

# 1865

The comedietta, *The Belle of Brisbane; Or, The Lady of Queensland* (dedicated to Lady Bowen) which contained at least one song, "Sweet Spirit Hear My Prayer," was staged at Mason's Concert Hall, Brisbane, on 21 March. The author, Meyer David Isaacs, had previously written and produced several dramas and comediettas, including *We Don't Take Boarders* (Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, 12 Nov. 1856), *Slander* (Prince of Wales Theatre, Sydney 14 Jan. 1857), *Brightshade and Nightshade* (Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, 4 June 1858), *Poor Indeed* (Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, 12-14 May, 1859) and *Wealth and Worth* (same theatre, July 1860). *The Belle of Brisbane* was the first of his works, however, to be staged in Queensland. Despite quite a deal of advanced publicity and high expectations, the production failed to satisfy the *Brisbane Courier* critic whose review indicates that not only was the humour flat, but that the drama might as well have been called "the Belle of Munster, Woogeroo, or anywhere else for all the difference" it made (22 Mar. 1865, 3).

## MASSANIELLO; OR, THE SHE-MUTE, THE EMEUTE, OR THE PILCHARDS IN THE BAY OF NAPLES: [burlesque] Txt Adapt. W.M. Akhurst; Mus. [n/e]

Adapted from Auber's opera *Massaniello; Ou, La Muette de Portici* (*The Mute Girl of Portici*), and written expressly for the Christy Minstrels troupe, the second 1865 Melbourne season was advertised in the *Argus* as a 'new local burlesque' done in blackface (23 Oct. 1865, 5). An earlier review in the same paper also records: "The affair as was to be anticipated, overflows with absurdities. It is chiefly remarkable for local allusions, most of which are political, and are received with applause or disapproval, just as they are acceptable or unwelcome to the audience. The visit of the pilchards to Hobson's Bay is made a prominent feature, and the sudden disappearance of the fish is ascribed to the Ministry" (9 Oct. 1865, 5).

The opera (and burlesque version) is loosely based on the historical uprising of Neapolitan fisherman, Massaniello, who led the 1647 revolt against the Spanish rule over Naples.

In relation to the music the *Argus* notes: "Some of the finest airs from the opera are introduced, including the ballad, 'Sister Dear', which [was] well sing by Mr Herberte" (9 Oct. 1865, 5).

NB: The *Calendar of Plays Produced in Australia: 1850-1869* treats the Melbourne and Sydney productions as separate versions, proposing that the later was derived from the first by an anonymous adapter (33). However, a review of the Sydney debut records that it was "from the same pen as the burlesque of *Faust*" (W.M. Akhurst), which was also staged by the Christy Minstrels in Melbourne and Sydney (see *Sydney Morning Herald* 30 Dec. 1865, 6)

**1865:** Royal Haymarket Theatre, Melbourne; 7-19, 31 Oct., 1, 3-4 Nov. [13 pfms]

- **Lse.** W. Hoskins; **Dir.** J.W. Smith.

- **Troupe:** Christy's Minstrels (Mngr. J.W. Smith).

- **Cast** incl. Miss Stanley, Miss Howard, E. Harvey, W.P. Collins, H. Herberte, C.W. Rayner, Nicholas La Feuillade, H. Stanley, Joe Brown.

**1865:** Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 26 Dec. 1865 - 6 Jan. 1866

- **Mngr/Lse.** Raphael Tolano; **S Art.** J.R. Setright.

- **Troupe:** Christy's Minstrels.

- **Cast** incl. Miss Williams, Miss Howard, Miss Bella, Miss Stella, Miss Mella, E. Harvey, W.P. Collins, Signor Abecco, C.W. Raynor, Charles Harvey, Joe Brown.

Covell, Roger. "Weakening Force of Origin: Reputations and Allegiances of Musicians in Colonial Australia, The." *Australian Studies* 2 (2010).

"Editorial." *Argus* (Melbourne) 9 Oct. 1865, 5. [see also advert. 9 Oct. 1865, 8]

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

"Victoria Theatre, The." *Sydney Morning Herald* 30 Dec. 1865, 6.

## FAUST, MD; OR, THE DOCTOR, THE DAMSEL, THE DEMON, AND THE DRAGOON: [burlesque] Txt Adapt.

W.M. Akhurst; Mus. [n/e]

Adapted from Gounod's opera *Faust*, (1859), itself loosely based on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* (1808), *Faust M.D.* was advertised in the *Argus* as a 'new local burlesque opera' (21 October 1865, 8). A review in the same paper records, 'The trifle is quite equal to the same author's *Massaniello*, which has only just been withdrawn, and the local jokes are perhaps better' (23 Oct. 1865, 5), it was advertised in the *Argus* as a "new local burlesque opera" (n. pag.).

