

# 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.

During its first full year in Australia **Rainer's Original Ethiopian Serenaders** (aka Rainer's Serenaders) introduced at least three new burlesques, in addition to reviving *Italian Opera* and *The Post Office Nigger* from the previous year. The latter burlesque was staged, however, under a new title, *The Nigger Postman*.

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

**Add Music** [n/e]

Adapted by William 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."

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* (Melbourne) 11 Jan. 1853, 8.

**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.

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

*Argus* (Melbourne) 11 Jan. 1853, 8. **Advert.**

## 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.

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

*Argus* (Melbourne) 4 Feb. 1853, 8. **Advert.**

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. 4832  
*Courier* (Hobart) 9 Nov. 1853, 3.

**OH, HUSH, YOU NIGGER, HUSH; OR, THE RIVAL BOOTBLACKS: [aka OH HUSH; OR, NEGRO ASSURANCE / HIGH LIFE BELOW THE STAIRS / NEGRO ASSURANCE; OR, HIGH LIFE BELOW THE STAIRS]** [burlesque minstrel

opera] Txt. Thomas D. Rice; Txt. Adapt. J.C. Rainer; Mus. [n/e

Identified as one of the company's "new pieces" for the Ethiopian Serenaders' 1853 Melbourne season, advertising in the *Courier* for that year's Hobart production indicates that the opera had been "previously performed in London by the renowned Jim Crow Rice for upwards of 200 nights." J.C. Rainer is identified as the arranger of one another of the Serenaders' burlesques, Italian Opera," and likely incorporated new material and topicalities into the Australian production.

The role of the "coquettish, fashionable, bustled, teasing, pleasing plague: in short a real young lady" was initially credited to Miss Lucy Long (otherwise minstrel comedian and female impersonator, J.M. Foans). This does not seem to have been the case for subsequent revivals, however.

Songs incorporated into the burlesque opera included: "Mamselle ge Mary" (Cuff and company), "Oh! Roley Poley" (Cuff and company), "Sam Johnson, why so solicitous" (Samuel and Cuff), "Day and Martin" (Cuff and company), Lubly Rosa, Sam now come to salute you wid his tum, tum, tum" (Samuel Johnson and Dinah Rose), [concerted trio] (Rose, Sam and Cuff). J.M. Foans (as Dinah Rose) also presented "a favorite dance," while Frank Moran performed an original dance in character. The show ended with a Virginia Reel by all characters.

The Evening's Entertainments to conclude with, for the second time in the Colony, the celebrated Negro Opera of

**OH! HUSH!**

OR, NEGRO ASSURANCE.

Cuff, a boot-black	.. ..	MORAN.
Samuel Johnson, Esq., a Master boot-black	.. ..	WHITE.
Peter Williams	.. ..	BROWER.
Joah Siabee	.. ..	RAINER.
Tom Lincoln	.. ..	BRYANT.

.. .. } Journeymen Boot-blacks

Miss Dinah Rose, a very coquettish young lady, very pretty, very bustling, and found of having "two strings to her bow" .. .. J. M. FOANS.

MUSIC IN THE OPERA.

Song and Chorus—Mamselle ge Mary	.. ..	CUFF and COMPANY
Song and Chorus—Oh! Roley Poley	.. ..	CUFF and COMPANY
Duett and Chorus—Sam Johnson why so solicitous	.. ..	SAMUEL and CUFF
Song and Chorus—Day and Martin	.. ..	CUFF and COMPANY
Serenading Duett { "Lubly Rosa, Sam now come To salute you wid his tum, tum, tum,"	.. ..	SAM JOHNSON and DINAH ROSE, ROSE, SAM & CUFF
Concerted Trio	.. ..	.. ..

During the course of the Opera

**A FAVOURITE DANCE,**

MISS DINAH ROSE.

**An Original Danbe, in character, MORAN.**

*Hobarton Guardian, or, True Friend of Tasmania* (Hobart)  
13 Apr. 1853, 2.

1853: Mechanics' Hall, Melbourne; 8-9 Feb.

