

1845

Hobart Town's 1844 Christmas pantomime *Harlequin Little-Bo-Peep* was given a final performance on 6 January. Written and directed by Mr Young, the pantomime had premiered at the Royal Victoria Theatre on Boxing Night.

Charles Nagel's *Shakespericonglomorofunnidogammoniae* (1844) was revived at Sydney's Royal Victoria Theatre on 30 January as part of a benefit programme.

Henry Deering's 1844 pantomime, *Harlequin Jack Spratt* (1844) was produced at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney on 8 March. Comic scenes from the pantomime were also staged there on at least three occasions (6 Mar., 24-25 Mar. and 1 Apr.).

George Coppin staged a pantomime for Launceston's juveniles and "children of a larger growth," on Easter Monday. Although the title of the piece is yet to be determined, the *Launceston Advertiser* records that Mr Young played clown and the Misses Thompson as Harlequin and Columbine. The scenery was by Mr Opie (28 Mar. 1845, 2).

Shakespericonglomorofunnidogammoniae was revived at Sydney's Royal Victoria Theatre on 30 January as part of a benefit given to Francis Nesbitt (McCrone).

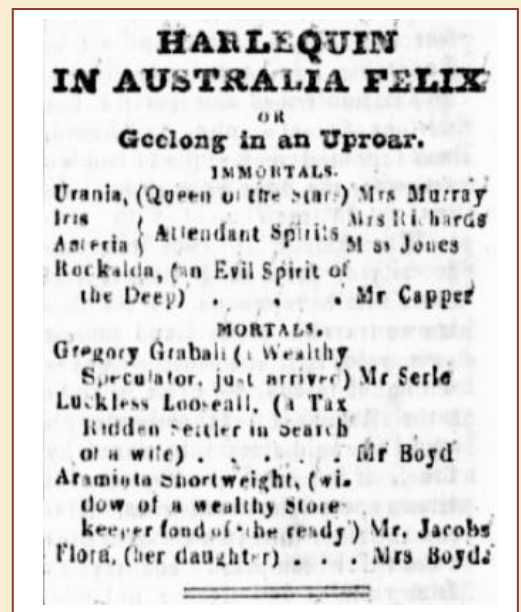
Two productions of the "pantomimical drama" *Obi Or, Three-Fingered Jack* were produced in the colony during the year. The first was staged at Sydney's Royal Victoria Theatre on 13 and 15 March, with the second being presented as part of a benefit to Mr Watson at the Queen's Theatre, Melbourne (20 Nov.). The scripts for both were likely based on the original 1880 Covent Garden pantomime. However, the Sydney production used music that is not believed to have been used in that London production. Advertising placed in Sydney's *Australian* newspaper indicates that the pantomime was "interspersed with songs, duets, choruses etc" and that the "whole of the music [had been] selected from the works of Dr Arnold, Haydn, Mozart etc, and arranged by Mr Gibbs for this occasion" (13 Mar. 1845, 1). The London pantomime was itself based on the William Earle's novella *Obi or, The History of Three-Fingered Jack* (1880) which tells the true story Jack Mansong, an escaped Jamaican slave.

HARLEQUIN IN AUSTRALIA FELIX; OR, GEELONG IN AN UPROAR: [pantomime]

Lib/Mus. [n/e]

A pantomime comprising immortals and mortals (both good and evil), the narrative of *Harlequin in Australia Felix* is set both in the heavens and in the Victorian township of Geelong. The earthly scenes involve local establishments of the time, notably the Retreat and Mack's Hotel, while parts of the story were also played out by Clown and Pantaloon on the roads to Corio and South Geelong. In her investigation into Tasmanian-produced pantomimes in the early to mid-nineteenth century, Elizabeth Webby writes the mortal characters were Australian types easily recognised as such by the audience:

