verne's novel Michael Strogoff, was initially dramatised by Basil Henry, and then adapted by J. B. Howe. The narrative concerns Michael Strogoff, who is charged with delivering a message to the Grand Duke in Siberia. This requires him to contend with hostile Tartars and the malevolence of the traitor Ogareff, who has him blinded in the Tartar camp. Strogoff recovers, however, and exposes, then kills Ogareff before finally delivering the message. All the while, French and English correspondents trail along with him. The musical element incorporates dance and a small amount of singing within the narrative. Reviews of the production also indicate that it contained substantial ballet interludes.

NB: Another adaptation of Michael Strogoff (subtitled Russia as it Is) was also staged in Sydney in 1882. That production, adapted by F. R. C. Hopkins, was then staged in Melbourne later that year, and revised by Alfred Dampier in 1885 and 1887. The extent of the musical content in these versions is unclear, although production credits indicate that David Cope was involved (most likely as composer or arranger of incidental music).

1882:  Bijou Theatre, Melbourne; 25 Feb.- 13 Mar.  [14 pfms]
- Dir/Lse. G. B. W. Lewis; S Art. Harry Grist.
- Cast incl. Julia Hayward, Mrs Wooldridge, Mr and Mrs Edwin Palmer, Frank Forbes, D. C. Smith, J. B. Howe, J. F. Cathcart, Harry Daniels, A. Norman, Mr Whiting, N. Brady.


SINGVOEGELCHEN [aka SINGING BIRDS]: [operetta] Lib/Mus. Moritz Heuzenroeder

"Lord Middleby, an Englishmen in lodgings on the Continent, resorts to all sorts of wiles to rid himself of a musical young lady and her lover, who are constantly warbling on the floor below." The South Australian Register's theatre critic went on to record that "the operetta was very fairly played for amateurs, and afforded a good deal of amusement to those who were present" ("Deutscher," 6).

1882:  Albert Hall, Adelaide; 29 May.  [amateur]
- M Dir/Cond. Moritz Heuzenroeder; Prod. Adelaide German Club.
- Cast and production by a local Adelaide amateur theatre company.
- The production possible included members of the Deutsche Maenner Gesang Verein (German Men's Choral Society). The society presented a selection of songs during the first half of the evening's entertainment. The operetta was staged in the second half.
- Albert Hall was also the home of the German Club.

1882:  Albert Hall, Adelaide; 31 July.  [amateur]
- M Dir/Cond. Moritz Heuzenroeder; Prod. Adelaide German Club.
- Cast incl. Messrs Menz and Basedow and Minna Schrader.

ONKEL BECKER'S GESCHICHTE [aka UNCLE BECKER'S STORY]: [operetta] Lib/Mus. Moritz Heuzenroeder

Described in the Express and Telegraph as both an "operetta" and an "amusing dramatic sketch which has been set to music" (3 Nov. 1882, 2).

1882: Albert Hall, Adelaide; 3 Nov. [amateur]
- M Dir/Cond. Moritz Heuzenroeder
- Cast and production by a local Adelaide amateur theatre company.
- The production possible included members of the Deutsche Maenner Gesang Verein (German Men's Choral Society). The society presented a selection of songs during the first half of the evening's entertainment. The operetta was staged in the second half.
- Albert Hall was also the home of the German Club.

°°°
George Darrell's emotional drama, *The Naked Truth* (incidental music by Thomas Zeplin), which premiered in May at the Melbourne Opera House, incorporated a small amount of musical performance in the opening Epoch ("A Queen of Bohemia"). This scene, set in an establishment described as "more like a music hall than a gentleman's residence, [and] bearing the outward show of prodigal extravagance and bad taste," sees the vulgar and fussy guests dance into and out of the drawing-room, singing as they waltz in and out (Age 14 May 1883, Supp. 1).

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**FAUST AND GRETCHEN:**  [operetta] Lib. Richard Jaentach; Mus. Moritz Heuzenroeder

Advertised as a parody on Goethe’s Faust," this four act operetta was first staged in Adelaide under the auspices of the Deutsche Maenner Gesang Verein (German Men's Choral Society) and in aid of the Rhine Inundation Fund. Presented in German, the English-only speaking members of the audience were given a translation in the program. The *South Australian Register*’s critic records, however, that the English words "fell rather flat on paper when contrasted with the sonorous German on the stage" ("Albert Hall," 7).

Set in Germany in 1850, the libretto is described as "tolerably smart," with situations somewhat funny" (ibid, 7). The dramatic act is set up in the beginning:

Dr. Faust (whose title is due to a bogus certificate from America) ia discovered relating some particulars of his past life. His meditations are interrupted by a students' drinking song, which revives memories of the past and determines him to return to his old life. He summons his assistant, Mepheles [sic] (who has failed to take his degree and has sunk rather low in the social scale… (ibid, 7).

The same critic goes on to suggests that the mainspring in the fun lies among the incongruities, for which we have costumes ranging from the antique picturesque to the modern grotesque, and the mingling of these in occasional groupings has a mirth-provoking effect… Altogether Faust and Gretchen passed off remarkably well, and smoothly enough to show that it had been carefully rehearsed” (ibid, 7).

**1883:**  Albert Hall, Adelaide; 19 Mar.  [amateur]
- Cast incl. Minna Schrader (Margaretha)

**1883:**  Albert Hall, Adelaide; 12 Nov.  [amateur]
- M Dir/Cond. Moritz Heuzenroeder.
- Cast incl. Minna Schrader (Margaretha)
- Second act only. Presented along with the second and third acts of Weber's *Der Freischutz*.

*Albert Hall: Faust and Gretchen.*  *South Australian Register* (Adelaide) 20 Mar. (1883), 7.  [Includes an extensive narrative synopsis]

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**ESTRELLA:**  [comic opera] Lib. Walter Parke; Mus. Luscombe Searelle

*Estrella*, a three act musical comedy, was first performed in the United Kingdom (1883), and later in the USA, before its Australian premiere in 1884, at which time it became a hit with audiences, although not always being so popular with the critics. Set in Venice, the action moves from the shore of the Adriatic to the Palace of the Count, and finally to the Doge's Palace of Justice. The narrative concerns Estrella, betrothed to a Count, but actually in love with Lorenzo, a young advocate. The Count schemes to test his wife-to-be's affection, and having found this out Lorenzo makes a plan with his friends to carry the Count off disguised as pirates. In the second act the count (disguised as a Hebrew moneylender) tells of his "own" capture and death, and that he was obliged to bring "his" last words to the young fiancée of the count. A second ceremony is performed, now between Lorenzo and Estrella. The third act, set in the Doge's Palace, which settles the problem once and for all, has been described as being influenced by the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice* ("Theatre Royal," 8).

**1883:**  Prince's Theatre, Manchester (England); 14 May
- Cast incl. Arnold Breedon.
- This was a tryout production. The cast very likely comprised most of the actors involved in the Gaiety Theatre season (below).
NECK FOR NECK; OR, THE BROAD TRACK OF TIME:  [play with music]  

Advertised as a humorous drama with startling sensations, comedy and songs, which introduces rival lovers, a bank defalcation, a murder, a drunken witness, an innocent man condemned, and a scaffold robbed of its victim. The narrative concerns an innocent bank clerk who is wrongfully accused of the murder of his boss. Condemned to be hanged, his girlfriend cuts him loose with the same knife used in the murder and gets him out of prison. The clerk is now half mad and unable to speak. The real murderer and his hirelings knife more people, until the clerk comes to his senses and prevents him from continuing.

It is not yet certain whether the 1883 Gaiety Theatre production, which also included a train sensation, was the Australian premiere. Sydney's Evening news records that the play had been "one of the last produced at the old Queen's Theatre prior to that theatre being condemned" ("Gaiety Theatre," 2).

1883: Gaiety Theatre, London (England); 24 May
- Cast incl. Aynsley Cook, Constance Loseby, Arnold Breeden, G. Temple, R. Brough, Mr DeLange, Miss F. Trevelyan, Sallie Turner, Ednee Richards, Maude Perletti, plus a chorus of fifty.
- One matinee performance only.

1883: Follies Dramatiques Theatre, London (England); 6 June - 6 July [24 pfms]

1884: Theatre Royal, Sydney 27 Sept. - 17 Oct.  [18 pfms]
- Prod. J. C. Williamson, Arthur Garner and George Musgrove;
  M Dir. Luscombe Searelle; S Art. John Hennings.
- Troupe: Williamson, Garner and Musgrove Opera Company.

1884: Princess Theatre, Melbourne; 15 Nov. – ca. 23 Dec.
- Cast and production mostly as for previous Sydney season.

1884: Standard Theatre, New York City (USA); 11-13 Dec.  [3 pfms]
- Cast incl. Amy Gordon.
- The season was forced to close after three nights when fire destroyed the Standard Theatre on 14 Dec.

1885: Theatre Royal, Brisbane; 10-16 Sept.
- Prod. J. C. Williamson, Arthur Garner and George Musgrove;
- Troupe: Williamson, Garner and Musgrove's Royal Comic Opera Company.

"Estrella." Sydney Morning Herald 26 Sept. (1884), 8.  [see also Advert. – 26 Sept. 1884, 2]
"Estrella." Brisbane Courier 10 Sept. (1885), 5.
"Follies Dramatiques." Times (London) 7 June (1883), 5.

- Prod/Lse. Arthur Vivian; Mngr. Lionel Harcourt.
- Troupe: Vivian's Dramatic Company.
- Cast incl. Kate Douglas, Beatrice Lyster.

1888: Theatre Royal, Brisbane; 22-24 Mar.

1889: Opera House, Melbourne; 26-31 Jan.
- Mngr/Lse. Arthur Vivian.

"Gaiety Theatre." Evening News (Sydney) 12 Nov. (1883), 2.

CRIME; OR, LIFE IN TWO HEMISPHERES: [play with music] Txt. A. L. Inglis; Mus. [n/e]
A drama with music, including a corroboree and a great diggers' concert, the story involves the departure of troops for Egypt and an encounter between police and bushrangers, amongst other scenes.

- Lse. Mr Howard and Mr Simmons; S Art. Kenny Douglas.
- Cast incl. Miss Merrick, Alice Johns, Hetty and Amy Sherwood, Cottier Brothers, Mr Palarto, R. Watson, Mr James, A. Andrews, Mr Penman.

1885: Nugget Theatre, Melbourne; 29 Aug. - 11 Sept. [12 pfms]

1887: Gaiety Theatre, Sydney; 12-16 Mar.
- Cast incl. Helen Vivian, Daisy Thynne, Amy Nelson, Eva Levy, Arthur Vivian, James Thynne, C. Montgarry, J. R. Fitzgerald, Mr Overton, Mr Andrews, Mr Bateman, Mr Cargo, Mr Winter.


○○○
BOBADIL: [comic opera] Lib/Lyr. Walter Parke; Mus/Lyr. Luscombe Searelle

Staged as the opening production for the Majeroni and Wilson Comic Opera Company's season at the New Opera House, Sydney in 1884, there were several references in the Sydney and Melbourne newspapers as to the popularity of Majeroni and Wilson's decision to place "before the Australian public a musical work by an Australian composer...". Described as an "opera bouffe," the tale is taken from the Arabian Nights' story "The Sleeper Awakened," and is said to have used a similar treatment to that of Shakespeare's in the introductory part of the Taming of the Shrew.

The storyline concerns, Bobadil, a young Englishman who has fallen amongst the Philistines and been ruined by an Armenian money lender. He longs to be Sultan for a day if only to get revenge on his tormenters, a wish, which by coincidence of fate, he manages. The action also includes the swapping, disguising, and mistaking of identities, lust and love, escape from the executioner's blade, and of course, a happy ending.