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

- Troupe: Rainer's Original Ethiopian Serenaders.<sup>1</sup>

- Cast incl. M.W. White (Samuel Johnson, Esq., a master bootblack), Frank Moran (Gumbo Cuff, a bootblack), J.C. Rainer (Peter Williams, a journeyman shoeblack), T.P. Brower (John Silbec, a journeyman shoeblack), C.A. [Neil] Bryant (Tom Bryant, a journeyman shoeblack), Lucy Long [aka J.M. Foans] (Miss Dinah Rose).

- The 9 February performance was staged as part of a "joint" benefit to Miss Lucy Long and J.M. Foans,

1853: Theatre Royal, Hobart; 8, 13, 16, 18, 25 Apr. [as *Oh, Hush; Or, Negro Assurance*]

- Cast and production as for previous Melbourne production.

1853: Cornwall Assembly Rooms, Launceston (Tas); 4 May [as *Oh, Hush; Or, Negro Assurance*]

- Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production.

1853: Noble's Circus, top end of Bourke Street (east), Melbourne; 18-20, 27 May [as *Oh, Hush; Or, Negro Assurance*]

- Cast and production as for previous Melbourne production.

1853: Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 27 June.

[as *Oh, Hush; Or, Negro Assurance*]

- Cast as for debut Melbourne production.

- Presented during Mr Evans Sloper's Grand Concert. Rainer's Serenaders were playing a season at the Royal Hotel.<sup>2</sup>

1853: Royal Hotel, Sydney; 28, 30 June • 1, 4, 5-6, 18-19 July • 25 Aug. [as *Oh, Hush; Or, Negro Assurance*]

- Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production.

1853: Rowe's American Circus, cnr of Stephen<sup>3</sup> and Lonesdale streets, Melbourne; 24, 26-27 Sept. [as *Oh, Hush; Or, Negro Assurance*]

- Cast as for debut Melbourne production.

- The Serenaders were engaged by Rowe as the feature entertainment at his venue between 12 and 8 October.

1853: Music Hall, Criterion Hall, Melbourne; 26 Nov. [as *Oh, Hush; Or, Negro Assurance*]

- Cast as for debut Melbourne production.

1854: Music Hall, Criterion Hall, Melbourne; 17 Feb., 1 Mar. [as *Oh, Hush*]

- Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production.

1853: Rowe's American Circus, cnr of Stephen and Lonesdale streets, Melbourne; 27 May Sept. [as *Oh, Hush*]

- Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production.

- This was a one-off performance at the American Circus by Rainer's Serenaders. The troupe was playing a season at the Salle de Valentino at that time.

1854: Salle De Valentino, Melbourne; 5 June [as *Oh, Hush*]

- Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production.

1854: Royal Victoria Theatre, Hobart; 5, 7 Aug. [as *Oh, Hush*] • 28 Aug. [as *High Life Below the Stairs*]

- Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production.

- The 28 August performance was given as part of a benefit to Frank Moran.

<sup>1</sup> J.C. Rainer's touring party was known by several similar names for most of its Australian tour - the two most common being **Rainer's Original Ethiopian Serenaders** and **Rainer's Serenaders**. Please be aware that the troupe's billing in any particular city or town could sometimes use both names interchangeably. In order to both avoid confusion and maintain consistency, the AVTA's policy is to retain the name it first became by - Rainer's Original Ethiopian Serenaders.

<sup>2</sup> Among the other artists and practitioners engaged for Sloper's concert were Frank and John Howson.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Street is now known as Exhibition Street.



- 1854:** Astley's Amphitheatre, Spring Street, Melbourne; 30 Dec. [as *Oh, Hush*]  
 - Cast as for debut Melbourne production. This performance was part of a benefit programme given to Rainer's Serenaders.
- 1855:** Sandridge Theatre, Melbourne; <sup>4</sup> 13 Jan.  
 - Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production.
- 1855:** Royal Victoria Theatre, Adelaide; 12 Feb.  
 - Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production.
- 1855:** Victoria Theatre, Adelaide; 5 Mar. [as *Negro Assurance; or, High Life Below the Stairs*]  
 - Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production.  
 - This performance was given as part of a benefit to C.A. Bryant.