The hero is 'Luckless Looseball (a Tax Ridden Settler in Search of a Wife)'; the villain is 'Gregory Graball (a Wealthy Speculator, just arrived)' and the comic dame, played of course by a man, is 'Araminta Shortweight (widow of a wealthy Store keeper fond of the ready).' Araminta has a lovely daughter named Flora, who she decrees should marry Graball rather than her true love, Looseball. When all seems lost, in Scene 3 the good fairy Urania and her evil counterpart Rockalda appear and transform the mortals into four traditional characters of the harlequinade: the lovers become Harlequin and Columbine, their two antagonists Pantaloon and Clown. The harlequinade consists of a further five scenes, with many chases as Clown and Pantaloon attempt to catch the lovers, comic turns by Clown, and magic tricks performed by Harlequin with the aid of his magic bat. Scene 6 is set in the bush and includes bushrangers. In contrast Scenes 5 and 7 are street scenes, representing two well-known Geelong landmarks, Mack's Hotel and the Retreat Hotel. Eventually Harlequin is captured by Pantaloon and Clown and loses his magic bat. But again the good fairy steps in to change the characters back into their mortal forms so that all can end happily (177).



ROYAL VICTORIA THEATRE.
THIS EVENING, DECEMBER 29.
THE EVENING'S entertainments will commence with, for the third time, a Grand Comic Pantomime, with entirely new Scenery, Machinery, Dresses, Tricks, and Transformations, &c., entitled JACK AND THE BEANSTALK, or HARLEQUIN OGRE. Tittle'emtwisto, Master Chambers; Jack, Mrs. Ximenes, afterwards Harlequin, Mr. Fitzgerald; Dollomopsey, afterwards Clown, Mr. Torning; Squall-squatto, afterwards Pantaloon, Mr. Douglass; Tulip, afterwards Columbine, Madame Torning; Bean Blossom, Queen of the Fairies, Madame Carandini. After which, the celebrated Jim Brown will (for the first time in this colony), assisted by the talented Four Feet High, go through the AMERICAN GRECIAN STATUES, which will comprise THE FIGHTING GLADIATORS. A Dance, by Mr. Chambers. To conclude with the admired Drama, called HOME AGAIN; or, THE LIEUTENANT'S DAUGHTERS, Lieutenant Leslie, R.N., Mr. Griffiths; Ben Bradshaw, Mr. J. Howson; Alice Leslie and Sophy Leslie, Mesdames O'Flaherty and Stirling.

Geelong Advertiser (Vic)
18 Jan. 1845, 3.

Sydney Morning Herald
29 Dec. 1845, 2.

- 1845: Albert Theatre, Geelong (Vic); 21 Jan. [benefit]
- **Cond.** Mr Richards.
- **Cast** incl. **Immortals** - Mrs Murray (Urania, Queen of the Stars), Mrs Richards (Iris, a spirit), Miss Jones (Asteria, a spirit), Mr Capper (Rockalda, an evil Spirit of the Deep); **Mortals** - Mr Serle (Gregory Graball, a wealthy speculator just arrived), Mr Boyd (Luckless Looseball, a tax-ridden settler), Mr Jacobs (Araminta Shortweight, widow of a wealthy store-keeper), Mrs Boyd (Flora, her daughter).
- Presented as the concluding part of a programme put for a benefit to Mr Boyd.

Geelong Advertiser (Vic) 18 Jan. 1845, 3. **Advert.**
Webby, Elizabeth. "Harlequin in Van Diemen's Land." *Script and Print* 33. 1-4 (2009), 177-78. [sighted 28/10/2015]

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK; OR, HARLEQUIN OGRE: [pantomime] Lib/Mus. [n/e]

A pantomime with transformation scene and harlequinade. The *Sydney Morning Herald* records: "The house was crowded to extremes and the pantomime was received with shouts of laughter, especially the local scenes" (27 Dec. 1845, 2).

An advertisement for the production placed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (25 Dec. 1845, 1) indicates that the music was by Mr Gibbs. It is unclear if this refers to composition, music direction, or both.