The opera's acts were: Act 1. A Bazaar in an Eastern city; Act 2. The Audience Chamber in the Sultan's Palace; and Act 3. The Courtyard of an Eastern Lunatic Asylum.

Songs incorporated into the narrative include "I'm a Man of a Very Old Nation," "The Secret of the Rose is Sweet," the unaccompanied quintette "Good Night," a quartette "Am I Sleeping," and Princess Zorayda's "Ah Me! I Would I Were a Peasant Born."

### Castings of 1884

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Castings</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Opera House, Sydney</td>
<td>22 Nov, 1884 - 12 Jan., 14 - 17 Feb, 1885</td>
<td>45 pfms</td>
<td>Eduard Majeroni and W. J. Wilson; M Dir/Cond. Luscombe Searelle; Orch Ldr. Herr Klieter; S Art. Alfred Clint; S Smgr. George Leopold.</td>
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<td>Cast incl. Charles Harding (Bobadil), George Leopold (Schacabac), Frances Saville (Lulu), Oliver &quot;Olly&quot; Deering (Armenian Money Lender), F. Wentworth (The Sultan), W. P Morrison (Officer of the Guard), A. Davies (Prince Haroun) Gracie Plaisted (Princess Zorayda), Minnie Desmond (Widow Hanifer), Blanche Leopold (Picalil), Nellie Fernleigh (Gulnare), Florence Slater, Edith Leslie, Emily Delamare, Edith Walters, Mattye Darly, Mary Watson, Maud Rouse, Maud and Miss F. Larade, Edith Lemington, Carrie Walker, Elsie Wright, Miss E. Blanchard, Fanny Hall, Miss C. De Barrie, Ettie Ward, Maud Ashley, Miss H. Osborne, Miss Sinclair, Miss A. Hudson, Patty Laroche, Hettie Matthews, Susie Thomson, Katy Strong, Nellie Martin, Esther Payne, Fanny Blossom, Hettie Vane, Grace Simmons, Mr Costello, Mr Whitworth, Percy Stuart, Mr Wells, Mr Reid, Mr Fenning, Mr Winter, Mr Moss, Mr Hutchins, Mr Oran, Mr Briggs, John Forde.</td>
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<td>The forty or so extras played roles such as Guards, Chinese Ambassadors, Fruit Sellers and Amazons.</td>
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<td>The company left for Adelaide immediately following the end of the Sydney season (27th Feb.).</td>
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<td>Theatre Royal, Adelaide</td>
<td>7-20 Mar.</td>
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<td>Cast and production mostly as for previous Sydney season.</td>
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<td>Bijou Theatre, Melbourne</td>
<td>9 May - 5 June, 2 July</td>
<td>24 pfms</td>
<td>Eduard Majeroni and W. J. Wilson; M Dir. Luscombe Searelle; S Art. Alfred Clint; Chor. Henry Leopold; S Smgr. George Leopold.</td>
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<td>Troupe: Majeroni and Wilson's Grand Comic Opera Company.</td>
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<td>Cast incl. Charles Harding (Bobadil), George Leopold (Schacabac), Frances Saville (Lulu), Oliver &quot;Olly&quot; Deering (Armenian Money Lender), John Forde (The Sultan), W. P Morrison (Officer of the Guard), Gracie Plaisted (Princess Zorayda), Ella Fenton, Mrs Ryan (Widow Hanifer), Ella Fenton, Blanche Leopold, E. Rosevear.</td>
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<td>Cast incl. Gracie Plaisted, Ella Fenton [Ella de Fontaine], Miss L. Bolyne, Sophie Harris, Nellie Fernleigh, Blanche de Fontaine [aka Mrs L. Searelle], James Lithgow, W. Rosevear, Charles Harding, Edwin Lester, Oliver &quot;Olly&quot; Deering, W. P. Morrison.</td>
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<td>New Opera House, Sydney; 24-30 Apr., 12 June</td>
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<td>Eduard Majeroni, W. J. Wilson; Mngr. Eduardo Majeroni, W. J. Wilson and C. E. Moreton; M Dir. Luscombe Searelle; S Art. Alfred Clint.</td>
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<td>Troupe: Searelle and Harding's English and Comic Opera Company.</td>
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<td>Queensland regional tour; ca. June/July</td>
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<td>Eduard Majeroni and W. J. Wilson; M Dir/Cond. Luscombe Searelle; S Smgr. George P. Carey.</td>
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<td>This tour advertised as &quot;the first production in Queensland of the most popular opera ever produced in Australia&quot; (MB: 6 July 1886, 1).</td>
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<td>Tour itinerary incl. Rockhampton (School of Arts) 6, 12 July</td>
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2 See Sydney Morning Herald 28 Nov. 1884, 2, for example.
Age 13 May (1885), 8. Advert.
"Bobadil." Sydney Morning Herald 21 Nov. (1884), 8.
"Bijou Theatre - Bobadil." Age 12 May (1885), 5. [see also advert. - 11 May 1885, 8]
Editorial. Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton, Qld) 7 July (1886), 5.
"Opera House." Sydney Morning Herald 24 Nov. (1884), 8. [see also advert. - 22 Nov. 1884, 2]

![Image of music sheet](image1.png)

![Image of playbill](image2.png)

Courtesy of the National Library of Australia
1885

George Darrell's play *The Squatter* premiered for the first time on any stage at Her Majesty's Opera House in Melbourne on 27 June. Essentially a melodrama, the play contains "The Passion Song Waltz" (lyrics by George Darrell and music by David Cope). It was presented as part of a musical performance in Act Three ("The Return Ball; Melbourne Town Hall"), which advertising describes as "a most realistic and vivid scene." The song was sung and danced to by 100 auxiliaries, in mythological and other fancy dress costumes (Age 27 June 1885, 12).

ZELMA: [comic opera] Lib/Mus. Auguste W. Juncker; Add Mat. H. Stephen

A comic opera described as "after Sir Arthur Sullivan dashed with a soupcon of Planquette" (Editorial, 4). The 28 April rehearsal, undertaken during the morning and attended by members of the press, was accorded a relatively positive response from the Brisbane Courier critic who suggested that "the music of Zendu is bright and sparkling, and shows in many places true musicianly skills and taste… [and] judging from the specimens we heard [it] show hold its own with many comic operas that have been exceedingly popular. Details concerning a theatrical staging have not yet been established.

At least one song from the opera, "The Spinning Wheel," was presented in Sydney at a special matinee musical concert put on by Mr Juncker at Sydney's West's Rooms (27 Nov. 1885). The vocalist was Josephine Deakin, with piano accompaniment provided by the composer.

1885:  Theatre Royal, Brisbane; 28 Apr.
- This was a a public rehearsal.


ISIDORA: [aka THE BLACK ROVER] [comic opera] Lib/Mus. Luscombe Searelle

Commissioned by the Majeroni and Wilson Comic Opera Company this three act light opera is founded on the Legend of the Black Rover, and had its world premiere at Melbourne’s Bijou Theatre on the 7th of July (it was staged in London in 1890 under the title *The Black Rover*). The narrative is set on the island of Cuba in 1550, and with the incidents said to have been taken from West Indian legend. The opera was comprised of three acts. The first sees the narrative set on a plantation on the coast of Cuba. Isidora, a woman over whose birth hangs a mystery, is in love with Felix. Her adopted father, Patronio, would prefer that she marry a Count, but unbeknownst to all the Count has drowned and is being impersonated. Meanwhile Felix attempts to locate a buried treasure so that he can marry Isidora when the Black Rover appears and kidnaps the lovers and the fake count, Henry T. Smith, along with a group of Patronio's slaves. Act Two, set on board the pirate's ship, sees the prisoners condemned to death, but they are saved by Isidora when she sings a song that was sung to her by a woman, perhaps her mother, when she was a babe. The pirate's anger is dampened, and soon after the prisoner's escape on a raft, leaving the pirate ship to sink. In the final act Isidora and her fellow captives return to the plantation to find happiness, except for Smith, who is gaoled. The opera also contains several sub-plots and intrigues concerning mistaken identity, lust and love, human sacrifice and a curse.

Searelle indicated that the opera combined elements of French opera comique with a story of strong dramatic interest. The Bulletin critic wrote, however, that "it is not necessary to say much about the literary value of the libretto… it has few well-turned thoughts. It has no felicitous expressions. Yet… it is no worse than… hundreds of other comic operas" ("Sundy Shows," 9). Town and County's critic was of a similar opinion with regard to the libretto, writing that "it is pleasanter to speak of Mr Searelle's music," which was seen as deserving "great praise… there are some very effective choruses, and not a few of the numbers are characterised by considerable fancy and feeling" ("Music," 450). The London Times critic, in reviewing the 1890 production noted that "the plot… on the assurance of its author and composer [is] taken from an old West Indian legend, but when shorn of its opera bouffe trappings is practically identical with that of Vanderdecken" ("Globe Theatre," 8). The same critic records, too, that the farcical element introduced in the opening scenes created a paradox in terms of the more melodramatic later scenes, and caused the opening night audience to "take as a joke much that was meant in sober earnest". Of the music, the Times suggested that while their existed some good pieces of musical travesty but that Searelle's score "rarely, if ever, emerges from the domain of the farcical element introduced in the opening scenes created a paradox in terms of the more melodramatic later scenes, and caused the opening night audience to "take as a joke much that was meant in sober earnest". Of the music, the Times suggested that while their existed some good pieces of musical travesty but that Searelle's score "rarely, if ever, emerges from the domain of the obvious; his harmonies are conventional and his rhythms commonplace." Nevertheless it was noted that the applause and encores of the premiere night audience indicated that "the popular verdict was undoubtedly favourable" (ibid, 8). It ran for just over 40 performances.

1885:  Bijou Theatre, Melbourne; 7-25 July  [16 pfms]
- Prod. Eduardo Majeroni and W. J. Wilson; S Mngr. George Leopold.
- Cast incl. Charles Harding (Felix), George Leopold (Henry T. Smith), Oliver "Oly" Deering (Chickanaque), Edwin Kelly (The Black Rover), Edwin Lester (Jacob), F. Wentworth (Senor Patronio), E. Rosevear (Magistrate), G. T. Tremnell (Bill), W. P Morrison (Tom), Gracie Plaisted (Isidora), Ella Fenton (Annetta), Frances Saville, plus a chorus of negroes, Plantation Girls, Pirates, Sailors, Angels etc.

- Prod. Eduardo Majeroni and W. J. Wilson; Cond. Luscombe Searelle; S Art. Alfred Clint.
- Cast incl. Charles Harding (Felix), Gracie Plaisted (Isidora), Edwin Kelly (Henry T. Smith), Oliver "Oly" Deering Chickanaque), Lithgow James (The Black Rover), Edwin Lester (Jacob), F. Wentworth (Senor Patronio), E. Rosevear (Magistrate), G. T. Tremnell (Bill), W. P Morrison (Tom), Sophie Harris (Annetta), Frances Saville, plus a chorus of negroes, Plantation Girls, Pirates, Sailors, Angels etc.
- Lithgow James (a celebrated baritone) made his first appearance in Australia for the 1885 Sydney season of Isidora, taking over from Edwin Kelly, who subsequently replaced George Leopold as Henry T. Smith.

1887: Cape Town (Sth Africa), no details
- **Troupe:** Luscombe Searelle's Opera Company.

1890: Globe Theatre, London (England); 23 Sept. - 7 Nov. [40 pfms, as The Black Rover]
- **Dir.** Hugh Moss; **Prod.** George Paget; **B Mgr.** A. Talbot.
- **Cast** incl. William Ludwig (Black Rover), Blanche Fenton (Isidora), William Hogarth (Patrouio), John Le Hay (Jacob), Charles Collette (Pedro), Shiel Barry (Chichanaque), Maurice Mancini (Felix), Royden Erlyne (Moro), Ettie Chapoy (Sabina), Florence Lloyd (Annetta).

