

MINSTRELSY IN POST-CIVIL WAR NEW YORK, 1865-1870

By

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Music, The City University of New York

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Abstract

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By

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Blackface minstrelsy transformed the colonial, European-based theater culture, which had existed in America since the 1780s, into a true American popular genre. Minstrels integrated elements from European, African American, and Anglo-American musical and dramatic sources into a highly improvisational format in order to produce the minstrel show.¹

Bryant's Minstrels, Christy's Minstrels, and the San Francisco Minstrels—New York's most popular minstrel troupes—flourished by performing blackface and war time skits and songs, challenge dances, farces, burlesques of serious opera and theater, and by including acts such as instrumental virtuosi and brass bands. These minstrel troupes continued their success by adapting to the changing tastes of reconstruction era audiences.

My current research involves developing a chronology outlining minstrel activity in New York for the years 1865-1870. Advertisements and reviews of minstrel shows in New York newspapers serve as the primary source material. I will present data describing this activity during the period of study in the political and social context of the

¹ William J. Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and Antebellum American Popular Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 1-2.

time. Topics will include population shift and changing values, the demand for variety and cheap entertainment, new sources for show material, opportunities for new black and female performers, and programs performed.

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Introduction

Minstrelsy developed as popular entertainers' response to the ways working- and middle-class Americans transformed old cultural institutions to meet new cultural needs and desires. What began as a small part of a more formal theatrical show evolved into a complete evening of dance, music, and jokes performed in blackface. As the first theatrical genre that was popular throughout the United States, minstrelsy began the organized entertainment industry in America.¹

The development of minstrelsy as the first American theatrical form may be attributed to its ability to address the conflict between popular and elitist entertainment demands, to serve as a safety valve for working-class discontent, to respond to changing cultural needs, and to comment on local issues due to its flexible format and improvisatory nature.² The democratic nature of the American class structure and the possibility of mobility within that structure drove Americans to improve their lots in life. The minstrel clown, who represented African Americans served as a scapegoat for the fear of failure that inevitably accompanies a life devoted to perpetual improvement. Depicted as lazy, ignorant, hedonistic, and illiterate, his on-stage discomfort both imitated and mocked the feelings of the audience in their efforts to appear comfortable with and deserving of higher social standing. By laughing at the minstrel clown, audiences safely laughed at themselves and the stresses they faced every day.³

Americans responded to the War of 1812 with a renewed desire for political independence and cultural distinctiveness. Both the working class and middle class

¹ Robert Toll, *Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 3.

² Ibid., 4.

³ Gary D. Engle, ed., *This Grotesque Essence: Plays from the American Minstrel Stage* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), xxv-xxvi.

demanded political power and opportunities for economic and social mobility. Common people wanted to shape the country in their own collective image, while the privileged class sought to raise imported European culture to new heights of achievement in America. The minstrel show developed out of this conflict between elitist and popular demands.⁴

Americans sought entertainment that would reflect their experiences, lives, and beliefs—their pursuit of the American dream. For many, the blackface mask served as a highly effective vehicle for the expression of these desires. Under the cover of the cork mask, performers could safely comment on local and contemporary issues and criticize widely held conservative beliefs while maintaining the social status quo. The disguise allowed lower- and middle-class white performers to validate themselves by satirizing upper-class, majority values (prejudice against blacks and later, immigrants) while simultaneously reinforcing those beliefs.⁵

The introduction of this dissertation reviews the origins of blackface minstrelsy, present scholarship, and the research methodology employed for this study. Chapter one comprises the birth of popular blackface performance in the Northeast and New York City and a description of antebellum minstrelsy, and the social forces, such as nativism, at work during the 1850s. The chapter concludes with minstrelsy during the Civil War and the effects of the war on America and the entertainment industry.

Chapters two through six include chronologically arranged descriptions of the five theatrical seasons (fall 1865 through spring 1870) that are included in this study. In addition to descriptions of troupe activity and programs, each chapter presents the most

⁴ Toll, 3.