1845: Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 26 Dec. 1845 - 1 Jan. 1846 [4 performances]

- **Cast** incl. Mrs Zimenes (Jack/Harlequin), Andrew Torning (Squallosuatto/Pantoloon), Mr Fitzgerald (Dollomopsey/Clown), Master Chambers (Tittle'emtwisto), Mr Douglass (Tulip/Columbine), Madame Torning (Bean Blossom), Madame Carandini (Queen of the Fairies).

"Editorial." *Sydney Morning Herald* 29 Dec. 1845, 2.

HARLEQUIN AND THE FAIRY OF THE CORAL CAVE; OR, THE MAGIC PANCAKE: [pantomime] Lib/Mus. [n/e]

Paris the Shepherd and Lilian are in love but her father Geoffrey Gorgemup forbids their union. When the Fairy Queen of the Coral Cave discovers Paris lamenting his wretched fate, she presents him with a magic rose, which has the power to open prison gates and make the possessor both invisible and invulnerable. Meanwhile Geoffrey Gorgemup orders his wife to make him a magic pancake. As his family sits down for dinner the pancake flies up the chimney and Paris and Lilian are accused of stealing it. He is prevented from punishing Paris, however, when the Fairy Queen appears from the fire. The mortal characters are subsequently transformed into the harlequinade characters

Elizabeth Webby notes that while the pantomime appears to have contained no local references in the three opening scenes, after the mortal characters have undergone their transformations the four most important scenes of the harlequinade feature well-known local buildings and make reference to recent political events (178).

The scenes as advertised for the Hobart season are: 1. The Coral Cave; 2. The Cottage of Geoffrey Gorgemup; 3. The Fairy Bower; 4. The Great Kitchen; 5. Duke the Painter's Shop; 6. Seal's Fancy Snuff Shop; 7. Alcock's Pawnbroker; 8. Interior of the Caledonian; 9. Macgregor's Tailor; 10. Tegg's Stationer; 11. Entrance to the Coral Cave; 12. The Interior of a Coral Grotto.

The Launceston production comprised the following scenes: 1. The Coral Cave or the Magic Lake; 2. The Cottage of Geoffrey Gorgemup; 3. A Forest; 4. A Street (the flight and pursuit); 5. Interior of Nathan's the celebrated dealer of Elizabeth Street; 6. Exterior of Benjamin's Emporium, Charles Street; 7. Exterior of the Horse and Jockey (Radfords), York Street; 8. Duchene's the Pawnbroker, Charles Street; 9. A Street; 10. The Coral Cave.

NB: There is not believed to have been any relationship between this production and *The Fairy of the Coral Cave; Or, Harlequin and the Magic Pancake* (staged at the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney in 1842).

1845: Royal Victoria Theatre, Hobart Town; 26, 29 Dec. 1845, 5 Jan. 1846

- **Prod.** Mrs Clarke; **S Mngr.** Mr Young; **S Art.** Mr Duke; **Orch Ldr.** H. Howson.

- **Cast** incl. Mr Smith (Geoffrey Gorgemup), Mr Young, Mr Falchon (Dame Gorgemup), Mr Stubbs, Mr Newson (Paris), Mr Turner (Bashelheadebus Gorgemup), Mr Kenny (Squinteintibus Gorgemup), Mrs Young (Lilian), Mrs Clarke (Good Friday, the Fairy Queen); Fairies of the Coral Cave - Mrs Jones (Shrove Tuesday), Miss Thomson (Easter Monday), Miss Clarke (Ash Wednesday);

- **Harlequinade:** Mr Smith (Clown), Mr Stubbs (Pantoloon), Mr Newson (Harlequin), Mrs Young (Columbine).

- Other characters included Elves, Spirits, Naiades, Imps, Gnomes.

- NB: The advertised cast list does not make it clear which Mortal characters were played by Messrs. Young and Stubbs.

