

LA FEUILLADE, PEEL & WESTON'S CHRISTY MINSTRELS

AUSTRALIAN VARIETY THEATRE ARCHIVE: RESEARCH NOTES

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aka **Christy & American Minstrels**

(1869) Formed in Melbourne in late March under the direction of Frank Weston, La Feuillade, Peel and Weston's Christy Minstrels announced a series of "out-of-town" try-outs beginning early April in order to "get into thorough working order" prior to its Melbourne debut. Although he announced his intention to "coalesce with Messrs Hussey, Kelly and Holly" for that season, the two companies in fact merged within a week. However, advertising saw them either retain their individual identities or bill the company as the Christy and American Minstrels. When the combined troupe opened in Melbourne on 31 May it was billed simply as Weston and Hussey's Minstrels.

► See also: [Weston & Hussey's Minstrels](#) • [Weston & La Feuillade's Minstrels](#) • [Weston & La Feuillade](#) • [Hussey, Kelly & Holly's American Minstrels](#) • [T.J. "Tommy" Peel](#)

LA FEUILLADE, PEEL, and WESTON'S
CHRISTY MINSTRELS,
In conjunction with
HUSSEY, KELLY, and HOLLY'S AMERICAN
MINSTRELS.
Grand Provincial Tour of this Mammoth
Company.
Having leased the popular premises hitherto known as
ST. GEORGE'S-HALL,
in Bourke-street east, it will shortly undergo a
thorough renovation, with the introduction of a new
stage, proscenium, dress circle, &c., and be fitted
up in complete style, after the most approved fashion
of the American minstrel halls, and will be opened on
or about
MONDAY, MAY 3.
When
Messrs. HUSSEY, KELLY, and HOLLY
will have the pleasure of making their first appearance
before a Melbourne audience,
Introducing
A NEW ERA IN AMERICAN MINSTRELSY.
15 STAR ETHIOPIAN ARTISTS.
Pending the elaborations to St. George's-hall, prior
to their grand opening, this Finished Company of
Ethiopian Delineators
Will proceed on a
SHORT RAILWAY TOUR,
Appearing at
Ballarat, Sandhurst, Castlemaine, Geelong, and
Daylesford.
FRANK WESTON, Business Manager.
H. PEACHMAN, Agent.

Argus 30 Mar. (1869), 8.

Personnel incl. Nicholas La Feuillade, T. J. (Tommy) Peel, Frank Weston, T. Bent, Mr Romer (pianist/music director)

The Victorian papers inform us that Mr. Frank Weston, the Wizard Oil Prince is organising a large Christy Minstrel Company, and is in treaty with Messrs N. Feuillade, T. J. Peel, T. Bent, (at present in Tasmania), and Mr. Romer, pianist, of the Royal Academy of Music, London, who has recently returned from India, after a lengthened engagement with Mr. Dave Carson. Mr. Wilkie the pleasing tenor singer, who made his first appearance in Melbourne last Saturday evening, at the Duke of Edinburgh Theatre, for Miss Fannie Carandini's benefit, has also had an offer made to him to join Mr. Weston. On the formation of the troupe they will make a short provincial tour to get into thorough working order previous to appearing in Melbourne, when if arrangements can be made, they will coalesce with Messrs Hussey, Kelly, and Holly, the celebrated American Ethiopian comedians, who have been playing to crowded houses in Sydney for some weeks past.

Border Watch (Mount Gambier, SA) 24 Mar. (1869), 4.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/7600751>

A new company—and a very strong one—of Christy and American minstrels has been formed by Mr. Frank Weston, who is well known in Victoria as the Wizard Oil Prince. He has had an opportunity to avail himself of three talented artists, who have only arrived from New York—Messrs. Hammond, and Peel; and of three others—Messrs. Hussey, Kelly, and Hulley, who have come over from California. To these have been joined the best talent left in the colony from previous Christy companies. The party are not merely strong in numbers, but in "Christy" cleverness; they are about to make a short provincial tour, visiting the principal towns accessible by railway, before commencing a season at St. George's-hall, which they are about to fit up specially for their purposes after the latest New York ideas. They appear to-night at Castlemaine.

Argus 29 Mar. (1869), 5

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/223279>

Geelong (Vic)

AMUSEMENTS.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

CHRISTY AND AMERICAN MINSTRELS.

WILL OPEN ON
THURSDAY EVENING,
29TH APRIL,
For a Few Nights Only.

TO THE PUBLIC:
Don't fail to come and see this
GREAT MAMMOTH COMPANY
in their
EXCELSIOR PROGRAMME.

Doors open at Half-past Seven.

ADMISSION:
Front Seats, 3s; Body of Hall, 2s;
Entrance, 1s.
Tickets may be obtained at the Mechanics' Institute, Mr Franks, Stationer, and the Victoria Hotel, from 11 a.m. till 3 p.m.

Carriages can be at the Door at a Quarter-past Ten o'clock.

FRANK WESTON, Business Manager.
H. PEACHMAN, Agent.

Geelong Advertiser 28 Mar. (1869), 3.

