

1853

As part of the entertainment presented during J. C. Rainer's farewell benefit at the Mechanics' Institute, Melbourne on 5 February, pianist C. Leman Jacobs and Rainer performed two songs, one in blackface [see advert below].

The Sham Catalini in Little Puddleton (1842) was revived at Geelong's Theatre Royal on the evenings of 8 and 13 May.

DON LEANDER; OR WOMAN'S WIT: [musical entertainment] **Txt** Alfred Nelson; **Mus.** Sydney Nelson

Described in the *Argus* as "musical vaudeville" (4 Feb. 1853, 8) expressly written for the Nelson family, the music was composed, selected and arranged by Sydney Nelson. The characters are Don Leander, a mysterious personage in a black cloak; Donna Isabella, a Spanish Lady; and her maid Paquita, "a little lady with high notions."

Songs incorporated into the piece were "Lady Fair" (serenade) "Paquita Stay" (trio), "Guadalquivir Gentle River" (Sara and Carrie Nelson), "Jacquestro's Person I But Shame" (Carrie and Alfred Nelson), "Do Not Despise Me Because I am Old" and "Come, Come to Me" (Sara Nelson) and the finale "Then Let Us Sing a Parting Song" (cast).

- 1853:** Protestant Hall, Melbourne; 4, 8, 11 Feb.
- **M Dir/Arr.** Sydney Nelson.
- **Troupe:** Nelson Family.
- **Cast:** Alfred Nelson (Don Leander), Sara Nelson (Donna Isabella), Carry Nelson (Paquita).
- **Musician:** Sydney Nelson (piano).
- 1853:** Temperance Hall, Melbourne; 22 Feb., 16, 31 Mar.
- Cast and production as for previous Melbourne season.
- 1853:** Exchange Room, Adelaide; 14 July
- Cast and production as for previous Melbourne season.
- 1853:** Mechanics Institute, Hobart; 10 Nov.
- Cast and production as for previous Melbourne season.
- 1854:** Mechanics Institute, Melbourne; 29 May
- Cast and production as for 1853 Melbourne season.
- 1854:** Queen's Hall, Melbourne; 14 Oct.
- Cast and production as for 1853 Melbourne season.

THE
NELSON FAMILY'S
SECOND.
MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT
Will take place
T-O-M-O-R-R-O-W E-V-E-N-I-N-G,
THURSDAY, on which occasion, in addition to the CONCERT,
(the Programme of which is entirely changed) will be presented a New Musical
Vaudeville, written by Mr. A. NELSON, entitled
"DON LEANDER, OR WOMAN'S WIT,"
The Music composed and arranged by Mr. S. NELSON.
The NELSON FAMILY'S Nights of Performance next week are TUESDAY,
THURSDAY, and FRIDAY. 4888

Courier (Hobart) 9 Nov. (1853), 3.

Kelly, Veronica, ed. [Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1850-1869](#). (1995), v. pags.
[Argus](#) 4 Feb. (1853), 8. Advert.

THE LADIES PREROGATIVE: [musical farce] **Txt Adapt.** W. M. Akhurst; **Orig Mus.** Sydney Nelson;

Add Music [n/e]

Adapted by Akhurst as a musical farce, and written expressly for the Nelson family, the narrative was based on William Bayle Bernard's play *The Dumb Belle*. The characters are Harry Chester, a gentleman in search of a silent woman, Ellen Wilton, a young lady who must be seen to be understood, and her younger sister, Kate, a champion for the rights of her sex.

The songs incorporated into the piece were: "Pause Before You Read That Letter" (Sara and Carry Nelson), "A Trick I Will Play Him" (Sara Nelson), "Oh! If There's One Thing in this Life" (Alfred Nelson), "Mr Jingle Jerry" (Carry Nelson), "O, How Happy I Shall Be" (Carry and Alfred Nelson), and the finale "We Wish You All Good Night."

- 1853:** Protestant Hall, Melbourne; 11, 14, 20 Jan.
- **Troupe:** Nelson Family.
- **Cast:** Alfred Nelson (Harry), Sara Nelson (Ellen), Carry Nelson (Kate).
- **Musician:** Sydney Nelson (piano).
- 1853:** Protestant Hall, Melbourne; 8 Mar.
- Cast and production as for previous Melbourne season.
- 1853:** Mechanics Institute, Melbourne; 20 Sept.
- Cast and production as for 1853 Melbourne season.
- Presented along with *Romance and Reality*.
- 1854:** Mechanics Institute, Melbourne; 21 Apr., 9 June
- Cast and production as for 1853 Melbourne season.

For the first time an entirely
NEW MUSICAL FARCE,
Founded on the Comedy of the
DUMB BELLE,
Adapted expressly for the Nelson Family,
entitled,—
THE LADIES' PREROGATIVE.
The Music composed by Mr. S. Nelson.