- The spelling of Geoffrey Gorgemup's given name was changed to "Geoffrey" for the Launceston production.

1846: Olympic Theatre, Launceston (Tas); 25, 29 May

- **Dir/Mngr.** Mr Newson; **S Art.** T. Flowers; **Orch Ldr.** H. Howson.

- **Cast** incl. Mr Osborne (Geoffrey Gorgemup), Mr Richards (Dame Gorgemup), Mons. Risley (Paris), Mr Donnelly (Corrolinas Gorgemup), Mr Wilson (Squintum Gorgemup), Madame Le Jar (Lilian), Miss West (Fairy Queen);

- **Harlequinade:** Mr McKenzie (Clown), Madame Le Jar (Columbine)

- Presented as part of the celebrations for Queen Victoria's birthday.

- Although first staged in Hobart Town the previous year, this production was nevertheless billed as a "new pantomime."

Colonial Times (Hobart Town) 23 Dec. 1845, 2. Advert.

Cornwall Chronicle (Launceston, Tas) 23 May 1846, 394. Advert.

Webby, Elizabeth. "Harlequin in Van Diemen's Land." *Script and Print* 33. 1-4 (2009), 178-180. [sighted 28/10/2015]

Colonial Times (Hobart Town) 23 Dec. 1845, 2.

ROYAL VICTORIA THEATRE,
CAMPBELL-STREET.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1845.

BOXING NIGHT.

FIRST NIGHT OF THE NEW
CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME.

MRS. CLARKE begs most respectfully to inform her Friends and Patrons, that in accordance with the old English custom, the Evening's Entertainments will commence with an entirely New and Grand Christmas Pantomime, entitled

HARLEQUIN,
AND THE
FAIRY OF THE CORAL CAVE;
OR,
THE MAGIC PANCAKE.

THE THREE WISHES; OR, THE QUEEN OF THE FAIRY LAKE AND THE PALACE OF THE BLAZING SUN: [pantomime] Lib/Mus. [n/e]

"Somewhat unusually [*The Three Wishes*] featured Shakespeare's Titania and Puck as it's immortals, while the opening crisis did not revolve around thwarted young love but that other staple of the nineteenth-century theatre, the oppressive landlord' (Webby, 180). The storyline concerns Robin Homespun (played by George Coppin) who is about to be sent to prison by his landlord, Sir Rupert Brushwood Breakcover). Puck then appears on his mission to restore his favour with Queen Titania and intercedes by transforming the mortals into the traditional characters of the harlequinade. One of the scenes in this section of the pantomime sees Clown and Pantaloon apply for a job at the very theatre the production was being staged in.

THREE WISHES ;
OR, THE
QUEEN OF THE FAIRY LAKE AND THE PALACE OF THE BLAZING SUN!!!
SCENE 1.—FAIRY LAKE.
INTERVIEW BETWEEN TITANIA AND PUCK—TITANIA'S RAGE!
PUCK'S INTERMISSION.
TERMS OF AGREEMENT FOR PUCK TO BE RESTORED TO FAVOUR!
DEPARTURE OF PUCK UPON HIS MISSION!
SCENE 2.—EXTERIOR OF ROBIN'S COTTAGE.
SCENE 3.—INTERIOR OF ROBIN'S COTTAGE.
GRAND TRANSFORMATION.
SCENE 4.—INTERIOR OF A BARBER'S SHOP.
DOUBLE IRISH NO. • • • HARLEQUINA & COLUMBINE.
SCENE 5.—VIEW OF THE THEATRE & ST. JOHN-STREET.
SCENE PAS SEUL, BY COLUMBINE.
COMIC DANCE BY CLOWN.
SCENE 6.—WELL-KNOWN SHOP IN CHARLES-STREET.
SCENE 7.—INTERIOR OF THE NECROMANCER'S COOK-SHOP.
PAS SEUL • • • MISS J. THOMPSON.
SCENE 8.—FRONT STREET.
SCENE 9.—VIEW OF THE RIVER TAMAR.
SCENE 10.—FRONT WOOD.
SCENE 11.—PALACE OF THE BLAZING SUN.
GRAND FINALE.
The whole to conclude with a series of
DISSOLVING VIEWS,