**1865:** Royal Haymarket Theatre, Melbourne; 21-30 Oct.

- **Lse.** W. Hoskins; **Dir.** J.W. Smith.

- **Troupe:** Christy's Minstrels (Mngr. J.W. Smith).

- **Cast** incl. W.P. Collins, H. Herberte, C.W. Rayner, Nicholas La Feuillade, Joe Brown, J.W. Smith, P.M. Clarke (from Astley's).

**1865:** Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 12-23 Dec.

- **Mngr/Lse.** Raphael Tolano; **M Arr.** W.P. Collins; **S Mngr.** Joe Brown.

- **Troupe:** Christy's Minstrels.

*Argus* (Melbourne) 23 Oct. 1865, 8.

**ROYAL HAYMARKET THEATRE.**  
Sole Lessee, W. Hoskins.  
Director, J. W. Smith.  
**LAST WEEK BUT ONE**  
Of the  
**ORIGINAL CHRISTY'S MINSTRELS**  
in Australia.  
**GREAT SUCCESS OF FAUST, M.D.**  
The local sayings, puns, wit, and frolics, converted  
the house with laughter and evoked the heaviest  
merriment. It will be repeated every night this  
week.  
**NEW ROUTINE OF BUSINESS,**  
Embracing  
Cere's of Minstrelsy from the Repertoire of the  
Christy's.  
**COLLINS,**  
Black Marguerite.  
**JOE BROWN,**  
Dark Mept'stophiles.  
**E. HARVEY,**  
The Coloured Faust.  
With  
**RAYNER,**  
As Valentine.  
And  
**HERBERTE,**  
As Liebel.  
**THE IRISH LILT.**  
**THE PHOTOGRAPH. HOP LIGHT LOO.**  
To conclude with the Highly Successful Burlesque of  
**F A U S T, M.D.;**  
Or,  
The Doctor, the Damsel, the Demon, and the Dragoon.  
Introducing Selections from the Opera.  
Doors open at half-past 7, commence at 8 precisely.  
Dress-circle, 5s.; stalls, 3s.; upper circle, 2s.  
Pit, One Shilling.  
Children in Arms not Admitted.

- Cast incl. Miss Williams, E. Harvey, Joe Brown, Signor Abecco, C.W. Raynor, W.P. Collins.

"Editorial." *Argus* (Melbourne) 23 Oct. 1865, 5. [see also advert - 21 Oct. 1865, 8]

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

## OBERON; OR, THE KNIGHT AND THE CALIPH'S DAUGHTER: [burlesque] Txt Adapt. G.B.

Barton; Mus. [n/e]

# David Mason, 1865

Also known as *Oberon; Or, The King of the Fairies*, this burlesque was localised and adapted by George Barton from Weber's opera *Oberon*, and produced expressly for Lady Don. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reports that while the premiere was not up to expectations "its repetition [the following night] evinced some improvement." The critic goes on to further note: "[It] follows closely the incidents of Weber's opera... [but] there are several clever passages running through the dialogue - as indeed it is impossible there should not be with the author's brilliant abilities in burlesque writing, as well as other branches of literature" (23 Dec. 1865, 7). The story as played out in Weber's opera is as follows:

Act 1. The story is set in motion when Oberon and Titania argue about whether men or women are more faithful. Oberon then sends Puck to search for a couple which is faithful to each other in every way. Pucks tells Oberon about Sir Huon of Bordaux who has been ordered to Bagdad to kill the man who sits on the left of Harun al Rashid and claim his daughter, Rezia, for a wife. Huon is shown a vision of Rezia by Oberon and given a magic horn (which can summon elves) and a magic goblet (which fills itself when it touches a person's lips).

Act 2. Rezia, who is being forced to marry Prince Babekan, is rescued by Huon and the pair escape with the help of the magic horn. Oberon takes them to the harbour of Ascalon but Puck raises spirits to wreck his ship. While Huon seeks help, Rezia sees a ship and thinking it is her rescuer's goes aboard only to find herself kidnapped by pirates and taken to be sold as a slave to the Emir of Tunis.

Act 3. Huon disguises himself as a gardener in his attempt to rescue Rezia. In the meantime the faithfulness of both is tempted by others, but rejected. When Huon is captured he and Reiza are sentenced to be burned at the stake. The horn is used to summon Oberon, who arrives with Titania in time to save them.

1865: Prince of Wales Opera House, Sydney; 19-23 Dec.

- Dir. Mrs Charles Poole; M Arr. Mr Eigenschenck and Mr Salamon; S Mngr. C.W. Barry.

- Cast incl. Lady Emily Don (Oberon, a monarch retired from business), Miss Corcoran, Mrs Charles Poole, Harriet Gordon [Hydes] (Reiza, the Caliph's daughter), J. Raynor (Sir Huon of Bordeaux), W. Andrews, Mr Welsh.