⁵ Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 152-153.

important aspects of its season. Chapter two (1865-66) includes the formation of the first all black (male) minstrel troupe, experimentation with the three-part show structure, aspects of minstrelsy of African derivation and the walkarounds of Dan Emmett, and parody of class and race conflict in afterpiece burlesques. Chapter three (1866-67) discusses the first female blackface performers since the end of the war, audience and repertoire, increased similarities between variety and minstrelsy, and description of minstrel bands. The subjects presented in chapter four (1867-68) include the results of the increasing presence of women and children in minstrel audiences, the end of the stock company, changes in repertoire, female impersonation, the first Offenbach burlesques, and other contemporary and local sources of burlesque. Chapter five (1868-69) describes programs that experiment with combinations of old and new, increasing troupe size and extravagance of production, and original light opera. Chapter six (1869-70) discusses the emergence of diverging troupe styles, changes in female impersonation, innovations in song and dance, and continuing experimentation with the third parts of shows.

Origins and the Rise of the Banjo

Blackface minstrelsy and all of the later American popular forms that developed from the genre resulted from the combination of African and Anglo musical elements that began blending as soon as African slaves boarded ships manned by white sailors. The sailors and slaves danced, sang, and played music on board ships in order to pass the time during their long and dangerous journey from West Africa to the Americas. On American soil, the intercultural exchange continued on Southern plantations between slaves and slave owners and later between white and black musicians on the river routes.

No better example of the African/Anglo combination may be seen than the four instruments used by the Virginia Minstrels: the banjo, tambourine, bones, and fiddle. African slaves contributed the banjo, tambourine, and bones, and immigrants from the British Isles (especially the Irish) brought the fourth instrument of this group—the Celtic fiddle—to America.⁶

Slave owners took great pains to wipe out the cultural identity of Africans once they arrived in America in an effort to integrate them into the slavery system. Many material aspects of African culture such as weaving, wood-carving, and iron-working were squashed, but nonmaterial aspects such as music survived.⁷ The slave uprising known as the Stono Insurrection in South Carolina in 1739 changed the course of African American and African/Anglo music making. The blacks who took part in this violent uprising used drums during their attempt to escape bondage, and the subsequent Slave Laws of 1740 banned certain aspects of African musical practices, such as “beating drums, blowing horns, or the like, which might on occasion be used to arouse slaves to insurrectionary activity,” in an effort to prevent another revolt. Slaves substituted instruments such as bone clappers, which work like castanets, jawbones, scrap iron, hand clapping, and footwork, which was comprised of heel and toe beats, for the outlawed drums.⁸ Forbidding the playing of drums paved the way for the banjo’s rise to prominence in African American and white Southern popular genres.

Cecilia Conway provides much valuable information about the early history of the banjo in her *African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia*. For slaves, the banjo provided a

⁶ Engle, xxiv.

⁷ Cecilia Conway, *African Banjo Echoes in Appalachia: A Study of Folk Traditions* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 160.

⁸ Maria Hannah Winter, “Juba and American Minstrelsy,” *Dance Index* 6, no. 2 (February 19, 1947): 39-40.

tangible link to Africa and its music. The American banjo and its predecessor, the West Indies' and the Jamaican pre-banjos, come from the same protobanjo—an African gourd instrument called a *ngoni* or *bania*—which is still played in the Savannah region today. Trees are scarce in the African Savannah, so gourds, or calabashes, still serve as the main material for these instruments. The ovoid-shaped gourd sound chamber, which was the main part of traditional African construction, was integral to instruments that were made in the West Indies during the early 1700s. A long, thin, wooden neck was attached to a gourd, which was strung with four strings—three long and one short, thick bass string.⁹

The banjo became well known in the Southeast by 1810, although it may not have found popularity until later with contemporary Southern whites, who described its sound as rude. Fear of slave uprisings led plantation owners to ban African drums, but the quieter banjo escaped legal action. Early American banjos were constructed of gourds, or in a few cases, wood, and were covered with skin. They had between one and six strings, which were made of gut, vine, horse hair, and other materials that were raised above the neck with a bridge. By the mid 1850s wire-wound strings were sometimes used. Minstrel instruction books of this period recommend the use of violin gut strings and one silk string wound with silver wire, but some black players continued to use horse hair. The skin covering the sound chamber came from whatever animal was available: snake, sheep, lizard, calf, raccoon, groundhog, cat, or goat. Wooden banjos, which came into use during the 1850s, in contrast to the ovoid sound chamber of the gourd, had round sound chambers. These instruments were sometimes fashioned out of wooden cheese