Age 7 July (1885), 8. Advert.
"**Bijou Theatre: Isadora.**" Argus 8 July (1885), 6.
"**Isidora.**" Sydney Morning Herald 24 Aug. (1885), 5.
"**Isadora - Bijou Theatre.**" Age 8 July (1885), 5.
1886

_The Soggarth_, written and directed by George Darrell (and produced by Williamson, Garner and Musgrove), premiered at the Theatre Royal (Sydney) on 28 September. Typical of the 19th century melodrama it contained an overture and a large amount of incidental music - composed by the production's music director, Walter J. Rice. Rice was also engaged in this position for the 1887 Melbourne production, staged at the Bijou Theatre, 15 January under the auspices of Eduardo Majeroni and W. J. Wilson.

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**POPULAIRE; THE MODERN HERCULES; OR, THE HERO OF A DAY:** [comic opera]

_Txt._ Thomas Moser; _Mus._ Hector McLean

# H. T. Dunn (Sydney), 1886

A story which satirises the excessive devotion to field sports, rowing and other muscular exercises. The cast includes a female chorus of lawn tennis players and a male chorus of bookies.

A rehearsal was opened to persons by invitation in 1882, and a public rehearsal given in 1884. The first full performance was at Government House on 7 Dec. 1886.

1882: W. H. Palings Rooms, Sydney; 9 Sept.
- Two acts performed only.

1884: W. H. Palings Rooms, Sydney; 19 Apr.
- Cast incl. Mr Morgan, F. J. Hallewell, Mr Rice, Hector McLean.
- Musician: Hector McLean (piano).
- Presented as a public rehearsal.

- _Dir._ Thomas Moser; _M Dir._ Hector McLean; _S Art._ William Kinchela; _S Mgr._ James H. Rainford.
- _Cast_ incl. Mrs J. A. Dobbie [or Miss E. A. Foxall], F. J. Hallewell [or Hellewell], A. Parkinson, Mr Monie, E. W. Foxall.


Kelly, Veronica, ed. _Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1870-1890_. (1997), v. pags.
1887

**FEDERATION:** [opera] **Lib/Mus.** Louis Bayer
# Kemp and Boyce, 1887
1887: Camperdown Mechanics Hall (Victoria); 21 June


**I DUE STUDENTI [aka THE TWO STUDENTS]:** [opera] **Lib.** Ugo Catani; **Mus.** Alfred Plumpton

A romantic opera in the Italian tradition, it is set in sixteenth-century Spain where two impoverished students stay in a supposedly haunted castle once owned by Jews. Each is in love with the same beautiful woman they met once, but who used a different name when first meeting them. During a storm Naomi, in disguise, searches the castle for her uncle's will in the hope that it will restore their fortunes. Each of the students recognises her as his love. She denies them and they take her for the devil in disguise. Furthermore, the peasants want to kill her, as they believe she is a witch. Sebastiano saves her, and she proposes. He cannot marry a Jew, however. Inigo finds a document showing that not only is she a Christian, but that he and Naomi are in fact cousins - a situation which allows Sebastino and Naomi to marry.

The opera, greeted with admiration for the mere fact that it was staged, was nonetheless given a distinctly modified response from the critics and public. Although meant to be comic, this did not come across, while the dramatic content was also weak. The music, written with taste (and with some songs providing an element of appeal) was viewed, however, as lacking variety.

The librettist, Signor Ugo Catani, was a Florentine artist who moved to Australia with Marchese Girolamo, another artist from the same Italian city in 1885. The pair opened up a studio at 5 Collins Street, Melbourne, sometime around October/November that year (*Argus* 17 Nov. 1885, 5).

**1887:** Alexandra Theatre, Melbourne; 27 Dec.
- **Mngr/Lse.** Martin Simonsen; **M Dir/Cond.** Roberto Hazon.
- **Troupe:** New Royal Italian Opera Company.
- **Cast incl.** Giovanna Cavalleri (Naomi), Giuseppe Santinelli (Sebastio), Attilio Buzzi (Inigo), G. Johnson, T. Morgan, Miss Graupner.

Gyger, Alison. *Opera for the Antipodes.* (1990), 48-49, 336.


Argus 27 Dec. (1887), 8.

°°°
1888

THE BERBER: [play with music] **Txt.** Mr Bolton; **Mus.** [n/e]
Described in *Table Talk* as a "drama of the Oriental order" (14).
1888: Academy of Music, Ballarat (Victoria); 27-28 Feb.
- **Mngr.** Ernest Barack and Mr Woodville; **S Art.** Mr Bolton.
- **Cast** incl. Nelly Russell, Virginia Clayton, Miss Medway, Maud Leslie, Miss Thomson, Miss Holland, E. B. Russell, Mr Beaufort, Mr Barack, Mr Bolton, Mr Patterson, Mr Melville, Mr Burns.


FAUST: [play with music] **Txt Adapt.** Gilbert Parker; **Mus.** Frank Eugarde
A drama in blank verse with music, it was described as having "some characteristics" of the Charles Kean version. The narrative follows the Faust-Marguerite plot, and includes the Brocken scene. The song for Mephistopheles, titled "A Devilish Good Fellow," was composed by Frank Eugarde. The musical aspects of the production, which included several choruses in the prologue and "The Soldier's Chorus" (in the fourth act, also comprised a 'military band, powerful chorus, peal of bells, [and] grand organ.' One of the musical highlights, too, was Miss Bishop's rendition of "King of Thule" (Sydney Morning Herald 2 Apr. 1888, 2).

1888: Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney; 31 Mar. - 18 May [42 pfms]
- **Dir.** George Rignold; **M Arr.** Frank Eugarde; **S Art.** John Little and George Campbell; **Cost.** Mrs George Rignold and Mde. Robin; **S Mngr.** J. W. Hazlitt.


SWEET SIMPLICITY: [comic opera] **Lib/Mus.** Fred A. Packer
The first performance of this work by Frederick Augustus Packer (a forebear of Australia's media empire family), was a private production at Government House 2 June 1888, with the first public presentation occurring on 22 February 1889. The second production contained a number of extra songs and duets etc.

1888: Government House, Hobart; 2 June
1889: Theatre Royal, Hobart; 22 Feb.


BOOTLES' BABY: [play with music] **Txt Adapt.** Charles Bradley;
**Orig Mus.** David Cope; **Add Mus.** [n/e]
This comedy, adapted by Charles Bradley from John Strange Winter's (Henrietta Stannard) novel of the same name, was first staged at Theatre Royal, Hobart by a company run by Harry St Maur. Another theatrical version of the novel was staged for a long run at the Globe Theatre, London, earlier in the year. Although the *Tasmanian News* records that the two stage versions were the same ("Local and General," 2), the London adaptation was undertaken by Hugh Moss.

The story sees Grace Harcourt leave her baby at the army barracks after she has been jilted by its father, and her secret husband, the despicable Captain Gilchrist. The baby, named Mignon, is raised by Captain Ferrers (familiarly known as Bootles) with the help of the motherly Mrs Simmons, who has thirteen children of her own. In the second act, set some five years later, Ferrers falls in love with Grace, who is now the companion to Lady Deveraux. Gilchrist meanwhile has begun to court Lady Devereaux. Grace exposes her ex-husband, and shortly afterwards, in the third act (set in a room overlooking the Blanktown racecourse), Gilchrist is thrown from his horse while riding in a hurdle race. With Grace now free to marry Ferrers, the baby's identity is finally made known.

The *Tasmanian Mail* critic suggested that *Bootles' Baby* promised to form one of the most brilliant successes of the St Maur season, the comedy-drama being a good-humoured satire on the exquisite lackadaisical type of British officers who live in a careless, happy-go-lucky style of life, yet withal are men of honor, and made of that stuff that did the country good service in the Crimean trenches ("Bootles' Baby," 2). The *Mercury* critic was similarly impressed by the production, writing that the company had "made a decided impression" and would likely be accorded a longer season than had initially been intended ("Theatre Royal," 3). Critical responses to the 1889 Melbourne production were generally unfavourable, however, with the *Age* reviewer noting, for example, that "Mr C. Bradley, has performed his share of the work in an unsatisfactory manner, and a duller and more feeble production could hardly be imagined. The dialogue is without sparkle and many of the scenes [are] of a most inconsequential
character” (“Bijou Theatre.” 6). The musical component of the play involved, along with incidental music, at least two songs, which were performed by the troupe's leader, Harry St Maur. These were "Doughty Deeds" and the "Kiss Song." Other "musical aids" performed during the play included "Mistletoe Brough" (company).

1888: Theatre Royal, Hobart; 4-8 Dec.
- Dir/Prod. Harry St Maur; M Dir/Cond. J. Brown.
- Troupe: St Maur Comedy Company.
- Cast: Harry St Maur (Capt. Ferrers), Collet Dobson (Capt. Gilchrist), Florence Seymour (Mrs Gilchrist), Julia Esmond (Mrs Primrose), H. R. Roberts (Captain Lucy), F. Cambourn (Simmons), May Holt (Mrs Simmons).

1889: Academy of Music, Launceston (Tas); 2 Jan.
- Cast and production as for previous Hobart season.

- Dir/S Mngr. Harry Daniels; M Dir. David Cope; Mngr/Lse. Robert B. Brough and Dion Boucicault Jnr; S Art. Mr Spong and Mr Churchwood.
- Troupe: St Maur Comedy Company.
- Cast: Harry St Maur (Capt. Ferrers), Lucy Harwood (Grace), F. Stanmaur (Capt. Gilchrist), Emma Temple (Lady Devereaux), Bessie Major (Mrs Simmons), Percy St John, Emma Markham, Owen Harris, Roy Grenfell, Fred Cambourne, Gerald Moore, Meta Pelham (Miss Primrose), Eileen Mayo, Little Leo (Mignon, Bootles' Baby).

"Bijou Theatre - Bootles' Baby." Age 1 Apr. (1889), 6.
"Bijou Theatre - Bootles' Baby." Argus 1 Apr. (1889), 8.
"St Maur Comedy Company." Examiner (Launceston, Tas) 3 Jan. (1889), 3.
"St Maur Comedy Company: Bootle's Baby." Daily Telegraph (Launceston, Tas) 3 Jan. (1889), 2.

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Alfred Dampier's melodramatic burlesque Marvellous Melbourne (co-written with J. H. Wrangham and Thomas Somers), with incidental music and overtture composed by Percy H. Kehoe [aka Herbert Percy] premiered at Melbourne's Alexandra Theatre on 19 January. A revised and adapted version of Marvellous Melbourne, written by Jack Hibberd and John Romeril, was produced by the Australian Performing Group in 1970. The University of Queensland Drama Department also staged the melodrama in 1994, with the text adapted from original sources by Delyse Anthony [aka Delyse Ryan] as part of her MA degree. The music for this was composed by Clay Djubal, with a soundtrack recording released by Have Guitar Will Travel.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD: [opera] Lib. [n/e]; Mus Adapt. Cecilia Summerhayes (from Franz Abt)

Advertised as an operetta written specially for the occasion. It was claimed that the music was an adaptation by Madame Summerhayes of Franz Abt's compositions. The performance of 2 July 1889 was given for those who had been unable to attend the first presentation (the date of this is as yet unknown).

1889: New Masonic Hall, Sydney; 2 July


MOUSTIQUE: [aka QUEEN VENUS] [opera] Lib. Marcus Clarke; Mus. Henri Kowalski

Marcus Clarke and French composer Henri Kowalski collaborated on this three act opera during 1880. Initially titled Queen Venus, it was almost completed at the time of the librettist's death the following year. Kowalski continued to work on the score over the next year or so and upon his return to Europe set about staging it. Thus although the first complete production of the opera in Australia occurred in 1889 (under the title Moustique), it is known to have been produced in Brussels in 1883 under the Kowalski's music direction.