*Courier* (Hobart) 7 Apr. 1853, 3. **Advert.**

The Evening's Entertainment to conclude with a  
 Negro Opera, entitled  
**HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS,**  
 First time during the season. During the Opera a  
**FANCY DANCE BY MISS DINAH ROSE,**  
**PLANTATION JIG BY CUFF,**  
**AND THE VIRGINIAN REEL**  
 By all the Characters.

Gumbo Cuff, a Bootblack .....	Moran
Samuel Johnson, Esq., a Master Bootblack	White.
Peter Williams	Brower.
Josh Silabee	} Journeymen Bootblacks
Tom Lincoln	
Miss Dinah Rose, a very coquettish young Lady, very pretty, very bustling, and very fond of having two strings to her bow .....	Bryant.
	Feans.

**MUSIC IN THE OPERA.**  
 Song and Chorus—"Mamselle ge Mary".....  
 Cuff and Company.  
 Song and Chorus—"Oh, Roley, Roley" ... Cuff and  
 Company.  
 Duet and Chorus—Sam Johnson, why so solicitous?  
 ...Johnson and Cuff.  
 Song and Chorus—"Day and Martin" ... Cuff and  
 Company.  
 Serenading Duet—"Lubly Rosa, Sam now come to  
 salute you with his tum, tum, tum".....  
 Sam Johnson and Dinah Rose.

*Courier* (Hobart) 26 Aug. 1854, 3.

The Evening's Entertainment to conclude with the  
 Celebrated and Side-splitting Burlesque Negro Opera  
 entitled,  
**NEGRO ASSURANCE,**  
**OR, HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS.**  
 Gumbo Cuff, a bootblack ..... Moran  
 Samuel Johnson, a master bootblack..... Brower  
 Peter Williams } journeymen bootblacks } Rainer  
 Josh Silabee } Nash  
 Tom Lincoln } Bryant.  
 Miss Dinah Rose, a very coquettish young lady, very  
 pretty, very bustling, and very fond of having two  
 strings to her bow..... Feans.  
**MUSIC IN THE OPERA:—**  
 Song and Chorus—Mamselle ge Mary.. Cuff and Company.  
 Song and Chorus—Oh, Roley, Roley.. Cuff and Company.  
 Duet and Chorus—Sam Johnson, why so solicitous?..  
 Johnson and Cuff.  
 Song and Chorus—Day and Martin.. Cuff and Company.  
 Serenading Duet—  
 "Lubly Rosa, Sam now come,  
 To salute you wid his tum, tum, tum"  
 Sam Johnson and Dinah Rose.  
 Concerted Trio—Coal Black Rose.. Rose Sam, and Cuff.

*Adelaide Times* 3 Mar. 1855, 1.

**THE ROSE OF CAROLINA; OR, THE LOST CHILD OF ST. DOMINGO:** [aka **THE LOST CHILD OF ST. DOMINGO / THE LOST CHILD / BO-HEA-MAN'S GAL** [musical entertainment] **Txt Arr.** M.W. White (possibly after Balfe and Bunn); **Mus.** [n/e]

Described as "the celebrated Negro Opera containing parodies on the most popular operas of the day" (*Geelong Advertiser*, 5), the work was initially billed as *The Rose of Caroline; Or, The Lost Child of St. Domingo*. It was later known simply as *The Lost Child of St. Domingo*.

The songs introduced during the first Australian production are recorded in the *Argus* (12 Feb, 1853, 8) as: Oh! Listen to My Song" (serenade - Count), "Lubly Rosa, Let Me In" (duet - Count and Rosa), "Whose Dat Knocking at the Door (O'Lantern)", "Do Not Go Away" (trio - Count, O'Lantern and Rosa), "I Had a Flower" (pathetic - Cline), Scena - As I View Now (Cline), "When de Isle of St. Domingo" (Count), "See, Sir, See" (recitative - Clime and company), "In the Isle of St. Domingo" (solo - Count), "Den You'll Remember Me" (duet - Rosa and Count), Grand Finale - Rosa's Wedding Day (Company), "Hurrah! Hurrah! The Day Has Come, Miss Rosa's to be Married; And Glad We Are, and Dat's a Fact, for Very Long She's Tarried" (Grand Chorus).