- Supporting characters incl. Mermaids, Fairies, Pirates and Courtiers

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

"Public Amusements: Prince of Wales Theatre." *Sydney Morning Herald* 23 Dec. 1865, 7.

## HARLEQUIN BARON MUNCHAUSEN; OR, THE GREEN WIZARD AND THE FAIRY OF THE SILVER LAKE: [pantomime] Lib Adapt. W. M. Akhurst; Mus. [n/e]

The original source for this production was indicated in the *Argus* as being "from the original produced at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden" (6). A pantomime titled *Harlequin Baron Munchausen* by Nelson Lee Jnr is also known to have been produced at Astley's (London) in 1858.

The pantomime begins with a scene set in a romantic fairy dell, wherein reside Fairy Pariboo and Queen Aurora, before shifting to a castellated ruin where the audience is introduced to Lady Ethelinda (daughter of Baron Puffendorf) who is in the power of Afullicoldandbyteyyurnoso, the Wizard of the Green Isle. She is eventually saved by the swashbuckling Baron Munchausen, but not before he undergoes many adventures and impossible situations, including: securing his horse to the church steeple, pulling a wolf inside out, being projected out of a mortar from Tower Hill to Bermondsey, and visiting the moon.

The critic writing for *Bell's Life in Victoria* notes in relation to the music that Akhurst had 'introduced some parodies and reminiscences of songs and dances brought into favour by "Arrah-na-Pogue" and the Christy Minstrels' (6 Jan.1866, 2).

1865: Royal Haymarket Theatre, Melbourne; 26 Dec. 1865 - 20 Jan. 1866 [26 pfms]

- Dir/Lse. William Hoskins; S Art. William Pitt and Charles Fry; Cost. Mr Hancock; Chor. J.H. Flexmore.

**ROYAL HAYMARKET THEATRE**  
Sole Lessee, Mr. Hoskins.  
**BOXING NIGHT.**  
**GIANTIC COMBINATION**  
For the  
**CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.**  
Mr. Hoskins has been fortunate enough to obtain from the author the Old English Pantomime, originally produced at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, of  
**BARON MUNCHAUSEN.**  
With Models of the Masks, all the Original Music, together with the Comic Scenes, &c, the whole of which has been revised, partly re-written, and arranged for the Haymarket Theatre, by W. M. Akhurst, Esq.  
In order to do justice to this great  
**PANTOMIME,**  
Mr. Hoskins has re-engaged those Wonderful Pantomimic Artists,  
**THE LENTON TROUPE,**  
Being positively their Last Engagement in Australia.  
Also,  
Miss **EMMA HOWSON,**  
Miss **CLELIA HOWSON,**  
Mr. **FRANK HOWSON,**  
Messrs. **JOE CHAMBERS and FLEXMORE,**  
Together with the  
**NATHAN FAMILY.**  
Miss **JULIANA NATHAN,**  
Miss **BELINA NATHAN,**  
Miss **MARIAN NATHAN,**  
Master **LOUIS NATHAN,**  
And  
Master **EDWARD NATHAN.**  
All these artists will appear in the opening and the comic scenes of the pantomime, forming a combination and attraction hitherto unapproached in a Melbourne theatre.

*Argus* (Melbourne) 26 Dec. 1865, 8.

- **Cast** incl. Emma Howson (Lady Ethelinda), Richard Stewart (Baron Munchausen), Frank Howson (The Green Wizard), Clelia Howson (Queen Aurora), Docy Stewart (Fairy Pariboo), Julia Nathan (Columbine), Marian Nathan (Puck), Miss Sutherland, Miss Mansfield, Miss Smith, Miss Hope, Miss Kenneth, Miss L. Hope, Maggie Stewart, Miss Bray, Miss Planche, Miss Howard, Miss Ainsworth, Miss Keeley, Miss Fitzgerald, Miss O'Donnell, Miss J. Sutherland, Miss Dyball, Miss Cushla, Miss Stephens, Miss Birtell, Miss Seabridge, Miss S. Lloyd, Miss S. Powell, Adelaide Stoneham, Joe Chambers, J.H. Flexmore, Masters Louis and Edward Nathan (Pantaloon and Harlequin), Leon Samwells, Tom, John and George Ridgway, Mr Stoneham, Mr Hall, E. Holloway, Master Kelly (Clown), H. Nelson, Herbert Skelton, Master Frank, The Lenton Troupe.
- The harlequinade was performed by the Lenton Troupe and the Nathan Troupe (most of which comprised juveniles), along with J.H. Flexmore, J. Chambers, Mr Stoneham and Adelaide Stoneham.