The narrative, as described in the Sydney Morning Herald of 2 July 1889, concerns a party of bachelor tourists who being 'tired of the matrimonial thrall, resolve to emigrate and seek seclusion in some out of the way spot.' They set sail under the guidance of Captain Cook Jr. and eventually land on what they believe to be an uninhabited island. One of the ship's crew, a young middy named Moustique, sets out to explore the island and discovers that it is peopled solely by women. "Consternation ensues among the [men] when they learn this intelligence; and their fears are further augmented upon hearing that any man found upon the island must suffer death before sunrise on the succeeding day. When the women, led by their ruler, Queen Venus and ministry discover the men they vow to wreak vengeance upon them. Moustique is to be spared, however, on account of his youth. In the end, however, "love conquers the hearts of the manumitted maidens, and they succumb to Cupid's influence." Marriage is reverted to, misogyny banishes, and it is to be hoped all live happily ever afterwards" ("Moustique," 3).

Although the narrative had been outlined in the Herald's preview, the paper's theater critic assessed the libretto following day as 'slight in the extreme,' pointing to Clarke's failure to give the story's namesake enough narrative time. The only one left out in the cold," he or she writes, "is Moustique…. The piece as it stands is rather like Hamlet minus the Prince of Denmark" (ibid, 3). The libretto was viewed by the same reviewer as lending difficulties to the setting of the score that the composer was largely unable to deal with. "That there is good work in the opera cannot be denied… [it] is invariable light and sparkling, partaking as it does of the Offenbach school, and it contains some pleasing and catching compositions… The orchestration is not so able as it might be, but the music ripples along gaily from start to finish" ("Moustique." 3 July, 10). Songs known to have been written for the opera are: "I am the Merry Little Moustique" and "Work, Work."

Some confusion over Moustique and its relationship to other works by Clarke has occurred during the past five decades. The first concerns a possible connection with The Lady of the Lake, believed to be one of his first attempts at writing for the stage. The second is a possible connection between Moustique and A Daughter of Eve; Or, A Lesson in Love (1880).

Ian McLaren in Marcus Clarke: An Annotated Bibliography (1982) proposes a relationship between Moustique and The Lady of the Lake, a parody of Sir Walter Scott written (and possibly staged) as early as 1864 (see page 122). Both stories, however, clearly follow different narrative paths and contain different characters suggesting little or no connection. McLaren also erroneously states that French composer (and one time Australian-resident) Henri Kowalski wrote the music for the burlesque. The chief problem here is that Kowalski did not arrive in this country until 1880.

The second issue, again relating to McLaren's bibliography is the tenuous link between Moustique and A Daughter of Eve, which was staged in Ballarat and Castlemaine in 1880 under the alternate title A Lesson in Love. McLaren's suggestion that the work is "possibly the second act of Queen Venus" (123), likely the result of his misreading the relevant section in Brian Elliott's biography of Clarke (see page 231), has subsequently been repeated in other publications, the "Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1870-1890," for example. An analysis of the plot as reviewed in the Sydney Morning Herald (2 July 1889, 3) and the published version (1985, edited by Dennis Davidson), indicates, however, that the settings, characters and themes are different in both works, and hence it is extremely unlikely that they are related.

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3 A text of The Lady of the Lake survives in the Marcus Clarke papers (Mitchell Library – MS C270). Eric Irvin in "Marcus Clarke and the Theatre" also questions Elliott's claim that the burlesque/farce was staged in 1864, arguing that no evidence has yet been found of a production (3).
NB: *Moustique* has been entered in this chronology under 1889 as no details of the earlier production having been located. See “Musical and Dramatic Notes” *Sydney Morning Herald* 19 September 1896, 4, for a reference to the Brussels 1883 premiere.

1883: *Alcazar Royal, Brussels; no details*

1889: New Opera House, Sydney; 2-12 July
- Dir. Henry Bracy, Lse. John Solomon; Mngr. John Solomon (theatre) and Philip Stuart (for Henri Kowalski); M Dir. Henri Kowalski; S Art. George Campbell; Cost. David Jones and Mark Foy.
- Cast incl. Lillian Tree, Clara Thompson, Flora Graupner, Isabel Stuart, Kate Freeman, Annie Brown, Francis Trigge, Fanny Montague, Amy De Courcy, Henry Bracy, John Forde, Williams Stevens.

"Moustique" at the Opera House.” *Sydney Morning Herald* 2 July. (1889), 8. Prev. [see also advert. – 2 July 1889, 2]
"Moustique" at the Opera House.” *Sydney Morning Herald* 3 July. (1889), 10.

Henri Kowalski (composer of *Moustique*)
From Eric Irvin’s *Australian Melodrama* (1981), 38.
1890

Also staged in Brisbane during 1890 was an "original Australian drama" by Brisbane-based writer Phil Agnew. Set in the Kimberley diggings of Western Australia, *The Kimberley Nugget* was presented as part of a benefit night to the playwright at the Gaiety Theatre on 5 April. Agnew himself impersonated five different characters in the production. Another character, Charcoal Tom, was portrayed by George Agnew. Although essentially a non-musical work, the drama did contain at least one song (written by Agnew) called "Coo-ee." *The Kimberley Nugget* was supported by another Agnew piece, the comedietta *Had*. In reviewing the benefit the *Brisbane Courier* records that "neither the play nor the comedietta… nor yet the songs that were introduced, deserve commendatory notice" (7 Apr. 1890, 5).

THE INFANT:  [operetta]  Lib. Steele J. Robertson; Mus. G. G. Nicholls
#  Centennial Magazine, 1890
A comic operetta with music arranged by G. G. Nichols.
1890:  Wilson Hall, University of Melbourne; 29 Apr.
-  Troupe: University Union.

**Editorial.** *Argus* 30 Apr. (1890), 5.

DIMPLE'S LOVERS:  [operetta]  Lib. Guy Boothby; Mus. Cecil James Sharp
An operetta in one act.
1890:  Government House, Adelaide; 2 Sept.

SYLVIA; OR THE MARQUIS AND THE MAID:  [comic opera]  Lib. Guy Boothby; Mus. Cecil James Sharp
A comic opera the plot of which concerns love and village life in pastoral mode. The critic writing for Adelaide's *Evening Journal* proposed that the music far exceeded the libretto:

The plot, if such a word is admissible, is of an extremely light character, and the libretto generally bears the mark of a writer who has witnessed many productions of W. S. Gilbert's. The latter may feel that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery ("Sylvia," 7).

1890:  Theatre Royal, Adelaide; 4-6 Dec.
-  M Dir. Cecil J. Sharp; S Mngr. Mr Haggard.
-  The company comprised local amateurs.


South Australian Register 3 Dec. (1890), 1.
The revival of George Darrell's drama *The Sunny South*, staged at Melbourne's Theatre Royal in late April (it originally premiered in 1883), incorporated several musical numbers into the production, including Sir William Robinson's popular patriotic song "Unfurl the Flag" (which was performed by Christine Darrell in the role of Babs Berkeley).

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**THE WINDMILL:** [opera] Lib. Paul Bartels and F. H. Clausen (translated from Méesville); Lyr. C. H. Smith; Mus. Moritz Heuzenroeder

Adapted and translated from one of the works of French dramatist Méesville (Anne-Honoré-Joseph Duveyrier, 1787-1865), *The Windmill* was produced by the Adelaide Harmonie Society on three occasions in 1891. The libretto was a collaboration between Paul Bartels (1865-1909) and F. H. Clausen, two prominent members of the Society at that time. The *South Australian Register* provides a synopsis of the dramatic action:

Denise, a youthful and charming widow who is deeply in love with Jean, is continually annoyed by the persistent advances of the Marquis, an old roué and owner of the Windmill. Jean, a somewhat clownish yokel who has no conception of Denise's feelings towards him, joins the soldiers who are recruiting in the village owing to the taunts of his cousin, who loses her temper in endeavouring to arouse some return for her affection. The advances of the Marquis meeting with only indifferent success, he leaves a letter for Denise in which he proposes to elope with her. This letter she hands to Jean, who, determined to avenge the insult and with that object, writes a similar proposal to the Marquise. The Marquise, who has a suspicion of the behaviour of her lord, has been trying to arrange a match for Denise with her chef de cuisine to remove the danger, but without success. On receipt of Jean's letter she rushes to the mill in a passion, and is only pacified on the production of the original letter, when she determines to upset the plans of the Marquis and to aid Denise in her love affairs, which in the end turns out satisfactorily to all ("Adelaide Harmonie," 6).

*The Windmill* was generally well-received by the Adelaide theatre and music critics, with Heuzenroeder coming in for much praise, both for his score and his supervision of the orchestra (comprising mostly local "lady amateurs"). Writing about the June premiere, the *Evening Journal* 's critic suggested however, that while the "songs, concerted numbers, and choruses are tuneful, melodious, and pleasing without doubt... they are all are strikingly suggestive of other well-known melodies." The review also notes that the preponderance of dialogue over the singing numbers in the first act was remarkable. "As the work is an operetta this peculiarity is a decided weakness, he or she writes ("Adelaide Harmonie Society," 4).

1891: Albert Hall, Adelaide; 18-19 June
- Cast incl. Minna Shrader (Marquise), Blanche Francis (Denise), A. Duncan (Jean), G. Dumel-Denger (Hector, the Marquis de Gaillardiere), H. Adams (Louis, a mill boy), Paul Bartels (Henry, mill boy). F. H. Stokes (Almanser, a coloured footman).
1891: Albert Hall, Adelaide; 27 June
- **M Dir/Cond.** Moritz Heuzenroeder; **Prod.** Adelaide Harmonie Society; **Cost.** Paul Bartels.
- **Cast** incl. Minna Shrader (Marquise), Blanche Francis (Denise), A. Duncan (Jean), F. H. Cottle (Hector, the Marquis de Gaillardiere), Annie Nelson (Denise), B. C. Peagam (Jean), F. Scarfe (Louis, a mill boy), Paul Bartels (Henry, mill boy). F. H. Stokes (Almanser, a coloured footman).
- This production was presented as a complimentary benefit to R. Nitschke, a pupil of the composer. Mr Nitschke also sang Heuzenroeder's "Margaretha" by request during the evening.

1891: Albert Hall, Adelaide; 30-31 Oct.
- **M Dir/Cond.** Moritz Heuzenroeder; **Prod.** Adelaide Harmonie Society; **Cost.** Paul Bartels.
- **Cast** incl. Minna Shrader (Marquise de Gaillardiere), Blanche Francis (Denise), F. H. Cottle (Hector, the Marquis de Gaillardiere), A. Duncan (Jean), G. Connell (Henri), Mr Snowflake (Almanser).


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Alfred Dampier staged a "special copyright version of Goethe's immortal masterpiece, Faust" at Melbourne's Alexandra Theatre beginning 30 April, with himself in the role of Mephistopheles. The production incorporated a number of original songs written by H. Percy Kehoe. These were: "Gentle Patron" (anthem), "Welcome Once More" (soprano aria), "Salamanders Creep Away" (basso recitative), "Walpurgia Night" (grand chorus), "Midst Sulphurous Hall" (demon recitative chorus) and "Brightly Gleams Thy Glory" (angels' chorus). Between the fourth and fifth acts the orchestra also performed the latest craze from London, the "frenzied half-dance, half dirge, 'Ta-ra-ra-boom-der-ay'" (Argus 30 Apr. 1892, 12).