Argus 11 Jan. (1853), 8.

Kelly, Veronica, ed. [Annotated Calendar of Plays Premiered in Australia: 1850-1869](#). (1995), v. pags.
[Argus](#) 11 Jan. (1853), 8. Advert.

ITALIAN OPERA: [burlesque] **Txt Adapt.** J. C. Rainer; **Mus.** [n/e]

Essentially a one-act burlesque scene from an Italian opera, this production was staged for the first in Melbourne as the conclusion to J. C. Rainer's farewell benefit. The company's advertisement in the *Argus* confidently expected that the "refined community [would] approve the effort to join elevated and classical music with truly chaste and healthy humour" (8). The story begins with Signor Banjo Mario summoning his lady love, the prima donna. She being (like most prima donnas when wanted) very sick sends her faithful page, Mad Jenny Tambo, who as most pages do, delivers a Billy-do. At this critical moment the

infuriated Papa (who like all infuriated fathers opposes the union of his daughter with any person who was ever known to sing) seizes the letter and admonishes the couple for their clandestine proceedings. Banjo entreats, Papa scorns, Tambo intercedes, Papa swears (in Italian) and vows eternal separation and revenge. They quarrel, a blow is given, a challenge accepted, a fight ensues and "alas oh dreadful, Banjo falls. Tambo weeps and prays, Ramorino is struck with remorse and snivels. Banjo meanwhile sings promptly dies.

The music for the burlesque included an opening recitative "Fatal Friday," the aria "Prendere an Drinko," the recitative "Malle Detteo Influenza Non Playo Stop Salarino Per Opera Paddy Whack" (in Italian) and the grand aria "Et Due Challenge" including the grand dying scene's song "I'm a Croker." The *Argus* advertisement also indicates that a book of words in English, Low Dutch and Half Spanish could be procured at the office for £1 1s (8).

1853: Mechanic's Institute, Melbourne; 5 Feb. [benefit]

- **Dir/Prod/M Dir.** J. C. Rainer.

- **Troupe:** Rainer's Serenaders.

- **Cast** incl. J. M. Foans (Madame Jenny Lindo Tambo), J. C. Rainer (Signor Lablanche Ramorino), M. W. White (Signor Mario Banjo), F. Moran (Signor Bono Cavetinio), T. P. Bower (Signor De Big-nees), C. Bryant ("Leader of an orchestra of something less than 100 strong")

[Argus](#) 4 Feb. (1853), 8. Advert.

AN UNWARRENTABLE INTRUSION: [musical sketch]

Txt/Mus. [n/e]

A comic sketch performed for the first time on 22 February 1853, with the songs ("Simon the Cellarer" and "The Monks of Old") possibly written by Sydney Nelson. The piece was presented as a first part finale, with singer John Gregg specially seconded for the evening's performance. Gregg's character, a gentleman fond of comfort and quiet, sang both songs, with the other character, played by Alfred Nelson, being a man addicted to questions and quoting. During the piece Nelson recited Shakespeare's celebrated speech, "Queen Mab."

1853: Protestant Hall, Melbourne; 22 Feb.

- **M Dir/Arr.** Sydney Nelson.

- **Cast:** John Gregg, Alfred Nelson.

- **Musician:** Sydney Nelson (piano).

[Argus](#) 22 Feb. (1853), 8. Advert.

ROGERS WORRIED: [musical farce] **Txt Adapt.** Frank Howson; **Mus.** [n/e]

ROYAL VICTORIA THEATRE.
THIS EVENING, MARCH 24.
Will be produced the Opera of THE BOHEMIAN GIRL. Count Arnheim, Mr. Rogers; Florestein, Mr. Willis; Thardeus, Mr. J. Howson; Devilshoof, Mr. F. Howson; Arline, Mrs. Guerin; Queen of the Gipsies, Mrs. Gibbs; Buda, Mrs. Rogers. To conclude with (for the first time in this colony) a most personal Extravaganza, entitled ROGERS WORRIED BY P. HOWSON. Mr. Rogers, by himself; Mr. Frank Howson, by himself; Jacob, by himself; Mr. Hollis, by himself.
To-Morrow being GOOD FRIDAY, the Theatre will be closed.

Advertised in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as a "most personal extravaganza" and an "interlude," this musical farce was adapted from the Mark Lemon and B. M. Webster farce *Keeley Worried*, and produced for the "first time in this colony at the Royal Victoria Theatre (2). It was presented as the second half of the programme, following *The Bohemian Girl*. The musical element included a song by Madame Sarah Flower and a dance by Miss Collins.

