

1841

A benefit for Mr F.B. Watson was held at the Royal Olympic Theatre, Launceston, Tasmania, on 1 November. During the course of the evening four scenes from *Harlequin Blue Nose; Or, The Phantom Ship* were presented. Mr Watson played the part of Vanderdecken, captain of the phantom ship. No details regarding an Australian production of this pantomime have yet located. The benefit also included William Barnes Rhodes' burlesque opera *Bombastes Furioso* as the finale entertainment (*Launceston Courier* 1 Nov. 1841, 3. *Advert.*) It is presently unclear if this production was the original work in full, or an abridged adaptation. Although billed as "burlesque burletta" the term burletta was at the time fluid in its definition. The *Launceston Courier* does note that "*Bombastes Furioso* is an old favourite in this town" ("*The Theatre.*" 1 Nov. 1841, 2).

DON JUAN; OR, THE SPECTRE ON HORSEBACK: [pantomime] **Txt/Mus.** [n/e]

Described as a "grand serio-comic Pantomime in two acts, Don Juan was presented during the course of a benefit night to Mr J. Allen. The production was said to have featured a storm, a shipwreck and a grand moving panorama, expressly painted by Mr Opie for the occasion. The panorama included views of Adelaide's old and new ports, a bird's-eye view of the Town of South Adelaide, with North Adelaide in the distance, and a variety of other views, too numerous to particularise" (*Adelaide Chronicle*, 1).

NB: A pantomime with the same title was staged in Melbourne in 1848. Although both works were likely based on the same source - Carlo Antonio Delpini's *Don Juan; Or, The Libertine Dest[r]oyed*, which was first staged at the London's Theatre Royal in 1790 - the text for the Melbourne production is believed to have been an entirely new adaptation, and also included different music and dances. No connection between the two (including practitioners involved) has yet been identified.

- 1841:** Queen's Theatre, Adelaide; 20 May
- **Prod/Mngr.** John Lazar; **Sc Art.** Mr Opie.
 - **Cast** incl. J. Allen (Don Juan), Miss Lazar (Scaramouch), My Hayward, Mr Lewis, Mr Arabin.
 - The remainder of the evening's programme comprised a selection of dances, the celebrated wood scene from *Valentine and Orson*, and a farce, "The Queen's Subject."

Adelaide Chronicle and South Australian Literary Record 19 May 1841, 1. *Advert.*

HARLEQUIN TURNED BUMPKIN; OR, THE VILLAGE GHOST: [pantomime] **Txt/Mus.** [n/e]

Staged as part of the benefit to Mr Searle (who also played the role of Clown).

- 1841:** Royal Olympic Theatre, Launceston (Tas); 15 Nov.
- **Prod/Mngr.**
 - **Cast** incl. Mr Searle (clown).

Cornwall Chronicle (Launceston, Tas) 13 Nov. 1841, 3. *Advert.*

HARLEQUIN AND THE EVIL SPIRIT OF WYE; OR, THE MILLER OF GLASTONBURY'S FAIR DAUGHTER: [pantomime] **Txt/Mus.** [n/e]

"The manager [of the Royal Victoria Theatre] has, at a considerable expense, got up a pantomime, called *Harlequin and the Evil Spirit of Wye*, for the special entertainment of the holiday folk," writes the editor of Hobart's *Courier* newspaper ("*Local,*" 24 Dec. 1841, 2). A suggestion that the pantomime be put on as a first part entertainment so that families with young children might "get back to their homes at a reasonably early hour" fell on deaf ears, and it was presented after the first part drama *The Jewess; Or, The Council of Constance*.

In its edition of 7 January 1842, the *Courier* makes some observations regarding the Royal Victoria's Christmas pantomime [see note below regarding some confusion over the identity of this production]

Got up for the amusement of juvenile spectators, the object aimed at is happily attained through the humorous sallies of Searle, and the indefatigable exertions of Mrs. Harrold and Mr. Boyd as dancers; whilst the feats of strength and agility thrown as interludes, by astonishing the unsophisticated in such matters, cannot fail to contribute to their amusement. At the same time that we would impress on the actors the necessity of perfecting themselves in their parts, auf trusting less to the voice of the prompter, we cannot but do them the justice to state that a decided amelioration has taken place... To the orchestra we would suggest an occasional change in the selection of their pieces, the same being performed loo frequently.

On a brighter note: "The substitution of wax tapers for oil, which we perceive had taken place on Wednesday last, is decidedly for the better; the effect is at once lighter and more equal" ("*Local,*" 7 Jan. 1842, 2).

[NB: The *Courier* indicates in its edition of 7 January 1842 that the "harlequinade pantomime" that had "already been produced at the Victoria Theatre" would be repeated on Saturday (8 Jan.). The production advertised for that evening, however, is identified as *Harlequin and the Enchanted Egg*. To date no pantomime with that title is located in connection with the Royal Victoria in 1841. The reasons for the discrepancy are presently unclear]

- 1841:** Royal Victoria Theatre, Hobart; 27 Dec. 1841.
- **Lse.** F.B. Watson; **Mngr.** S. Cameron; **Machinist** Mr Boyd.
 - **Cast** incl. Mr Searle, Mrs Harrold, Mr Boyd.

Courier (Hobart) 24 Dec. 1841, 3. Advert.

"Local: Theatre." *Courier* (Hobart) 24 Dec. 1842, 2

"Local: Theatre." *Courier* (Hobart) 7 Jan. 1842, 2.



Theatre Royal, Campbell Street, Hobart (ca. 1863). Formerly the Royal Victoria Theatre.
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office.

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