FAYETTE; OR, BUSH REVELS: [comic opera] Lib. James Brunton-Stephens; Mus. G. B. Allen

# Watson and Ferguson, 1892.

Fayette is said to be loosely based on incidents that occurred during the Victorian gold rush era. It story tells of a digger who goes to Melbourne to celebrate striking it lucky and while there invites a variety troupe to return with him to the goldfields. "The only return that he asks the troupe for their passage to the diggings is that they shall keep him amused on the way." At the close of one of their little plays, which they call "Bush Revels," the company spot a dazed and aimless traveler coming towards them and decide to play a trick on him. They leave their camp with all sorts of good things (including champagne) in plain sight and conceal themselves in the undergrowth to watch. Thinking he is hallucinating, a situation made worse by the fact that he becomes a little drunk, the traveller looks into a mirror and sees the reflection of what he thinks is an angel. The vision, which causes him to collapse, is only that of one of the actresses who has sneaked up behind him. When he regains consciousness the traveller continues on to the diggings where he soon has an extraordinary change of luck and becomes a wealthy man. Unable to get the angel out of his mind he refuses to look at any women lest their faces distort his memory of her image. His friends rally around him and find the antidote to his misery by replaying the camp scene to him (essentially a play within a play). When he looks into the mirror once again and sees the features that have enchanted him he is cured. The play ends with word coming to him that he has struck an even richer vein of gold. By now content ("his spirit love has become a mortal fact") he tells his mates to share the find ("Australian Opera." 5-6).

Subtitled "An Original Comic Opera in Three Acts" the first (and perhaps only) staging of Fayette was in Brisbane in 1892 when it was presented at a benefit for its composer G. B. Allen. With a cast of principal singers numbering almost twenty, and a chorus of forty, the rehearsals began well over a month prior to its premiere. Such a long pre-production period (unusual for an essentially amateur production) had been forced upon it after the initial performance date was cancelled due to wild Queensland storms. The extra time afforded its cast and musicians is perhaps one reason for the largely positive reviews of the production. The musicians were also said to be the best available in Brisbane at the time.

The songs known to have been composed for the opera are: "In Such an Hour" (duet), "If this it is to Dream" (aria) and "We are Spendthrift Prodigals." One particular criticism of the musical score, however, was the "great absence of chorus singing." The Brisbane Courier review records, for example: "The music as a whole is bright, sparkling and attractive... it needs the finishing stroke of the master's hand here and there, particularly as regards the orchestration, which is palpably weak in many places" ("Fayette," 5). With regard to the libretto, the same critic records: "The scenes portrayed are purely Australian and for that reason it appeals to the sympathies of all colonial audiences; but it may fairly be asked whether it was worth while to include in it colloquialisms which do not redound to the credit of our country... [however], both libretto and music are a credit alike to the authors and to the colony with which they are associated" (ibid, 5).

A professional production was to be staged in Sydney at the Opera House from the 17th February 1900. The season was cancelled, however, apparently due to the sudden and serious indisposition of leading man Howard Vernon (the production and cast details are given below as published prior to the cancellation).

1892:
- Centennial Hall, Brisbane; 23 Mar.
  - Cond. G. B. Allen.
  - Cast incl. Mrs Kelly, Mrs Menser, Mrs Robinson, Mrs Lewis, Mrs Pole, Miss Gardner, C. R. Jones, Denbigh Newton, Mr McSwaine, Mr Alpin, Mr Hausemann, Mr Yorston, Mr Stewart, J. Faulds, W. Kaye.
  - Musicians incl. R. T. Jefferies (Orch Ldr), Mrs Buzzacott (harp).
  - A public recital/dress rehearsal was held on 22 March.

1900: Opera House, Sydney; 17 Feb.  [season cancelled]
- Cast incl. Julie Davies, Howard Vernon, Maud Hewson, Alice Howard Vernon, Frank H. Weekes.

"Australian Opera, An." Table Talk (Melbourne) 12 Feb. (1892), 5-6.
Sydney Morning Herald 17 Feb. (1900), 14. Notice. [see also advert page 2].
Williams, Margaret. Australia on the Popular Stage. (1983), 190.

4 This is accompanied by a reprinted article from the 12 February 1892 edition of Table Talk (which is itself taken from the Queenslander). Both items were contributed by historian, Mimi Colligan.

Brisbane Courier 22 Mar. 1892, 2.
BULBO: [comic opera] Lib/Mus. H. T. Harrison

H. T. Harrison, who had been managing Her Majesty's Opera House (Bris) since the Maggie Moore season (beginning 18 Mar. 1892), presented this “new and original comic opera” for its Australian premiere as part of a season of comic opera under his own direction. The opening night performance was reviewed as being well received by the audience, although the company “appeared under disadvantages which few visiting companies have to contend against.” The Brisbane Courier refers here to the fact that the company was newly formed and that the opera was being staged for the first time. “They consequently had not the important advantage of having played together before, or the equally weighty advantage of having previously produced the opera.” The critic goes on the note that “in judging the merit of their first performance, it is only reasonable that these circumstances should be kept in view, for they doubtless operated adversely both upon the production and the impression made upon the public… who showed a marked dispensation to make fair allowance and to applaud unstintedly every part of the performance” (“Mr H. T. Harrison,” 6).

Set in the mythical country of Paflagonia, a hundred years in the future (1992), the story revolves around Prince Bulbo, “the perfect prince,” who visits the court of King Valoroso for the purpose of marrying the latter’s daughter Angelica. Valoroso is described as a monarch with a temper of his own. During the festivities of a state banquet the King becomes intoxicated and makes improper passes at a charming waiting maid, Rosabela. Unfortunately she has previously won the affection of the king’s nephew, Prince Giglio. Impetuously he flaws the king with a blow from a warming pan and flees. When the King recovers consciousness he orders the arrest and execution of the prince. Unable to find Giglio the court decides to arrest and execute Prince Bulbo in default. Meanwhile Rosabela is arrested and threatened with torture unless she divulges the whereabouts of her lover. Giglio returns to save Rosabela, at which time they sing the duet “By Thy Side, Dearest One.” Upon hearing of Giglio’s return King Valoroso falls into a revengeful rage, demanding his guards seize the prince immediately and kill him. In desperation Rosabela summons to her aid her fairy grandmother, Blackstick, who helps Giglio first escape, and then worst the king in a fight. All ends happily ever after with Valoroso taken prisoner, Giglio then ascends the throne with Rosabela as his queen, and Bulbo marries Angelica.

The Brisbane Courier critic writes of Harrison’s work: “He has used his experience and his musical ability with considerable though not always equal success. His music is light and tuneful. Some of the numbers are pretty and will no doubt win their way to popularity. There is good material in the opera and the fact that the encores were very numerous and even minor numbers were warmly applauded is strong evidence that the audience were pleased with it.

Apart from the aforementioned duet, other songs known to have been written for the opera were: “Quaff the Brimming Wine Cup” and “Cruel to be Kind” (Giglio), “For Him” and “Ours the Sweetest Occupation” (Rosabela), “What Do You Think of the Prince” (Bulbo) and “Let Me But Hear a Murmur” (King Valoroso).

1892: Her Majesty's Opera House, Brisbane; 6-13 Aug.
- Cast incl. C. M. Leumane (Prince Giglio), Aggie Kelton (Rosabela), Denbig Newton (King Valoroso), G. Boulton (Prince Bulbo), F. W. Montague (Captain Hedzoff), J. E. Leonard (Archbishop), A. Lynne (Glumboso), John Wallace (Jenkins Gruffanuff), Letty Durand (Angelica), Belle Lindsay (Fairy Blackstuff), George Sims (Countess Gruffanuff), Dorine Lesmore (Mandolina), Florrie Branscombe (Headsman's Daughter).
- The role of fairies was undertaken by a chorus of little girls, who were under the supervision of Mrs Harrison.
- The production was advertised to premiere on 3 August, but was postponed until the 6th when Aggie Kelton succumbed to an illness just prior to opening night.

“Harrison Comic Opera Season.” Telegraph (Brisbane) 4 Aug. (1892), 4.
“Mr H. T. Harrison's Opera Company – Bulbo.” Brisbane Courier 8 Aug. (1892), 6. [see also advert. – 9 Aug. (1892), 2]
“Opera House, The.” Queenslander (Brisbane) 13 Aug. (1892), 323.
“Theatrical Topics.” Week (Brisbane) 12 Aug. (1892), 22.
IMMOMEENA: [play with music] Tnt. Harry Congreve Evans; Mus. Mauritz Heuzenroeder

Set on a sheep station near the Murray River, this two act musical play concerns a squatter, Harry Crosby, his cousin, Kitty, and her friend Violet. Both women are involved in an amorous intrigue with a handsome police trooper, Alex Fergus, and his friend James Main, an adventurer. Other characters, who have arrived at the homestead to attend the squatter’s ball, include a pompous Alderman who is looking for his long-lost son; Professor Bingham (an eccentric "new chum" scientist searching for the mythical bunyip); Billy-the-Hatter (a crazed stockman); Harold Montague (a "masher"); and Maggie (an Irish servant girl). Juxtaposed with the various incidents that make up the dramatic action, is a strong sense of nationalist sentiment. Leslie Rees, in The Making of Australian Drama, points out, for example, that "the opening chorus of stockmen and girls set the patriotic tone" of the opera:

Men:  Coo-ee!
Girls: Coo-ee!
Men: 'Tis our Australian cry
In peril or in fear
Or when our friends are near
We raise our voices high
Coo-ee!

While the final chorus, "Song Of Australia," which was performed by the entire cast, who gathered before an allegorical tableaux depicting bush scenes, displays an even more unblushing and prophetic nationalism.

Our land with milk and honey flows, Australia!
Each heart with patriotism glows, Australia!
And though we're but an infant state
We shall be, at no distant date
A power among nations great, Australia! (qtd 77).

Elizabeth Wood suggests, however, that Immomeena was not simply just an opera steeped in nationalist sentiment, but through its inclusion of a diverse selection of characters, from the socially cultured to rouseabouts and stockmen, "presented a more realistic picture of colonial society and the democratic spirit than most 'exotic' indigenous dramas (5). Although only one ballad, along with the libretto, remains from the entire score today, it is clear that Immomeena, and more particularly the music, was met with much approval from critics and public alike. The 1893 production, for example, was praised by the Adelaide Register critic, who suggested that those people who gushed over "any new importations because they come from London or Milan or some place a long way from over the water," should not knock this local product (qtd Rees 77). This was despite the fact that the company had only been given one staged dress rehearsal before the opening night.

The action of the opera is played "outside Immomeena Station" (Act 1) and at a Fancy Dress Ball inside the Homestead (Act 2). Incidental features included in the 1893 production were a skirt dance by Edith Roberts, a gavotte (taught by Miss Millie Osborne of Williamson and Musgrove's Comic Opera Company) and a country dance, waltz and gavotte (arranged by Miss Lindsay).
Theatre Royal, Adelaide; 30 Apr.
- **S Mngr.** C. C. Paltridge; **Prod.** Adelaide Operatic Society; **M Dir.** Mr Quinn; **Lse/Mngr.** Wybert Reeve;
  **Chor.** Miss B. Lindsay; **S Art** Charles Marques.
- **Cast** incl. P. E. Dobbie (Harry Crosby), Norman Malcolm (Alex Fergus), Julian O'Sullivan (Alderman Mayne), J. E. Dixon (Professor Bingham), G. Dumel-Denger (Harold Montague), C. C. Paltridge (James Main), E. S. Clark (Billy the Hatter), A. R. Murray (First stockman), Mary Stewart (Kitty Crosby), Mable Knight (Violet Melford), Etta Wood [aka Mrs Fyvie Dench] (Maggie), Mary Bancroft (Lottie), Gwen Bancroft (skirt dance).