1853: Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 24, 26, 30 Mar., 1, 19 Apr., 3 May

- **Cast** incl. Mr Rogers, Frank Howson, Mr Hollis, Sarah Flower, Miss Collins.

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

[Sydney Morning Herald](#) 24 Mar. (1853), 2 Advert. [see also adverts. 30 Mar., 1 Apr. and 19Apr. 1853]

HARLEQUIN TOM, THE PIPER'S SON; OR, THE FAIRY OF THE MAGIC FLUTE:

[pantomime] **Lib/Mus.** [n/e]

Advertised as a new original pantomime with references to Geelong.

1853: Theatre Royal, Geelong (Victoria); 15 Aug.

- **Dir/Prod.** George Coppin.

- **Cast** incl. George Coppin, Chambers Family.

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

State Library of Victoria. Coppin Collection. (n. yr), Playbill (4/76).

MECHANICS' INSTITUTION, Great Collins-street.

On SATURDAY EVENING, FEB. 5th,

Mr. J. C. Rainer's

FAREWELL BENEFIT.

The Serenaders with

W H I T E F A C E S !

The Serenaders with

B L A C K F A C E S !

The Serenaders in

BURLESQUE OPERA !

MR. J. C. RAINER would respectfully announce to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Melbourne, that his Benefit will take place as above, and flatters himself that this Entertainment will surpass anything of the kind yet given to the Public. For this occasion he has arranged a New Programme (introducing a few of the old favorites); also a Burlesque Scene of the Italian Opera! and confidently expects that a refined community will approve the effort to join elevated and classical music with truly chaste and healthy humour. In addition to all the other attractions.

Mr. C. LEMAN JACOBS,

The eminent Pianist, will accompany Mr. Rainer in two of Henry Russell's popular Songs.

Part I.

WITH WHITE FACES.

Part II.

IN BLACK FACES.

The Evening's Entertainment to conclude with a Burlesque Scene of the

ITALIAN OPERA,

Arranged by Rainer.

[Argus](#) 4 Feb. (1853), 8. Advert.

QUITE COLONIAL: [musical farce] **Txt.** W. M. Akhurst; **Mus.** Sydney Nelson

This "entirely new and original farce" was written by W. M. Akhurst expressly for the Nelson family and staged for the first time at Adelaide's Exchange Room on 29 July. The characters are Mr Chumley, described in the 1853 *Argus* review as "faster than a married man ought to be and hot with a tendency to reformation;" Mrs Chumley, his too confiding wife who is worried to death by the servants;" and Fanny Fossick, a cozening young lady and colonialist (9 Sept. 1853, 8). The 1859 *Argus* review notes in relation to the *Quite Colonial's* storyline that, "the difficulties attendant upon the engagement and management of domestic servants are scarcely less considerable at this day than they were at the period at which the farce was written" (4).

The songs written for the piece were: "What's the Matter" (Sara and Alfred Nelson), "Dear Australy" (a ballad sung by Sara Nelson), "I Want a Husband Sadly" (Carry Nelson), and the finale "Kind Friends Your Voices I Entreat."

EXCHANGE ROOM.
THE NELSON FAMILY will give their.
next **MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT** on **WEDNESDAY EVENING, June 29**, when, in addition to the **CONCERT** will be presented, for the first time, an entirely new and original Musical Farce (written by a gentleman of Adelaide expressly for the Nelson Family), entitled
"QUITE COLONIAL."

South Australian Register (Adelaide) 24 June (1853), 2.

NB: The 1853 Adelaide season was alternated between the Exchange Room (Adelaide CBD) and the Port Adelaide Theatre

PORT THEATRE.
THE NELSON FAMILY will give their
Fifth Musical Entertainment at **PORT ADELAIDE**, on **Tuesday next, July 12th**, when will be presented, in addition to the **CONCERT**, Mr **W. M. Akhurst's successful Musical Farce**, entitled
"QUITE COLONIAL."

Adelaide Times 8 July (1853), 1.

- 1853:** Exchange Room, Adelaide; 29 June, 7, 21 July ▪ Port Theatre, Port Adelaide; 12 July
- **M Dir/Arr.** Sydney Nelson.
- **Troupe:** Nelson Family.
- **Cast:** Alfred Nelson (Mr Chumley), Sara Nelson (Mrs Chumley), Carry Nelson (Fanny).
- **Musician:** Sydney Nelson (piano).
- 1853:** Mechanics Institute, Melbourne; 9, 22 Sept.
Cast and production as for previous Adelaide season.
- 1853:** Cornwall Assembly Rooms, Launceston (Tasmania); 14 Oct.
- Cast and production as for previous Adelaide season.
- 1853:** Mechanics Institute, Hobart; 8, 17 Nov.
- Cast and production as for previous Adelaide season.
- 1854:** Mechanics Institute, Melbourne; 30 Mar., 17 July [possibly also 20 Mar.]
- Cast and production as for previous Adelaide season.
- 1854:** Queen's Hall, Melbourne; 21 Oct.
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.
- 1855:** Royal Hotel, Sydney; 17 Apr.
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.
- 1856:** Olympic Theatre, Sydney; 2-3 May
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.
- 1856:** Our Lyceum, Sydney; 18 Dec. [benefit]
- **Mngr.** Charles Dillon.
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.
- 1859:** Princess's Theatre, Melbourne; 17 Feb.
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.