"Boxing Day: Haymarket, The." *Argus* (Melbourne) 26 Dec. 1865, 6.

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

"Pantomime at the Haymarket." *Age* (Melbourne) 27 Dec. 1865, 6.

"Theatrical: The Metropolitan Stage, The." *Bell's Life in Victoria and Sporting Chronicle* (Melbourne) 6 Jan. 1866, 2.

## **HARLEQUIN AND THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT; OR, WILL O' THE WISP AND OLD MOTHER HUBBARD AND HER WONDERFUL DOG:** [pantomime] **Lib Adapt.**

[n/e]; **Add Txt.** Leopold Family; **Mus.** J.H. Tully (Eng); **Add Mus.** C.E. Horne

Based largely on E. L. Blanchard's original 'grotesque burlesque,' *Harlequin and the House that Jack Built; Or, Old Mother Hubbard and her Wonderful Dog* (1861) this adaptation contained local references and topical allusions from an unknown local author (and possibly the director C.W. Barry). The comic scenes and harlequinade were written and produced by the Leopold Family.

The story begins in Old Mother Hubbard's cottage where a party is held, and many remarkable pranks are played out by her comical dog. Things turn dark, however, when the villainous Squire arrives with a proclamation stating that there will be a witch burning. When he threatens Old Mother Hubbard with cremation she takes flight on her magic broomstick to the Witches Glen and Waterfall (Sc. 2), where the audience is introduced to Will O' the Wisp. Meanwhile back at the Village Green and Roadside Alehouse (Sc. 3), the Squire celebrates his birthday amidst Morris dancing and village revels. When Jack, all tattered and torn, arrives it becomes clear that he is treated quite differently by the squire in relation to his other tenants. Old Mother Hubbard's dog notices this and lets his mistress know when she returns. In the following scene (The Cage on the Common at Sunset) a dreamer and walker appear in a vision. Pleasure and the division of labour are played out, leading to a scene in which 100 Lilliputian labourers help Jack build his house. When the Squire goes hunting at twilight near a Frog Pool in the Marshes (Sc. 5) he is observed and tested by Will O' the Wisp. He not only loses both his way and temper, but is also tricked by Old Mother Hubbard's dog into making his way into Squash Hollow Swamp (Sc. 6) where he comes to grief. The arrival of Will O' the Wisp and her fairies sees Jack recognised as the rightful heir. They all celebrate as they make their way to Will O' the Wisp's Home beneath the waterfall (Sc. 7), which leads to the Grand Transformation Scene (The Glittering Glade of Ferns dissolving into the Silvery Alcoves and Dazzling Temple of Delight).

The harlequinade was played out in several locations: A Railway Lodging House (which included the arrival of 'Australian toys'); Jack-in-the –Green (set in London); a Model Farm Yard (which included a rifle shooting competition was staged between Victoria and New South Wales); Sydney Heads (which sees Clown and Pantaloon become yachting men, while Harlequin and Columbine fall into the jaws of lawyers – i.e. sharks); and Doctor's Shop and Florists.

Of the numerous songs and dances incorporated into the production by J.H. Tully (late of the Drury lane Theatre, London), the two featured highlights were: "Through the Wood," composed by C.E. Horne, and "Will O' the Wisp," composed by J.H. Tully (both sung by Lady Don).

**1865:** Prince of Wales Opera House, Sydney; 25 Dec. 1865 -13 Jan. 1866

- **Prod.** Mrs Charles Poole; **Dir/S Mngr.** C.W. Barry; **S Art.** W. Wilson; **M Dir/Arr.** J.H. Tully (UK); **Chor.** Henry Leopold; **Cost.** Mr Ford; **Dir of Comic Sc.** George, Tom and Henry Leopold.

- **Cast** incl. Lady Don (Will O' the Wisp), Harriet Gordon [Hydes] (Jack), W. Andrews (Old Mother Hubbard), Mr McLean (her dog), Mrs Andrews (Rosetta, the Maiden all Forlorn), Mr Miran (The Squire), Mr Hasker (Dame Wiggins), Mr Welsh (Dame Trot), Master Sidney (The Wonderful Cat), Master Sageaninguns (The Great Goose), Mr Bumble (Parish beadle), Mr Wolfe (a constable), Mr Tomlinson (a constable), F. Ede (Old Gripe, the steward), Mr Tanner (Old Scratch, his clerk); **Harlequinade:** Henry Leopold (Harlequin), Frau. Fannie (Columbine), George Leopold (Pantaloon), Tom Leopold (Clown, with songs and dances), Master Albert Leopold (Clown).

"Prince of Wales Theatre." *Sydney Morning Herald* 30 Dec. 1865, 6. [see also advert. 25 Dec. 1865, 8]

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