

1901

Among the music theatre productions staged by touring companies during the year, but which remain unclear as to their origins, was a pantomime burlesque entitled *Robinson Crusoe, Esq.*, which was produced by Patey's Lilliputians under the auspices of Jones and Lawrence (lessees) at the Cremorne Gardens, Perth, 6-11 January. Introducing such songs as "Oh Boys! Here's the Chance of a Lifetime," "The Gay Parisienne," "The Geisha" and "Jack's the Boy for Work," the performance also concluded with "an amusing illusion called 'Phantasmagoria' or Shadow Harlequinade,' [which] was extremely well done by the company" (*West Australian* 8 Jan. 1901, 5).

1901 revivals included *Cinder-Ellen* (1894): Percy St John's burlesque was staged at Brisbane's Theatre Royal from 30 June with Les Warton, Arthur Morley, Priscilla Verne, Sam Gale and Sam Rowley in lead roles • St John also revived his 1898 *Sinbad the Sailor* panto for a regional Queensland tour with St John's Variety and Burlesque Co • Harry Rickards' 1900 pantomime, *Puss in Boots* was given a season in Melbourne at the Bijou Theatre from 16 February • Pollards' [adult] Opera Company toured J.C. Williamson's 1895 extravaganza *Djin Djin the Japanese Bogie Man*, playing Sydney, Brisbane, regional Queensland and Tasmania.

ROBINSON CRUSOE; HIS MAN FRIDAY AND THE GIDDY GOAT: [pantomime]

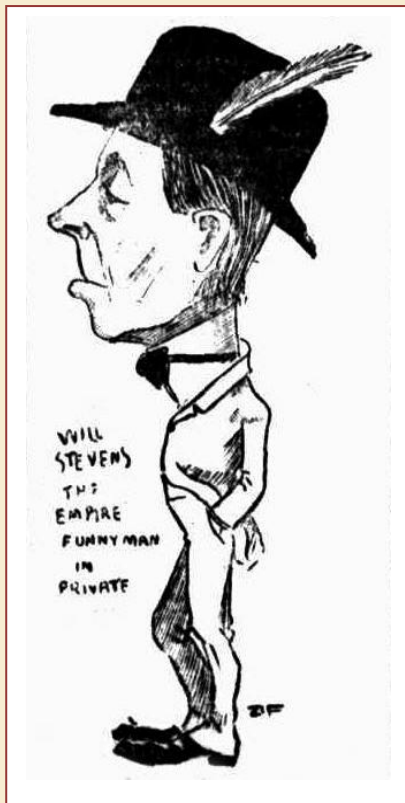
Lib/Mus. [n/e]

Advertised in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as a new, up to date and topical extravaganza presented for the first time in Sydney. A review in the same newspaper described the text as having taken "considerable liberty... with the famous story. Some of the highlights, according to the reviewer, were Walter Rivers' great Trilby burlesque, an aerial act, the harlequinade and the Grand Tableaux titled, "The Wreck" ("Empire," 6).

The pantomime was staged as a second half entertainment for the Empire season, being preceded by an original minstrels first part entitled "Ye Olde Englyshe Village" depicting a typical English village scene of forty years ago.

The presence of Will Watkins in the company suggests that this production may have been an abridged and updated revival of the comedian's 1897 pantomime, then simply titled *Robinson Crusoe*. It too was produced by John Fuller. No reference to the author this 1901 production has yet been located, however.

Sydney Morning Herald
27 Dec. 1901, 8.



EMPIRE THEATRE.
Castlrough-street, next Fire Station,
between Bathurst-street and Liverpool-street.
JOHN FULLER and SONS, Lessees.
A Record Attendance for this Theatre
A Record Attendance for this Theatre
to see the old-fashioned, up-to-date
Pantomime.

ROBINSON CRUSOE,
His Man Friday and the Giddy Goat.
Every Evening at 7.45.

**MATINEES SATURDAYS, MONDAYS, AND
HOLIDAYS.**

ROBINSON CRUSOE	His Man	ROBINSON CRUSOE
ROBINSON CRUSOE	Friday	ROBINSON CRUSOE
ROBINSON CRUSOE	and the	ROBINSON CRUSOE
ROBINSON CRUSOE	Giddy Goat.	ROBINSON CRUSOE

A LAUGHABLE, Far too Jolly by Half-able,
Pantomime. Something to amuse. All fun without
vulgarity.

EVERY EVENING AT 7.45.

**MATINEES, SATURDAYS, MONDAYS, AND
HOLIDAYS**
at 2.30. Doors open 2 sharp.
New Dresses. New Dances. New Songs.
New Comicalities, a Great Show, and a Wonderful Show
for the Money.

Prices, 2s, 1s, 6d. Children Half-price, except 6d seats.
Matinees, Children Half-price to all parts. Doors open
at 2.30 and 7.15.

Although the 1903/1904 New Zealand production was staged over an entire night's programme, it was still likely to have been based largely on the 1901 version, albeit with new topicalities, songs and business. The pantomime was expanded by the inclusion of a traditional harlequinade as a finale.

One particular focus of reviews for both the Australian and New Zealand productions was the ship wreck tableaux. Wellington's *New Zealand Herald* newspaper records:

Exceptionally fine is the tableaux of the wreck of Crusoe's ship. In semi-darkness, the stage is covered by a most realistic sea - great sullen waves heaving and falling - and there, labouring heavily with broken spars and rigging is the ship. Lighting cuts the darkness at intervals, and thunder moans and threatens. Presently the foremast goes by the board, and gradually the doomed ship settles and sinks ("*Robinson Crusoe*," 7).

Sydney Sportsman 25 Dec. 1901, 2.