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**THE HANDSOME RANSOM: OR, THE BRIGAND'S BRIDE:** [aka PREDATORAS; OR THE BRIGAND'S BRIDE]  
[opera] Lib. Francis Hart; Mus. Sir William Robinson

This operetta by three-term Governor of Western Australia, Sir William Robinson, his first foray into music theatre, was given its premiere in January 1894 (under the title *The Handsome Ransom*) before some 250 invited guests at Government House. The *West Australian* editorial noted in this respect, "it is of somewhat unique interest that a Governor of a British Colony should be the composer of an opera and should present its first performance in the colony of which he is ruler, and for this reason alone to-nights entertainment will elicit very keen interest." The article goes on to note: "Following the Government House premiere the operetta was transferred to a hall in the city, where it was received with enthusiasm by the public. While holidaying in Melbourne during July of that year, Sir William responded to requests from friends to present the operetta. The production, which included the librettist Francis Hart as Mr Potts, was mounted in the large salon of the Vienna Café without stage mounting, chorus or orchestra, and with about 100 guests in attendance. Re-titled, *Predatoras; Or The Brigand's Bride*, Robinson and Hart had reworked the operetta, adding considerably to its length, which according to the *Table Talk* reviewer allowed it to "fill the whole evening in its performance" ("Australian," 5). Several months later the work was re-staged (after some two months of rehearsal) under the auspices of the Williamson and Musgrove organisation. Interestingly, the advertising for this production indicated that the operetta was being "produced for the first time on any stage" (Age 12 Nov. 1894, 8).

Set in near Catania, Sicily, with Mount Etna in the distance, the story concerns a British family, the Potts, who while touring the countryside are captured by a gentlemanly brigand chief called Predatoros. His followers include a lieutenant, Burgaloros, and Guida, "the decoy duck" who leads the unwary into the brigand's traps. The brigand and Angelina Potts, described as an "up-stairs Miss," recognise each other from a previous time in Paris, and having entertained affectionate feelings for one another back then, now contrive to be together as man and wife. As a means of becoming a regular citizen, Predatoros decides to sell his "business." Mr Potts sees as an opportunity for exhilaration, and thus becomes the new brigand chief. After his first "escapade," however, Mr Potts decides his new life may be a bit more than he can handle, and so resells the business, this time to Burgaloros. A sub-plot engages with a love triangle between Angelina's brother, Algernon (described as a "somewhat untried"), Guida and Burgaloros. Angelina eventually marries her brigand, who in turn reveals himself to be a Greekian prince. The operetta is divided into two acts, the first set in "A Mountain Pass in Sicily," and the second in the "Interior of a Cave."

The *West Australian* music/theatre critic records that although "the Handsome Ransom" is not the first attempt at libretto writing on the part of Mr Hart... he has never, we think, produced so sustained a character as that of Mr Potts... the libretto throughout shows most careful preparation, accompanied by a just recognition of the exigencies of the lighter operatic stage" ("Handsome Ransom: Operetta," 3). In relation to the music the same critic goes on to note, in one of the longest (3 full columns) and most glowing positive reviews yet found on Australian music theatre, that "of the concerted and more dramatic parts of [Governor Robinson's] music, it may be generally said that [his] aim has evidently been to illustrate faithfully the situations created by the author of the libretto, and certainly the recitatives and the working up of the various situations are admirably done, and afford great scope to the performers" (ibid. 3). Writing of the Melbourne productions an *Argus* critic wrote the music is "more in the style of the French opera comique than of the burlesque composition of the day" ("Princess Theatre," 6). The Melbourne critics generally found Robinson's music to be adequate, and occasionally charming, although, as the *Argus* review notes, "not of a class to become quickly or widely popular" (6). The *Age* critic also suggests that the composer "seems to be too much afraid of venturing boldly into the unknown and untreated" ("Princess Theatre," 6).

The score for the Perth production comprised some seventeen numbers (solos, duets, sextets, choruses etc) included in the following order: 1. "Overture" 2. "Clink Your Glasses" (opening chorus) 3. "The Brigand's Greatest Glory" (Predatoras), 4. Medodrama; 5. "Potts' Tourist Song" and dance (Mr Potts), 6. Concerted Piece "I'm a British Tourist;" 7. "The Temple of Home" (Mrs Potts' ballad); 8. "In the Days when but a Little Boy (serio-ballerina) 9. "Still I Think that You had Better Choose Some Southern Maiden Fair" (Predatoras and Angelina, duet); 10. "They've Taken all My Money" (Ensemble); 11.Concerted Piece "Viva L'Amore;" 12. "Why Beats My Heart with Wild Delight" (Algernon); 13. "Oh Love of Mine" (Burgaloros); 15. Dance a la Gavotte; 16. "I Sometimes Think It might be Wise" (Angelina); and 17. "Handsome the Ransom" (finale).
1894: Ballroom, Government House, Perth; 11 Jan. [as *The Handsome Ransom*]
- Cond. Julius Herz; *Orch Ldr.* Arthur Taylor; *S Art.* H. C. Prinsep.
- *Cast* incl. F. D. North (Predatoras), Nelle Wigglesworth (Angelina), Francis Hart (Mr Potts), C. Griffith (Burglaros), G. Raikes (Algernon), Miss Wainscot (Mrs Potts), Miss Prinsep (Guida), Miss Watkins, Mrs Jackson, Miss Dumsday, Miss Forbes, Ida Stone, Miss Orchard, Mr Jackson, Mr Elgee, Mr Baker, Mr Stephens, Mr Neville, Mr Ord.

1894: St George's Hall, Perth; 18-19 Jan. [as *The Handsome Ransom*]
- Cast and production mostly as for previous Government House staging.
- No orchestra was used for this production due to the unavailability of several key musicians. The musical accompaniment was therefore undertaken by Julius Herz and Arthur Taylor (pianos).

1894: Vienna Café, Collins Street, Melbourne; 11 July [3 pfms, as *Predatoras*]
- Cast incl. F. D. North (Predatoras), Katherine Hardy (Angelina), Francis Hart (Mr Potts), Gladstone Wright (Burglaros), C. Saunders (Algernon), Elsie Cameron (Mrs Potts), Clara Morivale (Guida).
- *Musicians*: Mr Herz (piano), Herr Weinberg (violin).

1894: Princess's Theatre, Melbourne; 12 Nov. [as *Predatoras*]
- *Dir.* George Musgrove; *Prod.* J. C. Williamson and George Musgrove;
- Cond. Leon Caron; *S Art.* George Gordon.
- Cast incl. Wallace Brownlaw (Predatoras), Nellie Stewart (Angelina), George Lauri (Mr Potts), Sydney Deane (Burglaros), Elsie Cameron (Mrs Potts), Joseph Tapley (Algernon), Florence Young (Guida).

"Australian Opera, An." *Table Talk* (Melbourne) 13 July (1894), 5.
"Handsome Ransom" *Last Night's Performance, The.* *West Australian* 19 Jan. (1894), 2. [see also prev. - 18 Jan. 1894, 1]
"Princess Theatre - Predatoras; Or, The Brigand's Bride.* *Argus* 13 Nov. (1894), 6. [see also prev. - 12 Nov. 1894, 5]

► *The Brigand's Bride*: Two digital copies original program available online through the National Library of Australia.

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Among the music theatre productions of indiscernible origins staged during the year was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, produced by Miss Olivia Kemp's Dramatic Company. With a cast containing several Australian variety performers - W. H. Speed, Will Wallace and (possibly) Harry Sadler (along with J. P. West, a long-serving and well-known Australian thespian), *Uncle Tom's Cabin* contained a up-to-date songs, breakdowns, plantation dances and sand jigs. Of the songs incorporated into the story, those advertised were: "The Old Ark's A-Moovering," "Gabriel's Going to Blow His Trumpet," "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel," "Tom, Tell Us," "Sweet By and By" and "Nearer My God to Thee." [See Gaiety Theatre, Brisbane, 9 March]

J. C. Williamson and George Musgrove's Lyceum Theatre (Sydney) production of the Herve comic opera, *Mam'zelle Nitouche*, included several musical additions written especially for the show by Leon Caron. One of these was the song "Invocation to Love," described by the *Sydney Morning Herald* critic as having "been conceived in the Oriental style, the use of oboe, bassoon and clarinets giving requisite colour to the plaintive love air, and the cymbal accompaniment sustaining the same idea in the more vivacious movement. There was a hearty encore for M. Caron's interpolation" (3 June 1895, 5). A dance number titled "Gavotte Fantastique," staged later in the same act by eight members of the Royal Comic Opera Company's ballerinas, dressed in Directoire costumes also achieved marked success according to the same critic. The production opened on 1 June.

On 25 December French-born-Australian-resident composer, Henri Kowalski staged for the first time an excerpt from his oratorio *Future Life* (Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney). Although a poetic libretto for this was initially written by A. Branscomb Wood, the Christmas Eve production of the work was founded on a version by R. R. Garran. The *Sydney Morning Herald* music critic records that the music of *Future Life* was "inspiring… elevated in its tendency, and marked by breadth of treatment and melodic dignity of idea" (26 Dec. 1895, 6). The characters of The Maiden and The Death were undertaken by Hetty Holroyd and H. T. Gordon respectively, while Kowalski conducted the orchestra (led by George Hall). The musical numbers presented were "Call for Death" (chorus), "Death Appears" (recitative/aria, H. T. Gordon), "Youth Rejoicing" (chorus), "Song of the Maiden (Hetty Holroyd) and "Prayer (solo and chorus).

KATHERINE: [comic opera] Lib. Margery Browne; Mus. Guglielmo Lardelli

Guglielmo Lardelli, who "occupied a prominent position in Sydney for many years" previous to the premiere of his comic opera *Katherine* ("New Opera," ?), first premiered its music at a private performance in the salon of the Continental Hotel, Wynyard Square. Among the forty or fifty people attending were Henri Kowalski and W. J. Wilson. At the conclusion of the evening the composer announced that it was his intention to place the opera before a London audience some time later that year. The *Sydney Morning Herald* critic writes of the evening, "Signor Lardelli, who, in addition to his gifts as a pianist and singer, has the power of droll expression, took his audience through the two act opera with surprising vivacity. It would appear from reviews of the Town Hall premiere, however, that the production suffered from the "necessarily incomplete nature of the performance" having been "brought forward, as all new pieces are at London matinees, more or less 'in the rough' [and that it had yet] to undergo the process of remodelling bestowed upon every musical comedy during rehearsal at the theatre" ("Signor Lardelli's Comic," 3).

Songs and musical numbers known to have made up the score are: "The Katherine Waltz;" "Now Rides the Night" (sung by Katherine); "Semper Fidelis" (Wizard); "Night is Coming" (duet between Katherine and Archibald); and "Eldorado" (Archibald). The libretto, written by Mrs Margery Brown, later to write the libretto for Alfred Hill's comic opera *Lady Dolly*, is said to have in no way detracted from the composer's "very genuine success" in scoring a work described in the paper as "tuneful, animated and always to the point" ("Signor Lardelli's New," 6).

The critical response to the opera was generally good. In a review of the full stage version the *Herald's* critic writes, for example: "There are heaps of good things in the work. Mrs Margery Brown's lyrics are excellent. and Signor Lardelli's music shows a true melodic gift, all the romantic numbers are taking, and the second part of the opera is musically strong" ("Signor Lardelli's Comic," 3). Bruce Smith, in his address to guests following his private performance at the Continental Hotel, is also quoted as saying that "he was authorised to say the "book" was the work of a lady resident in the colony" (Browne was then living in Drummoyne) and that "her libretto was so sparkling that he could only hope that such a female "Gilbert" might long collaborate in unbroken amity with the "Australian Sullivan" ("Signor Lardelli's New." 6).