The scenes advertised for the Launceston production were: 1. Fairy Lake (interview between Titania and Puck – Titania's rage; Departure of Puck on his mission); 2. Exterior of Robin's Cottage; 3. Interior of Robin's Cottage - Grand Transformation; 4. Interior of a Barber's Shop; 5. View of the Theatre and St John-Street; 6. Well-known shop in Charles-Street; 7. Interior of the Necromancer's Cook-shop; 8. Front Street; 9. View of the River Tamar; 10. Front Wood; 11. Palace of the Blazing Sun – Grand Finale

1845: The Theatre, Launceston (Tas); 22, 26, 28 Mar.

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

- **Cast** incl. Mrs Thompson (Titania, Queen of the Fairy Lake), Mrs Rogers (Puck), Mr Rogers (Sir Robert Brushwood Breakcover), George Coppin (Robin Homespun), Mrs Coppin (Dorcas, Robin's wife), Mrs Hambleton (Peggy);

- **Harlequinade:** Eliza Thomson (Columbine), Jane Thompson (Harlequin), Mr Young (Clown); Mr Opie (Pantaloon).

1846: New Queen's Theatre, Adelaide; 26, 28, 30 Dec., 4, 7 Jan. 1847

- **Prod/Mngr.** George Coppin; **Dir.** Henry Deering.

- **Cast** incl. Mrs Deering (Columbine), Mr Jacobs, Mr Rogers, Henry Deering.

Cornwall Chronicle (Launceston, Tas)
29 Mar. 1845, 3.

- In its 29 December 1846 edition the *South Australian Register* records that the pantomime reflected "great credit on Mr Deering by whom it was got up" (6). In the following issue, however, the "getting up" of the pantomime was attributed to both Deering and Rogers (3).

Cornwall Chronicle (Launceston, Tas) 22 Mar. 1845, 3. **Advert.**

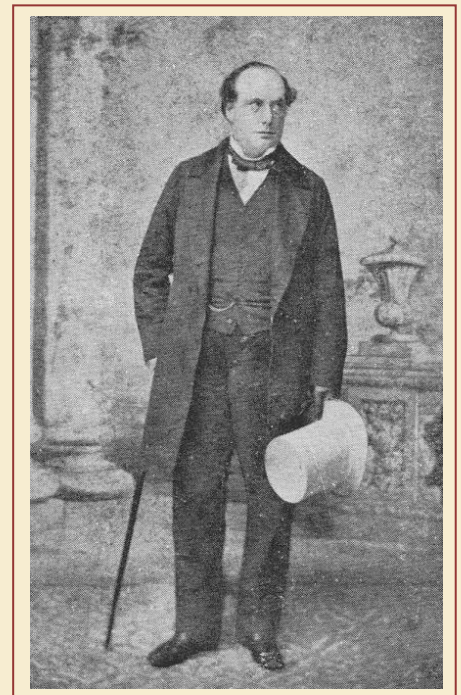
Editorial. *South Australian Register* (Adelaide) 30 Dec. 1846, 3.

"Theatre." *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston, Tas) 26 Mar. 1845, 3.

"Theatre." *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston, Tas) 29 Mar. 1845, 3.

"Theatre, The." *Launceston Advertiser* (Launceston, Tas) 28 Mar. 1845, 2.

Webby, Elizabeth. "Harlequin in Van Diemen's Land." *Script and Print* 33. 1-4 (2009), 180. [sighted 28/10/2015]



George Coppin
Nellie Stewart. *My Life's Story* (1923), 21.

Last updated: 5/01/2021

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

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