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

Argus 9 Sept. (1853), 8. Advert.

"*Princess's Theatre*." *Argus* 18 Feb. (1859), 4.

ROMANCE AND REALITY: [musical entertainment] **Txt.** W. M. Akhurst; **Mus.** [n/e]

Sometime given the subtitle *The Digger in London*, this musical entertainment was advertised in the *Argus* as a "new petite comedy" (15 Sept. 1853, 8) and in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as an "original vaudeville" (1 May 1855, 4). It was written expressly for the Nelson Family by W. M. Akhurst, who was then living in Adelaide and first staged at the city's Exchange Room. The characters are John Dobson (a young gentleman with expectations, very matter of fact and food), Mrs Annabella Vavasour (a youthful widow and lover of the idea), and her maid, Mary Smithers (who has her mistress's interests at heart and a dictionary in her pocket).

The music for the original production included the songs "Charming Romance" (a ballad sung by Sara Nelson), "I've a Plan" (Alfred Nelson), "To Old Regards Appealing" (Sara and Alfred Nelson), "The Trip Overland" (Carry Nelson) and the finale "Let's Put the Question to our Friends." Although these songs were changed for later productions, "The Trip Overland" seems to have been purposefully written for the show. Of the original songs it alone remains in the 1859 version - the other songs being "Oh and He Loves Me Dearly," "Oh Indeed" and "The Dream of Love."

**FIRST NIGHT OF A NEW PIECE BY THE
AUTHOR OF "QUITE COLONIAL."
THE NELSON FAMILY will give their
next MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT on THURSDAY,
July 28th, 1853.
PART I.—CONCERT.
PART II.—For the first time, an entirely new and original
Comedy, written expressly for these entertainments, by Mr.
W. M. Akhurst, entitled
"ROMANCE and REALITY."**

Adelaide Observer 23 July (1853), 4.

- 1853:** Exchange Room, Adelaide; 28 July [premiere season]
- **M Dir/Arr.** Sydney Nelson.
- **Troupe:** Nelson Family.
- **Cast:** Alfred Nelson (John Dobson), Sara Nelson (Annabella Vavasour) , Carry Nelson (Mary Smithers).
- **Musician:** Sydney Nelson (piano).
- 1853:** Mechanics Institute, Melbourne; 15, 20 Sept.
- Cast and production as for previous Adelaide season.
- Presented along with *The Ladies Prerogative*.
- 1853:** Cornwall Assembly Rooms, Launceston (Tasmania); 21 Oct., 19 and 30 Dec. [return season]
- Cast and production as for previous Adelaide season.
- 1853:** Mechanics Institute, Hobart; 24 Nov.
- Cast and production as for previous Adelaide season.
- 1854:** Rowe's American Circus, Melbourne; 23 Mar.
- Cast and production as for previous Adelaide season.
- 1854:** Mechanics Institute, Melbourne; 25 May
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.
- 1854:** Rowe's American Circus, Melbourne; 30 Sept.
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.
- 1855:** Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 1 May
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.
- 1857:** Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 17 Jan. [benefit]
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.
- 1859:** Princess's Theatre, Melbourne; 19 Feb.
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.
- 1859:** Prince of Wales Theatre, Sydney; 4 May
- Cast and production as for 1853 Adelaide season.

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

[Argus](#) 15 Sept. (1853), 8. Advert.

[Sydney Morning Herald](#) 1 May (1855), 4. Advert.

[Sydney Morning Herald](#) 4 May (1859), 1. Advert.

HARLEQUIN UNCLE TOM'S UNCLE; OR, THE FAIRY OF THE MISSISSIPPI

COTTON FIELDS: [pantomime] **Lib Adapt/Mus.** [n/e]

A pantomime adapted from Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel. Coppin had previously produced a non-music version at the Theatre Royal in Geelong on 14 and 15 April (the adaptor was not credited).

- 1853:** Theatre Royal, Geelong (Victoria); 28 Nov. [benefit]
- **Dir/Prod.** George Coppin.
- **Cast** incl. George Coppin, The Juvenile Ethiopian Serenaders.

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

State Library of Victoria. Coppin Collection. (n. yr), Playbill (4/114).

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

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