According to the *Sydney Morning Herald* Lardelli almost suffered the catastrophic loss of his only copy of orchestral score a few weeks before the Town Hall premiere. According to a report in the paper's "Musical and Dramatic Notes," a friend of Lardelli had been entrusted the manuscript but lost it "somewhere on the road between the city and Redfern." Luckily, a gentleman driving his buggy along the road several hours after the score had been dropped picked it up, took it to his home at Cook's River and returned it to the composer several days later ("Musical and Dramatic," 27 Apr. 5).
Interest in the opera was generated by Bruce Smith’s post-performance comment regarding the difficulties local writers and other creatives faced in getting their work staged. “It is a sad reflection,” he said, “that few works of art, music or literature are accepted in Australia until they have received the seal of approval of recognition in England.” Smith went on to name several novelists who he claimed had been driven away because of the “mental attitude of the average Australian” (“Signor Lardelli’s New,” 6). In the same paper the following day the "Musical and Dramatic Notes" column wrote at length on some of the aspects raised by Smith - arguing that while Smith had “neatly expressed” the problem, the fact was that producers could hardly be blamed for wishing to avoid the risks associated on chancing a four week season on untried productions when they could avoid such risks by purchasing a big London success. In the article’s conclusion the writer does suggest, however, that “the great mass of concert-goers and the great theatrical public of Australia are remarkably fair and intelligent in their verdicts and care very little for "the seal of English approval" (4).

1895: Continental Hotel, Sydney; 21 Mar.  [concert version]  
- **Musician/Singer:** Signor Lardelli (piano).

1895: Town Hall, Sydney, 16 May  
- **Cond.** Guglielmo Lardelli F.R.C.O; **Orch Ldr.** G. Rivers Allpress.  
- **Cast** incl. Violet Birkenhead (Katherine), Mrs Charles Edwards (Hecate), Frank Adams (Archibald), H. Weir (Wizard), Fred Leston (Poet), Harry Leston (Doctor).  

**ELDORADO:** [opera] Lib. C. W. Chiplin; Mus. Hugo Alpen

"Possibly encouraged by the success of Signor Lardelli in the production of his comic opera, Katherine, Herr Hugo Alpen has now completed a romantic three-act piece entitled Eldorado," wrote the *Sydney Morning Herald* columnist in the 19 October issue. The opera was indeed afforded a production, held at the Guild Hall, during celebrations for the forthcoming marriage of the daughter of the composer. The same paper records that “it was rather a daring idea to present Eldorado on the operatic stage instead of in concert form, because it is not possible to drill a large chorus in the necessary gesture, and concert-room soloists seldom appear to advantage when suddenly called upon not only to 'create' characters, but to fill-in all the little details which give life and body to theatrical impersonations” ("Amusements," 6). In reference to the cast it is apparent that much responsibility fell on the shoulders of the much experienced actor/basso Thomas H. Rainford, who played the double roles of Carl and Jack.

Concerning the narrative aspects of the opera, the *Herald's* theatre critic notes that the composer “has had to contend with the difficulty which besets musicians all over the world, that of securing a suitable libretto. There is no doubt a good deal of intelligent work in Mr C. W. Chiplin’s 'book,' but as a whole it lacks action and the sustained interest which leads to success” (ibid, 6). The story begins in a vineyard setting in Germany where the love of Harold for Dora is made known. Her father, Carl, forges urns to the s and  

**1895:**  
- **Cond./Dir.** Hugo Alpen; **Orch Ldr.** Albert Wentzel.  
- **Cast** incl. Milly Wynn (Dora), J. Thompson Brown (Harold), Thomas H. Rainford (Carl/Jack the Digger), Mr Clancy (Henri), Mrs Riley (Anna), Mr Nesbet (Ludwig).

"Music and Drama: Herr Hugo Alpen's Opera." *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* 2 Nov. (1895), 897  
The operetta's story unfolds within the smoking-room of the Cassewary Club, where the members have decided to discharge the waiters and take on waitresses instead. The newly engaged waitresses, who are actually society girls in disguise, turn the tables on the members, however. Those not intent on finding a rich husband seem to be keen to test "the loyalty of their lovers or spying upon their peccant [sic] consorts." This situation naturally calls for a number of social and intimate complications, matters which appear, according to the Herald review, to move "the action along brightly enough in the first act, and only begins to halt perceptibly in the second. At this point," notes the critic, "it becomes evident that a clever sketch which judiciously condensed would make a first-rate "lever de rideau" at the regular theatres, has been extended on the rack of an entire evening's entertainment. Still, slight though it might be, Club Life is always well written, and the lyrics are smart and generally to the point" (ibid, 6).

As to the music, the Herald's critic proposed that Mr Truman, "who can be a scientific as anyone when he likes, has wisely devoted himself to melody. Where [Paterson has] lagged a little he seems to have taken up the running, so to speak; and whilst the first act does not lack good songs, it is in the second act that the best music, the more elaborate orchestration, has been forthcoming." If there was any major criticism of the music it seems to have been directed towards the orchestra, which was seen as the weakest link. In this respect the critic suggests that "a true evaluation of the orchestration [was] difficult to judge" (ibid, 6). The critic employed by the Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser was more forthcoming in his or her criticism of the music and orchestration:

Mr. Truman has excellent musical knowledge and a gift of melody which enabled him to put together some pleasant music. Perhaps this has come to him so easily that he credits all with similar powers, and lightly regards the drudgery of rehearsals, or perhaps he has no skill in conducting. Whatever be the cause, the fact remains that the ladies and gentlemen who undertook to act were so handicapped by the shortcomings of the orchestra that the marvel is that they were able to go through the work. No cues were given, no support to soloists or chorus, and it was from the first evidenced that the composer had no conception of his duties. He lost a chance for which many an able musician has waited in vain for years. He placed Mr. Paterson and the company, who had worked so earnestly, in a most uncomfortable position, and he merits severe censure for his unpardonable assurance in attempting a performance without one complete rehearsal by those engaged (1261).

The second night of the season saw David Cope take charge of the orchestra and conducting. Songs known to have been written for the opera are: "In Our Society" (opening male chorus); "All Things Come to the Man Who Waits" (sung by Miss Hixon, with the inference that why shouldn't they come to the woman!); "I Was Born and Bred" (Hinchcliffe); "Saveloy Duo" (Butler and Austin); "We Parted in Those Olden Days" and "My Love, Good Night" (Marks); "Will You Have Me, Sweet?" (Weir and Marks); "The Cigarette Song" (Weir); "A Maiden Met" (Rose); "Long Said the Old Man" (Gibson); "Human Vanity" (Gibson and Hixon).

A rough manuscript of excerpts from the score for the chorus is held by the State Library of NSW. The 27 page manuscript is credited to the chorus master W. J. Banks.
The Australian theatre industry of 1896 might best be known for as the year of *Trilby*. While Williamson and Musgrove had much success with their two Christmas extravaganzas - *Matsa, Queen of Fire* (Melbourne) and *Sinbad the Sailor* (Sydney), it was to be Du Maurier’s *Trilby*, or to be more precise, the various “Colonial” version of his famous 1894 novel that caught the attention of local managers and audiences. The first apparent interest in *Trilby* came in December 1895, when two productions - *Pat; Or the Bells of Rathbeal* (Theatre Royal) and *Robinson Crusoe* (Her Majesty's) both featured Trilby ballets. The following month the *Trilby Tourists* minstrel company was formed in Sydney for a season in Brisbane, followed by a tour of North Queensland. A reconstituted company was later formed to play at least one NSW regional centre (Bathurst) during its show week. While the 1896 Maggie Moore dramatised version of *Trilby* was undoubtedly the premiere Australian production, and indeed she is known to have continued playing her version through until at least 1898, this didn't stop others from mounting their own takes on the story. Among those identified to date were productions staged by the Charles Godfrey (revised in 1897 by Delohery, Bovis and Deane), and Melbourne journalist J. North. While touring with Tommy Hudson's Surprise Party, the Gourleys also presented a sketch entitled, "Trilby and Svengali."

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**THE MAGIC CLOAK:** [operetta] Lib. Bernard Espinasse; Mus. Ernest P. Truman

Especially written for the Llewellyn family, *The Magic Cloak* was given its debut performance in Sydney under the patronage of the Mayors of Paddington and Woollahra and local politicians Adrain Knox (M.L.A.) and David Storey (M.L.A.). While no details relating to the story have yet been located, the Sydney Morning Herald records that the principle characters were Mr Jackson (a curio collector), Mrs Jackson (his wife), Mary Queen of Scotts, Nicholas (a page boy), and Clarita (Queen of the Gypsies).

- Troupe: Llewellyn Operetta and Concert Company
- Cast incl. H. H. Llewellyn (Jackson), Clara (Mary Queen of Scotts/Mrs Jackson), Maud Llewellyn, Marion Llewellyn.

- The first part of the evening's entertainment comprised concert numbers by the company.


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Adelaide journalist Harry Evans and organist and choirmaster of St. Peter's Cathedral, John Dunn, completed *The Mandarin* in June 1896. Originally conceived as an operetta of around 40 minutes duration, the pair gradually the work until reached the dimensions of two-act comic opera ("Musical Notes," 5). While all of the characters are Chinese, one is played as a replica of an "English Johnie." According to the *Evening Journal*:

The plot rests on that document frequently requisitioned by story-writers great and small—a will, though in this case it is not lost or mislaid, but simply unreadable. Owing to his father having left such a document as this, a young man rejoicing in the euphonious name of Tin Khan is forced to earn his living by the humble occupation of a gardener, and is; employed in this capacity by the Mandarin. As is usual in comic opera, this unhappy menial loves the Mandarin's charming daughter Swee Tee, and, according to the usual custom, is loved by her. Her father's' choice, however, falls upon a gentleman with a limited vocabulary and exceedingly limp gait, Li Ah, but it being Leap Year the maiden determines to ask whom she pleases...

("Theatre Royal." 20 Nov. 1896, 3.)
When the will is eventually interpreted it reveals that Tin Khan is the owner of laundries in Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide, and also has a tenth share of a Northern Territory gold mine, thus making him a millionaire. Of course all ends happily, except for the ridiculous Li Ah.

The critics were generally positive in their comments, especially in relation to the music:

Mr. Dunn's music is largely coloured with the ecclesiastical tint, it is throughout pretty and melodious, this particularly with regard to the solos, which are also creditably free from reminiscences. In the choruses Mr. Dunn's choir experience has unquestioningly proved valuable; the parts are well written and effective. The orchestra is also well looked after, the parts being scored in a light, bright fashion, well suited to each particular instrument, without making undue demands on the performers” (“Theatre Royal,” South Australian Register 20 Nov. 1896, 6).

Criticim of the libretto was largely directed at the shortcomings of comic opera storylines in general rather than Harry Evan's work in particular. The Advertiser notes, for example: "The plot of a modern comic opera is not its strong point, nor is it meant to be. It is the framework on which to hang a light and sparkling fabric, and solidity is the last thing required” (“Theatre Royal,” 6). Typical of the critical responses is the Express and Telegraph’s review. "The libretto, from the pen of Mr. H. Congreve Evans, affords plenty of scope for the comedians of the company, and is full of humour and gaiety” (“Amusements: The Mandarin.” 21 Nov. 1896, 4). The South Australian Register further noted:

Mr. Evans' libretto kept the audience in a continual simmer of laughter, which frequently broke out into enthusiastic applause. It is always funny, frequently satirical, and brimming over with quaint and humorous allusions to our various customs, sports, dress, and even our respected Agent-General. In fact Mr. Evans jokes and makes fun of everything he can lay hands upon, not excepting the engagement notices which so often appear in Quiz.5

1896:  Theatre Royal, Adelaide; 19-21, 23 Nov.
- S Mngr. C. C. Paltridge, M Dir. J. M. Dunn; Cost. Way Lee
- Cast incl. C. C. Paltridge (The Mandarin), F. P. Eaves (How Ler, his brother), Arthur Glover (Tin Khan), R. Hosking (Fan Tan), F. Bradley (Li Ah), L. Jagow (Too Lung), Jenny Nelson (Swee Tee), Miss Pizey (Chee Kee)
- The orchestra comprised 17 musicians. The choir involved some 60 members of the St Peter's Cathedral Choir. All performers and musicians involved in the production were non-professionals.