⁹ Conway, 161-64, 171.

hoops. The gourd banjo disappeared soon after 1850, but the tradition of attaching the skin to the gourd with pegs was carried on with wooden rims.¹⁰

The cultural integration of black and white—the banjo and the fiddle of the Scots and Irish—symbolized the complex and more volatile military, legal, and political integration of blacks and whites in the United States. Nicholas Cresswell, in his *Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1744-77*, which documents his travels in the South, was probably the first to record the pairing of the instruments in America. Cresswell's report documents black musicians performing on banjo and fiddle at a Southern plantation barbecue, and however likely it is that Southern African American slaves were the first to combine the instruments, there is no evidence to support or refute the idea. However, it is probable that the combination began in the South.¹¹

The banjo began its stage life as a simple accompanying instrument to singing and dancing performances and became the most important element in the blackface minstrel band sound. The oldest and strongest tradition of black banjo playing began in the upland South because of the early arrival to and high concentration of African American slaves in that region. The route of dissemination then followed the main river routes of the Ohio, Cumberland, and Tennessee Rivers, and by 1798 blacks in Knoxville were playing it. The first white banjo players were Southern folk musicians that came out of the upland South during the 1820s. They learned the Negro song repertoire and banjo playing techniques from African Americans in Virginia and North Carolina, in particular. Prominent among these early white banjoists were the Sweeney brothers from Appomattox, Virginia and a man named Ferguson, from West Virginia. The Sweeney

¹⁰ Ibid., 116, 164, 170, 172-73.

¹¹ Ibid., 110, 118-19.

brothers and Ferguson played in the downstroking or thumping style of blacks in Virginia and the Piedmont area of North Carolina, who were the first transmitters of this style to whites. The apprenticeships of early white banjoists to black banjo teachers lasted for at least one year and demonstrate whites' genuine interest in black culture.¹²

Joel Walker Sweeney (1810-60), who was raised with African American slaves on his family's farm near the old Appomattox Court House in Virginia, is the most important of the early white banjoists. Sweeney's playing technique and improvisations drew on motifs from the repertoire of African American spirituals, work songs, and dance songs that he learned while growing up in Virginia. As a descendant of Irish immigrants and as a reputed banjo virtuoso, Sweeney was the embodiment of the Anglo-African combination that resulted in American popular music. Sweeney also may have invented the wooden rim banjo around 1840. He and drum maker William Boucher of Baltimore, Maryland, one of the first craftsmen to make quality banjos for professional musicians, manufactured wooden rim banjos, which, unlike earlier models, had skin covering both the front and back of the wooden hoop like a drum. Environmental factors may have done away with gourd banjos because gourds were not readily available in Northern urban areas and were also quite fragile.¹³

Northern musicians like Billy Whitlock (1813-78) and Daniel Decatur Emmett (1815-1904) learned to play the banjo from Sweeney and Ferguson, as well as from Southern blacks during the late 1830s. The first public performance of the banjo and fiddle combination, according to Whitlock, took place during 1840, when he, on banjo, and Dick Myers, on fiddle, played a benefit for themselves at a theater in Philadelphia.

¹² Ibid., 109, 118, 127-28, 132, 134-35.

¹³ Ibid., 108, 173-75.

By 1840 (and probably earlier), white solo banjoists emerged doing blackface numbers as entr' actes in circuses and variety shows, and the banjo became part of ensembles with fiddle, tambourine, and bones.¹⁴ Two or three years later this combination of instruments was common in popular blackface performance and was played by both black and white musicians. In the absence of drums, the musicians stamped their feet to keep time.¹⁵ Unlike the violin, which changed from country- to a legitimate style and was absorbed by the minstrel band, the role of the banjo in minstrelsy (like the tambourine and the bones) remained largely unchanged from the early 1840s through the late 1860s.

Blackface minstrelsy also combined musical, masking, and role inversion traditions, such as charivari, Lord of Misrule, callithumpians, mumming, and belsnickel, which were brought to the New World by European and African immigrants and were used to regulate behavior. European rituals of masked music and theater and influenced popular blackface performance in America.¹⁶

Current Scholarship

The works of Carl Wittke (1930), Robert Toll (1974), Eric Lott (1993), Dale Cockrell (1997), W. T. Lhamon (1998), and William Mahar (1999) provide different views of early blackface and antebellum minstrelsy. Carl Wittke, in his *Tambo and Bones: A History of the American Minstrel Stage*, focuses on descriptive information regarding the performance practices, songs, and skits of specific troupes rather than dealing with the social implications of minstrelsy. He ignores the impact of blackface

¹⁴ Ibid., 97-99, 102-03, 112, 132.