Advertising published in Hobart in July 1854 records a smaller musical programme: "Oh! Listen to My Song, My Love" (serenade - Count), "Lubly Rosa, Let Me In" (duet - Count and Rosa), "Whose Dat Knocking at the Door (O'Lantern)", "O Don't Go Away" (trio - Count, O'Lantern and Rosa), "I Had a Flower" (pathetic - Cline), "See, Sir, See" (recitative - Clime and company), "In the Isle of St. Domingo" (solo - Count), "You'll Remember Me" (duet - Rosa and Count), "Hurrah! Hurrah! The Day Has Come" (Grand Chorus).

The O'Lantern character is identified as being Jack or Jim at various times.

Two productions with the same characters, character descriptives and musical programme were staged by Rainer's Serenaders during benefits in 1854 under the title *Bo-Hea-Man's Gal*. It is reasonable to suspect that these were essentially *The Rose of Carolina* under a new name. The first of these performances was in Melbourne (May) and the second in Hobart (Aug.). of the Melbourne show the *Argus* theatre critic writes: Melbourne production records: "The company respectfully announce to the ladies and gentlemen of Melbourne and its vicinity that they have engaged the Queen's Theatre... for the purpose of performing one of their Negro Operas" (6). The burlesque is said to have contained "some of the most popular melodies of the day, including a choice selection of quartette, songs etc from the company's store of Ethiopian melodies interspersed with witticisms, conundrums and Negro sayings." Given the similarities in title and narrative with Balfe and Bunn's *The Bohemian Girl*, it is also reasonable to suspect that *The Rose of Carolina* and *Bo-Hea-Man's Gal* were burlesques of that opera.

[NB: "Lubly Rosa, Let Me In" was also performed in the burlesque *Black Rivals* (as "Lubly Fanny, Let Me In"). See below]

<sup>4</sup> Sandridge was the name of the locality at the head of Hobsons Bay where colonial passengers disembarked to journey across the sandy land between there and the Yarra River, Melbourne. It became a borough in 1863, and in 1884 changed its name to Port Melbourne.

- 1853:** Mechanic's Institute, Melbourne; 12 Feb. [as *The Rose of Carolina*]  
 - **Dir/Prod/M Dir.** J.C. Rainer.  
 - **Troupe:** Rainer's Serenaders.  
 - **Cast** incl. J.M. Foans (Miss Rosa Tiel, a young lady with a very good opinion of herself), M.W. White (Count Domingo, in love with Rosa), F. Moran (Jim Tarbell, a sailor and rival of the Count), J.C. Rainer (Old Clem Cline, a wanderer in search of his daughter), T.P. Bower (Jack O'Lantern, a meddler in every body's way [sic]), C.A. [Neil] Bryant (Uncle Solomon, a professional darkie).
- 1853:** Theatre Royal, Hobart; 20 Apr. [as *The Rose of Carolina*]  
 - Cast as for previous Melbourne production. Staged as part of a "joint" benefit to J.M. Foans and Miss Lucy Long.
- 1853:** Cornwall Assembly Rooms, Launceston; 5-6 May [as *The Rose of Carolina*]  
 - Cast and production as for debut Melbourne season.  
 - The 6 May performance was in place of the advertised *Italian Opera*.
- 1853:** Noble's Circus, top end of Bourke Street (east), Melbourne; 21, 23 28 May [as *The Rose of Carolina*]  
 - Cast as for debut Melbourne production.
- 1853:** Rowe's American Circus, cnr of Stephen and Lonesdale streets, Melbourne; 1 Oct. [as *The Rose of Carolina*]  
 - Cast as for debut Melbourne production.  
 - The Serenaders were engaged by Rowe as the feature entertainment at his venue between 12 September and 8 October
- 1854:** Music Hall, Criterion Hotel, Melbourne; ca. 20-22 Feb.  
 - Cast as for debut Melbourne production.  
 - The 22 February performance was part of a benefit program given to C.A. Bryant under the patronage of the Mayor of Melbourne, Mr John Hodgson.
- 1854:** Queen's Theatre, Melbourne; 20 May [as *Bo-Hea-Man's Gal*]  
 - Cast as for debut Melbourne production.
- 1854:** Music Hall, Geelong Hotel; 27 June  
 - Cast and production for debut Melbourne production.
- 1854:** Music Hall, Geelong Hotel; 29, 31 July  
 - Cast and production for debut Melbourne production.