5 The Quiz was a weekly newspaper co-founded by Evans in 1889.
1897

Dan Barry's Dramatic Company staged a "grand Christmas drama," The Gilded Sin at Melbourne's Alexandra Theatre from 27 December (ending 11 Feb. 1898). The story, whose authorship is unknown at this stage, concerns Christmas tide in "old England," with scenes set in a variety of locations, including a small Kentish village church, the streets of London and a river. The production naturally incorporated music in the form of carols.

Although Alfred Hill's Maori cantata, Hinemoa, with its libretto by Arthur H. Adams, was said to have been produced for the first time on any stage when performed by the Sydney Philharmonic Society in July, it actually received a performance at the Auckland City Hall between 1-4 March the same year. The orchestra, comprised largely of Ovid Musin's ensemble (then touring New Zealand) was conducted by Hill. As with Hill and Adams' later, and more well-known opera, Tapu (1903), Hinemoa is based around Maori lore and mythology.

THE ROMANCE OF CORSICA: [opera] Lib. C. P. Pridham; Mus. Auguste W. Juncker

A week following the success of a "standing room only" recital of this romantic opera at Sydney's Oddfellows' Hall, Auguste Juncker staged the work at the city's Opera House. The Sydney Morning Herald critic writing of the earlier concert version, records that the composer "has not striven after bizarre originality [nor has he] attempted the dominating instrumental effects of the modern German school, but [rather] has written simply melodious music of a popular character, in which the scoring, though sometimes rather noisy, is often both graceful and ingenious" ("Amusements." 6).

A review of the Opera House production notes in relation to C. P. Pridham's "book," it "is a creditable production… [although] on somewhat old-fashioned lines, and the all-important element of 'comic relief' has been much neglected. Still the young author has worked out his elaborate plot carefully, and he has shown judgment in the choice of a picturesque period… for dramatic illustration" ("Romance of Corsica," 7).

The story is set towards the end of the seventeenth century, and concerns Everette, the daughter of Count Stephano d'Ornano's deceased older brother. Everette has been raised in poverty as the adopted daughter of Ursino, an innkeeper. A band of robbers, led by Paolo, storm Stephano's castle while he is absent and they by chance discover a secret will that entitles Everette the right to inherit her father's property. When Stephano finds out that his position is in jeopardy he attempts to marry Everette in order that her claim is made redundant. She is happily betrothed to a Corsican patriot, however. After many plots and counter-plots the lovers are united and the villain is vanquished.

Songs known to have been presented within the opera are: "The Chorus of Mountaineurs," "Hail Happy Day" (chorus), "The Soldiers' Chorus," "Light Shines" (air), "My Heart's Desire," the aria "Once in Reverie" (sung by Anna Petersen), and a waltz chorus "Ding Dong."
Aside from the usual songs (including Irish ditties) and dances integrated in to the narrative, McKenzie also presented a concert within the play as part of the dramatic action.

1897:  Lyceum Theatre, Sydney; 17- ca. 23 Apr.
- **Mngr/Lse.** William Cosgrove.
- **Troupe:** Cosgrove Company.
- **NB:** There is an element of confusion over several minor roles and the actors supposed to play them. See *Sydney Morning Herald* preview - 17 Apr. 1897, 4 and premiere advertisement 17 Apr. 1897, 2.

"**Lyceum Theatre.**" *Sydney Morning Herald* 17 Apr. (1897), 4.  [see also advert. - 17 Apr. 1897, 2]

"**Lyceum - Squaottocracy.**" *Sydney Morning Herald* 19 Apr. (1897), 3.

**LELAMINE:**  [opera\et]  Lib.  [n/e];  Mus.  Alfred R. Moulton

Melbourne-based composer and music director, Alfred R. Moulton, had his comic opera *Lelamine* premier as an amateur production under the auspices of Williamson and Musgrove (Princess's Theatre, Melbourne) in early May 1897. The work's popularity with both audiences and critics alike led to its revival later the next month, this time over two nights (the second of which being a benefit for the composer). According the *Age* theatre critic Williamson and Musgrove spared no expense "to produce the opera with the perfection of mounting and completeness of detail which ought to characterise a professional entertainment" ("Princess's Theatre," 6). In this respect, for example, they not only provided the talents of George and John Gordon as scenic artists, but also engaged leading director John Wallace to oversee the production on their behalf. The critic notes in this respect that although "the general public, as a rule, fight shy of amateur shows… the gods, though not present in overwhelming force, were [nevertheless] fairly well represented, and the augus approval of 'high Olympus' was expressed with quite as much warmth and liberality as that of the other parts of the house" (ibid, 6).

The story concerns the somewhat sad coquette, Lelamine, daughter of Pedro, an armorer in a small Breton fishing village. Though desperately in love with Theodore (and he with her) a poor villager, she feigns indifference with such success that he

...
1898

ALCESTIS: [lyric drama] Txt Adapt. Alexander Leeper; Mus. G. W. L. Marshall-Hall
# GM/UM [M-H 1/1]

A lyric drama in operatic style founded on the play by Euripides, this was the first music theatre work composed in Australia by Ormond Professor, George Marshall-Hall. The composer had begun working on the score late in 1897, but had been prevented from completing it earlier due to illness. A week season had originally been planned for the drama, but this was shortened to one night when Trinity College-trained soprano, Florence Towl, suffered a cycling accident and was unable to perform. The production was performed by the students of Trinity College and accompanied by a chorus made up of members of the Melbourne Liedertafel. The orchestra was composed of some 55 instruments.

The score consists of incidental music for every scene, in addition to an aria for the dying protagonists and a number of double choruses. The Age critic pronounced the work a success, largely because of Marshall-Hall's contribution, which was described in the review as being of "genuine musical power and worth" ("Trinity College," 6). Therese Radic, in G. W. L. Marshall-Hall: Portrait of a Lost Crusader, records in this respect that the composer and director had a very strained relationship, due largely to their difference of opinion over the music. Dr Leeper, a classics scholar, planned for the production to be presented in Greek, and accompanied by "pseudo-antique music performed on campus via [Marshall-Hall], but he was confronted instead with a modern score consisting of background music for the entire play." Radic notes further to this that "the credit for the subsequent success went to Marshall-Hall. Leeper, who had been stung by several humiliating encounters with the composer, was not amused" (24). Following the 1 August 1898 production, however, the Age critic qualified the "very high opinion previously expressed concerning" the merits of Marshall-Hall's score with the opinion that the funeral march "still strikes me as less effective than the bulk of the music" and that it fails to "reach quite so high a level as has been done elsewhere" ("Amusements," 6).

Extracts from Alcestis are also known to have been performed at various times, including, for example, the "Death Scene," which was presented by the Marshall-Hall Orchestra on 28 Apr. 1898. The Melbourne University Conservatorium also performed this scene at the Alexandra Theatre on 20 Dec. 1898 as part of its annual "Scenes from Opera" series. The "Prelude" was also presented by the Marshall-Hall Orchestra on 22 Sept. 1900.

Alcestis was later staged in Meissen (Germany) in 1913, and performed in the presence of the Crown Prince of Saxony. The 1898 Melbourne production had apparently been seen by a German scholar, Dr Poeschel, who was impressed enough with the work to have it staged in Germany some fifteen years later.

1898:
- **Town Hall, Melbourne; 22 June**
  - Dir. Alexander Leeper; Prod. Trinity College/Melbourne Liedertafel; Cond. G. W. L. Marshall-Hall; S Art. H. Desbrowe Annear and Lionel Lindsay.

1898:
- **Town Hall, Melbourne; 1 Aug.**
  - Prod. Trinity College/Melbourne Liedertafel; Cond. G. W. L. Marshall-Hall.
  - Presented as part of the Liedertafel concert series, this production was without costumes and scenery.

1913:
- Stadttheater, Meissen, Saxony (Germany), Fürsten und Landesschule; [no details]

Victorian Artists Society Journal 1 Nov. (1913), n. pag.

RED RIDING HOOD'S TEMPTATION: [children's operetta] Lib. Miss Cush Heinbockle; Mus. [n/e]

Advertised as a "Grand Children's Operetta" dramatised by Miss Heinbockle, believed to have been a local teacher of theatre for children, the production was subtitled A Night in Fairy Land, and was performed mostly by the local students (although the role of the wolf is known to have been played by an adult). In this respect the advertisements in the West Australian also called on the public to "come and see the Mortals and Fairies and Tiny Footsteps in their Sparkling Fun and Merriment" ("Town Hall," 4).

Although the authorship of the music is not made clear it is quite possible that Miss Heinbockle was responsible for this. Evidence for this claim is in the wording of one part of the West Australian's review following the production, whereby the critic notes that "the interesting episodes of the old nursery tale were suitably arranged by Miss Heinbockle, and the music, which was of a simple character, fitted the story well." There is no further mention of song titles in the review, though several musical performances are referred to - notably "the music, on the whole, was creditably rendered by the young performers" (ibid, 4).

The operetta, "produced with such success in the Town Hall," was staged a few weeks later at Highgate Hill in Perth, "for the purpose of raising funds to pay for the painting of the scenery now in course of completion in the hall" (West Australian 24 Nov. 1898, 1).

1898:
- **Town Hall, Perth; 10 Oct.**
  - Dir. Cush Heinbockle; Chor. Arthur McNulty; Lig. Frost and Shipam (limelight); S Mgr. Mr Lamphier.
  - Cast incl. Miss Myra Franklin (Little Red Riding Hood), Bruce Bott (Woodman), Lily Rance (Red Riding Hood's Mother), Master Davies (Father William), Miss E. Martin (Grandma), Nora Dawes (Nellie), Miss Philpot (Myrtle), Selma Kenworthy (Bertha), Emma Peters (Lizzie), Ethel Sherwood (School Mistress), and Mr Arthur McNulty (The Wolf). Fairies - Kathleen Stinton, Miss E. Mercer, Minnie Lowe, Gwenny Barber, Winnie Dawes, Joan Barber, Ruby
McNeece, Eva Smith, Daisy Brooker, Miss Patten, Jack and Jill Hassell (dancers).
- **Musician:** George W. Bailey (piano).
- The evening’s entertainment also included, by request, an after act - the presentation of the "School Act" from Robertson’s *School*, staged by members of a group called "Helping Hands."

1898:
- St Alban’s Hall, Highgate Hill (Perth); 24 Nov.
  - **Dir.** Mr Lamphier.
  - **Cast** incl. Miss Myra Franklin (Little Red Riding Hood), Bruce Bott (Woodsman), William Duff (Wolf).

“Entertainment at Highgate Hill.” *West Australian* 25 Nov. (1898), 5.
Williamson and Musgrove's Royal Comic Opera Company staging of Sturgess and Audran's *La Poupee* (Princess's Theatre, Melbourne, 14 Oct.) included two additional songs. One of these was "The Dawn," written and composed by Sydney Bracey expressly for Dorothy Vane (while the other song, written and composed by recently-arrived English actor/singer, Charles Kenningham, was "Can this Be Love"). Another Williamson and Musgrove production, William Gillette's *Secret Service*, which was described as a "romance of the Southern Confederacy" (Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney 26 Aug.), had its music "written and selected" by Australian-based composer/music director Frederick W. Weierter.

On 2 December John F. Sheridan staged another season of his immensely popular creation *Fun on the Bristol* at the Lyceum Theatre (Sydney), again portraying his signature character the Widow O'Brien. This version included, among several popular musical numbers, the "Good Night" song, written by actor Fred Sinclair. Presented during the burlesque scena on *Il Tovatore*, the song was performed by local children who had been trained by Sinclair himself.