¹⁵ Winter, 48.

¹⁶ Cockrell, 33-37, 41, 44.

performance on racial stereotypes and the development of Anglo- and African American culture into mass entertainment.

Toll, Cockrell, Lhamon, and Mahar approach minstrelsy as an elusive historical form in need of dissection, explanation, and reconstruction. These authors seek to find the reasons for minstrelsy's success, its meanings for contemporary audiences, and what its legacy means for us today. Toll (1974, 27-28), Cockrell (1997, 34, 41), Lhamon (1998, 25,44), and Mahar (1999, 2) agree that 1820s and 1830s blackface acts developed out of Anglo and African musical and cultural practices and contemporary legitimate theater. These authors disagree as to the amount of influence that these sources had on minstrelsy.

Robert Toll, in *Blackening Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America*, writes that white folk elements contributed to blackface performance in his discussion of minstrelsy as "common man's culture." He believes that blackface acts in America developed out of the conflict between highbrow and lowbrow music, drama, and literature. Toll emphasizes population shift as one of the main contributors to the development of popular blackface by viewing it as a substitute for the folk culture left behind by rural immigrants moving to the cities.¹⁷ He contradicts his assertions about African influences on minstrelsy by denying the validity of these sources and by adopting the view that white racism was the overriding force at work in the genre.¹⁸ In his view white actors in blackface gave incorrect and negative caricatures of American blacks that appealed to their racist audiences.

¹⁷ Toll, 3-4.

¹⁸ Ibid., 26, 27, 33-34, 42-47, 50, 51.

Cockrell, in *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World*, agrees with Toll that early minstrelsy sprang out of the egalitarian Jacksonian era. According to Cockrell, African customs made their way into blackface performance during the 1820s and 1830s through Lord of Misrule inversion rituals.¹⁹ He believes that low-class urban whites and blacks lived and worked together in a somewhat integrated fashion during this period, and that blackface minstrelsy is the raucous product of these groups' European legitimate theatrical practices and folk traditions of masking and noise making found in American urban centers.

Lhamon, in *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop*, also views legitimate theater and folk elements as the main sources of popular blackface. He differs from Cockrell and Toll in that he places more importance on the contributions of African, rather than Anglo, culture to those pre-existing forms. He also characterizes blackface minstrelsy as the first Atlantic mass culture and the first mass youth culture.²⁰ Much of his work deals with the effects of minstrelsy on twentieth century entertainment.

William J. Mahar's *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and Antebellum American Popular Culture*, focuses on the shared humor, music, and beliefs of white and black Americans in the early nineteenth century. He reinterprets the early minstrel show as a product of Anglo-American, African, and European musical, literary, and dramatic influences. Unlike Toll, who views the African elements in popular blackface acts as the product of white fantasies, and Lhamon, who views popular blackface performance as cultural appropriation of African culture by whites, Cockrell and Mahar see it as the product of Anglo and African interaction, resulting from living

¹⁹ Cockrell, 34, 41.

²⁰ W. T. Lhamon, *Raising Cain: Blackface Performance from Jim Crow to Hip Hop* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 25, 44.

and working together since the colonization of America and the arrival of slaves in the seventeenth century.

Toll and Lhamon are most at odds over the accuracy of white use of African culture in blackface performance. Toll believes that the images of blacks in minstrelsy were shaped solely by white expectations. He believes that popular blackface contains no real elements of black culture. Lhamon contradicts this by writing that minstrelsy liberated black culture by allying it with blackface performance on the popular stage. Because of this alliance, black culture has had a great impact on Atlantic society, resulting in 1843 blackface minstrelsy and twentieth century forms such as vaudeville, sitcoms, rock 'n' roll, jazz, r & b, hip-hop, rap, American musical theater, the American novel, and the radio and film industries.²¹