1901: Empire Theatre, Sydney; 26 Dec. 1901 - 24 Jan. 1902

- **Dir/S Mngr.** Walter Rivers; **Prod.** John Fuller Snr; **Cond.** H.P. Purnell; **S Art.** Will Diamond.

- **Cast** incl. Ida Roslyn (Robinson Crusoe), Walter Rivers, Hettie Warden (Polly Snooks), John Fuller, Jack Kearns (Friday), Jeannie Johnstone, Fred Rivenhall (Snooks, the publican), Amy Blackie, Elmore Sisters, Will Stevens (Mrs Crusoe), Will Watkins, Nipper Wallace, Will Diamond (Davy Jones), Vera Rose (Dainty Alice), Albert McKisson (Giddy Goat), Miss Phillips (First pirate), Ruby Elmore (Tommy Bowline), Jeannie Johnstone (Perky Perkins), Daisy Elmore (Bessie Lightfoot), Nipper Wallace (Atkins secretary).

- 1903:** His Majesty's Theatre, Wellington (New Zealand); 26 Dec. 1903 - 9 Jan. 1904
- **Prod.** John Fuller Snr.
 - **Cast** incl. Tilly Dunbar (Robinson Crusoe), Denis Carney (Dame Crusoe), Madge Stagpoole (Polly Snooks), Joe Cowan (Will Atkins), Ted Stagpoole (The Giddy Goat), Friday (Alec Stagpoole), Dan Dunbar (Snooks), Ruby Elmore (Tommy Bowline), Daisy Elmore (Daisy Lightfoot), Alf Driscoll (Mike Bobstay), Bob Driscoll (Pat Bobstay), S. Wray (Emperor of Morocco), Daisy Chard (Polly Perkins), bert Harrison (Captain Blindoh), Little Alex Cowan (Atkins Jnr).
 - **Harlequinade:** Joe Cowan (Clown), Denis Carney (Pantaloon).

"Amusements." *Evening News* (Sydney) 27 Dec. 1901, 8.

"Empire Theatre: *Robinson Crusoe*." *Sydney Morning Herald* 27 Dec. 1901, 6.

"*Robinson Crusoe*." *New Zealand Times* (Wellington, NZ) 28 Dec. 1903, 7.

"*Robinson Crusoe at the Empire*." *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 27 Dec. 1901, 6.

"*Robinson Crusoe at His Majesty's*." *Evening Post* (Wellington, NZ) 28 Dec. 1902, 5.

Sydney Morning Herald 27 Dec. 1901, 8. Advert. [see right]

SHE: [burlesque pantomime] **Lib.** Pat Finn; **Mus.** [n/e]

Adapted from H. Rider Haggard's classic story, *She: A History of Adventure*, this Pat Finn burlesque-style pantomime was possibly subtitled "The White Queen of the Amahagger." Haggard's original story, serialized in 1886 and 1887, is a first-person narrative that follows the journey of young Cambridge professor Horace Holly and his ward Leo Vincey to a lost kingdom in the African interior. There, they encounter a primitive race of natives and a mysterious white queen, Ayesha, who reigns as the all-powerful "She", or "*She-who-must-be-obeyed*". In this work, Rider Haggard developed the conventions of the Lost World sub-genre, which many later authors emulated.

YE OLDE ENGLISH FAYRE, FREMANTLE.

TO-NIGHT and EVERY EVENING.
 Mr. KEYS begs to announce that he has made special arrangements with Mr. W. H. SPEED'S SPECIALITY COMPANY to CONTINUE their First-class VARIETY ENTERTAINMENT until THURSDAY NEXT, so as to enable all Fremantle patrons to see this great and unrivalled company.

WEDNESDAY (XMAS EVENING)
 A SACRED CONCERT will be given.
GREAT CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME.

THURSDAY EVENING (Boxing Evening), will be given for the first time in Fremantle, Pat Finn's new and up-to-date version of Rider Haggard's great and popular novel "SHE." Watch for the Pantomime, Boxing Evening. Cast of Characters:—She (the White Queen of the Amahagger), Mrs. W. H. Speed; Major L. Horace Holly (an African Explorer), Bat. Henry; Leo Tincey (Ward of the Major's), Bert. Thomas; Eustane (a Goddess), Miss Neva Glenn; Ballali (Ethiopian King, a Servant of She), W. H. Speed; Job (The Unicorn Goose, a Slave in the employ of Major Holly), Tom Leopold; Theodore Fatman (a Swell from Home), C. R. Jones; Ayesha, a Daughter of the Amahagger, a Medicine Woman), Miss Lottie Hunstead; and numerous attendants, played by well-known and popular artistes. Don't miss this great Xmas Treat. The Children's Delight. Don't forget Sacred Concert, Xmas Night and Sunday Evening. Watch the papers for future announcements.

E. L. WRIGHT, Treasurer.

- 1901:** Ye Olde Englyshe Fayre, Fremantle (WA); 26-29 Dec.
- **Prod/Dir.** W.H. Speed
 - **Troupe:** W.H. Speed's Specialty Company.
 - **Cast** incl. Mrs W.H. Speed (She, the White Queen of the Armahagger), B. Henry (Major Horace Holly), Bert Thomas (Leo Tinney, the Major's ward), Neva Glynn (Eustance, a Goddess), W.H. Speed (Ballali, an Ethiopian King and servant of She), Tom Leopold (Job, the Unicorn Goose and slave of Major Holly), C.R. Jones (Theodore Fatman, a swell from home), Lottie Hunstead (Ayesha, a daughter of the Armahagger and medicine woman).

West Australian (Perth) 28 Dec. 1901, 1.