Much has been written, more has been said, and probably even more again thought of the new company of Christy Minstrels, and as a natural consequence the public of Geelong being a reading, speaking, and thinking community, have had their curiosity aroused in no mean degree. What then could be expected under such circumstances but a full house, and, as Frank Weston would remark, "that's just what's the matter." Entertainments of late have been but very poorly patronised, and it is quite refreshing to have to notice one which is patronised by a crowded audience. Such, however, was the case last evening, the Mechanics' Institute being crowded in the back and middle seats, while the front seats were comfortably filled. At a rough guess, the receipts must have been about £50. Whether this large audience had their expectations satisfied or not, it is not difficult to guess, judging by the general approval expressed as to the merits of the entertainment. At the same time the company may be summed up as being one of the best that has yet appeared in the colonies, so far as instrumental, comic and dancing departments are concerned, while in vocal talent it is somewhat deficient. In fact, the only real vocalists of the company are Messrs T. Campbell and Frank Weston. Mr Campbell has a really fine baritone voice, and knows how to make it effective. His songs "Kiss me ere I die," and the descriptive song in the second part, were the best vocal efforts of the evening. The first part of the entertainment consisted of what is termed in the programme "mirth and music." The mirth was well supplied by Messrs Kelly and Hussey, the "banjo" and "bones" of the company respectively. Their jokes have the merit of being nearly all new, and not worn threadbare by constant use, while they are made to tell well

by the manner in which they are delivered. The audience was kept in one continued state of laughter during the intermissions between the songs. It is in dancing talent, however, that the great strength of the company lies. The golden shoe dance, by Messrs Kelly and Holly, is the best ever seen on the stage of the Mechanics', hardly, excepting even the terpsichorean efforts of Joe Brown. Mr Peel's "champion jig" is also excellent. The sketches of nigger eccentricities were like the jokes, all new, and however absurd they might be, the most staid among the audience could not help joining in the laugh. Albeit, there were some who evidently felt ashamed of the weakness. The "four o'clock train," by Messrs Hussey and Weston, is perfectly irresistible, the expression of fear on the countenances of the performance as well got up, ghost puts in his appearance, and the extraordinary manner in which Mr Weston makes his exit being about "the funniest thing out." Mr Hussey's song, "Tobias and Bisnea," is altogether a new thing, and some may consider it not quite the thing to burlesque orthodox psalm singing in this manner. Altogether the Christys may be said to have come up to expectations in everything save vocal music, and this is saying much considering what those expectations have been. In conclusion, it might be hinted in a friendly way, that the accompaniments are at times too loud for some of the voices possessing but little power.

Geelong Advertiser 30 Apr. (1869), 2.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/17541>

M ECHANICS' INSTITUTE, BALLARAT
 LA FEUILLADE, PEEL, AND WESTON'S
 OLD AND ONLY CHRISTY MINSTRELS,
 IN CONJUNCTION WITH
 MESSRS HUSSEY, KELLY, AND HOLLY'S
 AMERICAN MINSTRELS,
 Will Appear on
 WEDNESDAY, 7TH APRIL,
 In their
GRAND SOIREEs DE ETHIOP
 GREATEST BAND OF ETHIOPIAN SERENADERS
 THAT EVER VISITED THE AUSTRALIAS.
BOTH MAMMOTH COMPANIES EACH NIGHT
 In their
EXCELSIOR ENTERTAINMENT.
 FOURTEEN STAR PERFORMANCES.
 Admission:—Front seats, 3s; body of hall, 2s; gallery, 1s;
 children, half-price.
 Performance to commence at 8 precisely.
 FRANK WESTON, Business Manager.
 H. PEACHMAN, Agent.

Ballarat Star 3 Apr. (1869), 3.

At the hall of the Mechanics' Institute, on Wednesday evening, there was a very full house to witness and hear the first performance of "La Feuillade, Peel, and Weston's Old and only Christy Minstrels, in conjunction with Messrs Hussey, Kelly, and Holly's American Minstrels." With a considerable deal of justice we may, in the terms of the advertisement, designate the troupe as the "greatest band of Ethiopian Serenaders that ever visited the Australias." The bill is entirely new, and contains some decidedly good things. In fact, though a performance of "minstrels" it is quite novel in its character and arrangement; and while those who sustain the principal parts are possessed of very pleasing voices, and the instrumentalists are clever, there are three comic men—Messrs Frank Weston, Frank Hussey, and Harry Kelley—who do their part of the business in a manner that is equal, if not superior, to anything of the kind we have previously seen. It is useless for us to attempt a description of the performance in detail, as no doubt, our readers will take our word for it, that its repetition on this and other evenings will afford them the fullest satisfaction.

Ballarat Star 8 Apr. (1869), 2.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/12094482>

L Y C E U M — T H E A T R E
 CHRISTY AND AMERICAN MINSTRELS.
 OPEN THIS (MONDAY) EVENING, 10th MAY,
 For a Few Nights Only.
 To the Public—Don't forget to come and see this
 GREAT MAMMOTH COMPANY
 In their EXCELSIOR PROGRAMME.
 GEMS OF NEGRO MINSTRELSY.
 The GOLDEN SHOE DANCE,
 By Kelly and Holly.
 TOBIAS and BIANCAS, by Frank Hussey.
 LOOK OUT FOR THE BIG SUNFLOWER.
 TWELVE STAR PERFORMERS,
 Thus forming a Congress of Minstrelsy, and the
 greatest Constellation ever in Australia.
 ¶ This night, doors open at seven; other nights,
 half-past seven o'clock. Carriages can be at the
 door quarter past ten o'clock.
 Tickets can be obtained at the Shamrock Hotel
 from eleven till four o'clock. Admission:—Dress
 circle, 3s; stalls, 2s; boxes, 2s; pit, 1s. Children half
 price, except to the pit.
 Frank Weston, business manager.
 H. Peachman, agent. 499

Bendigo Advertiser 10 May (1869), 1.

► See also [Weston and Hussey's Minstrels](#) entry.

Australian Variety Theatre Archive: Research Notes

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