Toll, Cockrell, Lhamon, and Mahar agree that minstrelsy adapted to the desires of its audience by adjusting the content of shows, and that mature blackface minstrel shows of the mid-1840s moved away from the wildly grotesque narrative style of the 1820s and 1830s to a family-oriented, refined pastiche approach to performance. Troupes during this period featured polished musical acts in an attempt to throw off blackface's low-class image. Lhamon believes that the change from a narrative to a pastiche form took place in New York at the Chatham Theatre (located on Chatham Street between James and Roosevelt Streets)²² where the "formal slipperiness" of the pastiche approach was harder to pin down and judge negatively than narrative drama. The "guerilla wit and moving targets" of pastiche minstrelsy during the mid-1840s fit the demands of the audiences of

²¹ Ibid., 56.

²² This is the second Chatham Theatre (1837-60), which was located on Chatham Street between James and Roosevelt Streets. The first Chatham Garden Theatre (1824-32) was located on Chatham Street off Pearl Street.

the time—young workers rebelling against authority and class structure and forms associated with that authority.²³

Toll, Cockrell, Lhamon, and Mahar examine issues of class and race in minstrelsy. They agree that minstrelsy up to the 1840s presented a variety of positive and negative images of free Northern blacks and Southern black slaves, and that the variety of characters was reduced to a few stereotypes during the 1840s and 1850s. Toll's view of popular blackface in the 1850s places race in the center of a minstrelsy construct, with white racism as the driving force behind its popularity. He writes that the pressures of a possible Union break up and countrywide abolition during the 1850s caused white audiences to see blacks as the source of their troubles and as scapegoats for their fears. Blackface minstrels thus gave audiences stereotyped characters and more negative and ridiculing portrayals of blacks to silence their fears.

Lhamon agrees with Toll that the social pressures of abolition and the possible disintegration of the Union during the years preceding the war led to the increased use of stereotyped black characters in minstrelsy. However, he goes on to write that the rapidly growing audience—in terms of size and demographics—also largely influenced the watering-down of minstrelsy's formerly diverse characters and democratic message.²⁴

For Cockrell the importance of race and class in minstrelsy is expressed through presentations of the “other.” Minstrelsy up to 1843 dealt with what was real to the audiences—noise, politics, class, gender, and race. The varied blackface characters (“others”) of the time supported this. After 1843 minstrelsy turned into representation of “others”—falsely presented characterizations of blacks.

²³ Lhamon, 32.

²⁴ Ibid., 45.

Lhamon agrees with Toll that blackface caricatures of African Americans almost always depicted them negatively. But to Lhamon, the degradation of blacks was not the point of the “Ethiopian” show. The resentment between the rich and poor classes and the inequity of wealth distribution was more important to minstrelsy than race and was one of the main sources that Rice drew upon for his Ethiopian operas of the 1830s.²⁵

Mahar writes that the increasing variety of minstrel acts throughout the 1850s—burlesques of Italian operas, acrobats, solo instrumentalists, female impersonators, and historical tableaux—is one reason for the reduction of blackface characters. In his view the study of these various acts is just as important to the study of minstrelsy as blacking up itself. Mahar sees the burlesque rhetoric of blackface comedians as being more about class struggle and parody of the American elite than race. In direct opposition to Toll, Mahar writes that minstrelsy found such widespread popularity in America and internationally because it was more than a racist form designed to ridicule African Americans. In fact, the blackface mask allowed whites a mechanism for self-criticism. Minstrelsy was a form that owed as much to burlesques and Anglo sources as to depictions of plantation life and mimicry of Northern blacks.

Toll, Mahar, Lhamon, and Cockrell also conflict as to the place and time period of the beginning of blackface performance and on the introduction of three-part shows. Toll states that popular blackface acts first began in the mid-west and the south, and then matured in northeastern cities.²⁶ Cockrell believes that George Washington Dixon’s performance of “Coal Black Rose” in New York in late July 1829 marks the beginning of the “myth” of blackface minstrelsy and thus the genre itself. He concedes, however, that

²⁵ Ibid., 94, 159, 152.

²⁶ Toll, 32.

arguments may also be made for Albany in 1815 and T. D. Rice's first New York performance of "Jump Jim Crow" in 1832. Toll and Lhamon conflict with Mahar over the frequency of tripartite shows before the war. Toll writes that before the war the three-part show with a fully developed afterpiece was common. Lhamon writes that the three-part form was standardized by 1848.²⁷ Mahar writes that after 1853 the use of sketches and afterpieces increased, but that three-part shows were uncommon until after the war. He supports this claim with his extensive study of playbills of antebellum shows.