**MUSIC** Hall, Criterion Hotel.—Wednes-  
 day evening, 22nd inst., 1854. Fare  
 well benefit of C. A. Bryant, and last night but  
 three of Rainer's Serenaders.  
 Under the patronage of John Hodgson, Esq.,  
 Mayor of Melbourne, who has signified his  
 intention of being present.  
 The Serenaders, in white faces.  
 The Serenaders, in black faces.  
 New songs, choruses, solos, &c. Last  
 night of the burlesque opera, entitled *The  
 Lost Child of St. Domingo*.

*Argus* (Melbourne) 22 Feb. 1854, 3.

The Evening's Entertainment to conclude  
 with a Negro Opera entitled  
**BO-HEA-MAN'S GAL!**  
 A Burlesque on Balfe's Celebrated Opera  
**THE BOHEMIAN GIRL.**  
 Count Domingo.....White.  
 Jack O'Lantern (a meddler in everybody's way).....Brower  
 Clem Cline (a wanderer in search of his child).....Rainer  
 Uncle Solomon (a professional darkey).....Bryant.  
 Rosa Tiel (a young lady with a very good opinion of  
 herself).....Foans.  
*Music in the Opera.*  
 Serenade—Oh, listen to my song.....The Count.  
 Duet—Lubly Rosa, let me in.....Count and Rosa.  
 Who's dat knocking at the door?...Jack O'Lantern.  
 Trio Do not go away.....Count Domingo, Jack  
 O'Lantern, and Rosa Tiel.  
 Pathetic—I had a sorrow.....Old Clem Cline.  
 Recitative—'ee, sir, see...Clem Cline and Company.  
 Solo In the Isle of St. Domingo.....Count.  
 Duo—You'll remember me.....Rosa Tiel and Count.  
 Grand Chorus - Hurrah, hurrah, the day has come....  
 Company.

*Courier* (Hobart) 30 Aug. 1854, 2

- 1854:** Royal Victoria Theatre, Hobart; 31 Aug. [as *Bo-Hea-Man's Gal*]  
 - Cast and production as for debut Melbourne production
- 1855:** Victoria Theatre, Adelaide; 6, 13 Feb. [as *The Lost Child*]  
 - Cast and production mostly as for debut Melbourne production.  
 - A review of the production in the *Adelaide Times* records that J.P. Nash also appeared in the production as Solomon's Uncle. Formerly of the New York Serenaders, Nash was then acting as the Serenaders' agent.
- 1855:** Prince of Wales Theatre, Sydney; 3 Sept.  
 - Cast and production for previous Melbourne production.<sup>5</sup>
- Argus* (Melbourne) 12 Feb. 1853, 8. *Advert.*  
*Argus* (Melbourne) 22 Feb. 1854, 3. *Advert.*  
*Argus* (Melbourne) 20 May 1854, 6. *Advert.*  
*Colonial Times* (Hobart) 29 July 1854, 3. *Advert.*  
*Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer* (Vic) 27 June 1854, 5. *Advert.*  
*"Rainer's Serenaders."* *Adelaide Times* 7 Feb. 1855, 3.

## 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* (Melbourne) 22 Feb. 1853, 8. *Advert.*

<sup>5</sup> *The Rose of Carolina*: see also *Bo-Hea-Man's Gal* (1854). Both productions bear striking similarities in terms of characters and songs. They also share similarities with the Balfe/Bunn opera, *The Bohemian Girl*.