This Study

In this dissertation I describe how minstrelsy continued to flourish during the second half of the 1860s. I examine the types of entertainments performed, especially the importance of local and contemporary subjects, and how these songs and skits reflected the waves of change altering America during reconstruction and recovery. I show how minstrelsy adapted to the desires of Americans for escape and a return to a form of normalcy. My presentation of New York's minstrel activity during this half decade includes such topics as changing values, post-war stresses, the demand for cheap variety entertainment, sources of show material, nostalgia, and programs performed.

New York newspapers and journals serve as the primary source material for studying minstrel activity in New York from 1865 to 1870. I have compiled a chronology of minstrel activity based on my examination of advertisements and reviews of minstrel shows in daily editions of the *New York Herald*, the *New York Tribune*, the *New York Times*, the *New York Post*, and the *New York Clipper*. These periodicals vary greatly in the amount of information that they contain about minstrel shows. Of the white

²⁷ Lhamon, 32.

periodicals, the *New York Tribune* and the *New York Times* provide a few advertisements and reviews, and the *New York Post* contains almost none. The *New York Herald* (a daily newspaper) and the *New York Clipper* (a weekly theatrical journal) proved to be the most fruitful. Although the majority of reviews are anonymous, indications are sometimes given in the body of the *Clipper*'s "City Summary" section that this column was written by an author called "Our Jim." Most troupes advertised in both the *Herald* and the *Clipper*, and both periodicals reviewed both white and black minstrel troupes.

African American newspapers and periodicals of this time provide little information regarding contemporary theater. The black press, run by middle-class blacks and the black elite, frowned on all theater as a waste of time and money for industrious, respectable people. They believed that the expense and late hours involved in attending the theater would lead to intemperance. In 1829, *Freedom's Journal*²⁸ scorned theatrical entertainments as frivolous and trivial. *The Weekly Advocate* in 1837 called theater an evil and a vice. To further discourage theater going, *The Colored American*,²⁹ later in 1837, ran a series of articles by Boston clergymen on the evils of theater and the danger to the minds of children who attended theatrical amusements.³⁰

Black theater in New York began at the African Grove in 1821, at the corner of Bleecker and Mercer Streets,³¹ but black newspapers never ran advertisements, previews, or reviews of the African Grove or other black theaters. African American minstrels may

²⁸ Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 548-49. *Freedom's Journal*, edited by Samuel Cornish and John Russwurm, was published in New York from March 1827 through March 1829. It was the first black newspaper published in the United States.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 855. *The Colored American*, the successor to *Freedom's Journal*, was published in New York 1837-1841.

³⁰ Frankie Hutton, *The Early Black Press in America, 1827-1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 92.

³¹ Kenneth Jackson, ed., *Encyclopedia of New York City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 115. William A. Brown opened the African Grove in 1821.

have been the first black contributors to American theater, but the class-conscious and religiously conservative black press rejected theater in general and minstrelsy in particular because the depictions of blacks in minstrelsy as lazy and hedonistic did not correspond to the genteel image cultivated by the black bourgeoisie. Papers such as *The Ram's Horn*, first published in 1847 and edited by Frederick Douglass (1817-1895), the *Black Republican and Office-Holder's Journal* (first published in 1865), and Brooklyn's *Weekly Anglo-African*³² refused to run stories or advertisements about black theater and black or white minstrelsy. Ira Aldridge, a black actor of international acclaim, was the exception that proved the rule. Aldridge, who was famous for his performances of classic dramas, portrayed such a dignified image both on and off stage that he gained attention in the black press. Aldridge rose to fame in Europe in the 1850s and was most famous for his *Othello*.³³

I have examined reviews of legitimate theater and opera in New York as a way of establishing the connection between the repertoires of minstrel theaters and legitimate theater and opera. Determining the amount of burlesque material borrowed from serious opera and drama by minstrels makes up an important part of this study. Kelly and Leon's Minstrels' performances of the "Dr. of All-Can-Tear-Her," for example, which premiered in New York City on 16 October 1866, just days before Julius Eichberg's (1824-1893) comic opera, *Doctor of Alcantara* (1862), began its run on 19 October 1866 at the New York Theatre, is an example of this connection.³⁴

³² Duke University Library. The *Weekly Anglo-African* ran from 1859 until at least 1865.

³³ Hutton, 92-93.

³⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 28 (20 October 1866): 222. Julius Eichberg composed his opera, *Doctor of Alcantara*, in 1862.

The following issues make up the focus of my work: reception histories of troupes and shows in New York, minstrel burlesques of legitimate theater and opera performed in blackface or whiteface, important minstrel performers, types of acts and how they reflect the prevailing attitudes of society at large, the economic and social makeup of audiences and the issue of respectability, and the importance of and influence exerted by minstrel shows in the entertainment life of the city. I show how the social upheaval precipitated by the war altered the face of minstrelsy in terms of troupe organization, performers, types of acts performed, touring, audiences, and overall viability of the art form.

Bryants' Minstrels, Christy's Minstrels, the San Francisco Minstrels, Charley White's (Charles White 1821-91), and Kelly and Leon's Minstrels—New York's most popular minstrel troupes between 1865-1870—flourished by performing blackface skits, various song and dance acts, farces, ethnic satires, stump speeches on local subjects, instrumental solos, burlesques of opera and legitimate theater, and variety acts such as acrobatic and gymnastic feats. These troupes continued their success by constantly adapting to the changing tastes of reconstruction era audiences.

My approach to this study is both historical and analytical. I present new findings (about female and black performers, in particular) that describe the activities of and programs performed by minstrel troupes and variety troupes with Ethiopian corps during the period of study. I also show how much of the minstrel repertoire is related directly to and comments on contemporary news, famous people of the day, and majority values. Present minstrel scholarship deals mostly with antebellum minstrelsy and minstrelsy of

the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The new data presented in this study connects the scholarship of pre- and war-time minstrelsy to that of 1870s minstrelsy and variety.

Chapter One: New York and Early Minstrelsy

The history of blackface minstrelsy in New York is the history of the transformation of the colonial, European-based theater culture, which had existed in America since the 1780s, into a true American popular genre. This chapter presents the history of minstrelsy from its inception early in 1843 through the Civil War, as well as some of the important issues surrounding its origins. I also describe the activities and shows of the New York troupes and the state of theater in general during this period.

Troupes from the Northeast, who performed to all classes of American society, were the first to spread minstrelsy throughout the country as they toured America on steamboats and later by rail. Mark Twain (1835-1910) described traveling minstrel shows of the late 1840s that performed near his childhood Mississippi Valley home of Florida, Missouri.¹ Popular in both slave and free states, minstrelsy continued to draw large audiences throughout the mid-nineteenth century by adapting the content of shows to their locales and to the expectations of their patrons.²

The great success of minstrelsy throughout the country may be attributed to its wide variety of loosely related improvisatory entertainments and relatively low cost. Crude and rustic early blackface acts appealed to newly urban males, who made up the majority of early audiences. T. D. Rice, who reached the height of popularity in Five Points with his early blackface acts, noted in a letter to James Gordon Bennett, the owner and editor of the *New York Herald*, that his American audience was “unsophisticated.”³

¹ Engle, xix-xx.

² William J. Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and Antebellum Popular Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 1.

³ Cockrell, 67.

Immigration

New York City, the great beacon of American industry, trade, finance, and manufacturing, pulled the United States along the path of progress to greater power and prosperity during the first half of the nineteenth century. People flocked from other countries and the countryside to New York in search of jobs, drawn by the exciting whirlwind of life found there. The city's downtown landscape constantly changed in order to accommodate the growing population and northern expansion. Buildings were torn down and built up, and streets were rerouted. New city dwellers adapted to this harried lifestyle as a matter of survival. Living and working in a large city such as New York subjected people (especially poor immigrants and natives) to the constant pressures of crowds, unsanitary and cramped living conditions, crime, low pay, and a rushed daily pace. William Bobo's *Glimpses of New York* (1852) describes New York as well today as it did in 1852. Bobo wrote of "the throng upon the sidewalk" as "one grand kaleidoscope in perpetual motion."⁴

The growing size and ethnic diversity, especially after 1835, of the native-born and immigrant populations—Dutch, English, Irish, German, and French—created a fertile environment for culture and theater.⁵ Between 1820 and 1845 huge waves of 10,000 to 100,000 immigrants per year entered the United States. The largest surge—2.9 million immigrants—occurred between 1845 and 1854, 1.2 million of whom were "Black Irish" and one million German. Uneducated, impoverished, and disease-ridden Irish immigrants particularly troubled natives in seaboard cities such as New York and Boston

⁴ Burrows and Wallace, 692.