**ROGERS WORRIED:** [musical farce] **Text 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; Thaddeus, 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 F. 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.

Advanced publicity in the *Sydney Morning Herald* described *Rogers Worried* as a "most personal extravaganza" and notes that it was to be staged for the "first time in this colony at the Royal Victoria Theatre (24 Mar.). The following week the farce was further described as an "interlude" (30 Mar.). Kelly et al note, too, that it was adapted from the Mark Lemon and B.M. Webster farce *Keeley Worried*. Presented as the second half of the programme, following *The Bohemian Girl* (opera) and *The Devil and D Faustus* (drama), among other productions, 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.** [left] [see also adverts. 30 Mar., 1 Apr. and 19 Apr. 1853]

**THE NIGGER IN THE BAG; OR, THE RIVAL DARKIES:** [burlesque] **Text/Mus.** [n/e]

Seemingly staged as a sequel to *The Post Office Niggers* (1852), the story underpinning this burlesque also features the characters (Gumbo) Cuff, Charles Squash and Fanny Bloomer.

All advertising up until the end of 1854 identifies the participants as Foans and Moran (as Fanny and Cuff), or Foans, Moran and White (as Charles). Advertising for the production staged at Astley's, Melbourne in December 1854 records other characters as being played by Rainer, Brower, and Bryant. It is unclear whether they were added later or were always involved but uncredited.

**1853:** Mechanics' Institute, Melbourne; 10 Jan.

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

- **Troupe:** Rainer's Original Ethiopian Serenaders

- **Cast:** J.M. Foans (Fanny Bloomer), M.W. White (Charles Squash, in love with Fanny), F. Moran (Cuff, the rival of Squash).

**1853:** Theatre Royal, Hobart; 5, 9, 11 Apr.

- **Cast** and production as for debut Melbourne season

**1853:** Cornwall Assembly Rooms, Launceston; 3 May

- **Cast** and production as for debut Melbourne season

**1853:** Noble's Circus, Top of Great Bourke Street, Melbourne; 14, 16 May

- **Cast** and production as for debut Melbourne season.

**1853:** Royal Hotel, Sydney; 23-25 June • 7-8 July

- **Cast** and production as for debut Melbourne season

**1853:** Rowe's American Circus, Melbourne; 20 Sept.

- **Cast** as for debut Melbourne season.

- The Serenaders were engaged by Rowe as the feature entertainment at his venue between 12 September and 8 October

**1854:** Royal Victoria Theatre, Hobart; 10 Aug.

- **Cast** as for debut Melbourne season.

**1854:** Astley's Amphitheatre, Spring Street, Melbourne; 23 Dec.

- **Cast:** F. Moran (Cuff), T.P. Brower (Bob Williams), C.A. Bryant (Dick May),<sup>6</sup> J.C. Rainer (Bill Johnson), J.M. Foans (Fanny).

**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).

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

This "entirely new and original farce" was written by William 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

<sup>6</sup> C.A. Bryant was also known as Neil Bryant around this period.

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.

**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. pages.

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

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

**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.

**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 William 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."

- 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 debut 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 debut Adelaide season.
- 1853:** Mechanics Institute, Hobart; 24 Nov.  
- Cast and production as for debut Adelaide season.
- 1854:** Rowe's American Circus, Melbourne; 23 Mar.  
- Cast and production as for debut Adelaide season.
- 1854:** Mechanics Institute, Melbourne; 25 May  
- Cast and production as for debut Adelaide season.
- 1854:** Rowe's American Circus, Melbourne; 30 Sept.  
- Cast and production as for debut Adelaide season.
- 1855:** Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney; 1 May  
- Cast and production as for debut Adelaide season.
- 1857:** Theatre Royal, Melbourne; 17 Jan. [benefit]  
- Cast and production as for debut Adelaide season.
- 1859:** Princess's Theatre, Melbourne; 19 Feb.  
- Cast and production as for debut Adelaide season.
- 1859:** Prince of Wales Theatre, Sydney; 4 May  
- Cast and production as for debut Adelaide season.

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