⁵ Ibid.

with their strange, new customs and Catholic religious practices.⁶ American commentary on the Irish character during the 1840s became increasingly negative and race-oriented. Native Americans (whites born in America) described “Irishism” as a state of depravity passed down hereditarily and linked it to a set of physical characteristics—low-browed and brutish looks and a simian posture. A *Harper’s Weekly* article in 1851 describes the “Celtic look” as a “small and upturned nose and black tint of skin.” The attitude toward Irishness was seen in jokes, political speeches, newspaper cartoons, police reports, and social policy guidelines.⁷ Though German immigrants were often educated and/or middle class, they had trouble gaining acceptance in America for three reasons: they were the first non-English-speaking immigrants to come to New York, German men and women drank large amounts of beer, and they violated native Anglo customs by presenting and attending musical entertainments on Sundays.⁸

Nativism, which began in the 1840s and flourished between 1852 and 1860, grew in response to massive Irish and German immigration and the powerful urban Democratic connections of these groups.⁹ Immigrants competed with native-borns for jobs and increased their political power beginning in the 1820s and 1830s, which led to the fall of old-guard politicians and turned the focus of Anglo distrust to the Roman Catholic Church. The nativist movement objected to immigration and the election or appointment

⁶ Robert Wernick, “The Rise and Fall of a Fervid Third Party,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 1996 (Accessed [3 April 2003]), <<http://www.smithsonianmag.si.edu/Smithsonian/issues96/nov96/knownothings.html>>. This article deals with Nativism in America during the 1850s.

⁷ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 48.

⁸ Christopher Bruhn, “Taking the Private Public: Amateur Music-Making and the Musical Audience in 1860s New York,” *American Music* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 273.

⁹ Douglas T. Miller, “Know-Nothing Party,” *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* (Accessed [23 June 2003]), <<http://gi.Grolier.com/presidents/aae/side/knownot.htm>>. Gabor S. Boritt, “Civil War,” *World Book Online Americas Edition* (Accessed [23 June 2003]), <<http://www.aolsvc.worldbook.aol.com>>.

of Roman Catholics and the foreign-born to official positions and charged Rome with attempting to subvert the United States through alcohol by refusing to support Temperance. Out of this political climate arose nativist societies such as the American Republican party (1842-1844),¹⁰ the Short Boys (founded 1853), and the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner (1849).¹¹

The secret nativist societies formed the American, or “Know-Nothing,” Party—a native, Protestant, non-Democratic organization—that was centralized in New York City in 1853.¹² They sought to increase the naturalization period from five to twenty-one years and won national prominence mostly because the Whigs and Democrats—the two main political parties in the early 1850s—were split over the slavery issue.¹³ In 1855 the nativist American Party reached the height of its power by winning control of the New York and Massachusetts state legislatures.¹⁴ Millard Fillmore, the American Party presidential candidate in the 1856 election, won twenty-one percent of the popular vote, but the party soon divided along regional Northern and Southern lines over slavery. By 1860 the American Party had all but vanished, most of its Northern members leaving to join the newly formed Republican Party.¹⁵

It is not a coincidence that many minstrels were Irish, also known as the “Black Irish” or “smoked Irish.” Native-born Americans viewed the Irish as barely higher in social standing than African Americans, and there were cases of Irish working for

¹⁰ The nativist American Republican party should not be confused with Lincoln’s Republican party of the late 1850s.

¹¹ Burrows and Wallace, 631-32, 828-29.

¹² “Whigs, Democrats, and ‘Know-Nothings.’” *From Revolution to Reconstruction*: outlines: American History (1994): Chapter 5 (Accessed [23 June 2003]), <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/H/1994/ch5_p7.htm>.

¹³ Gabor S. Boritt, “Civil War,” *World Book Online Americas Edition*. (Accessed [23 June 2003]), <<http://www.aolsvc.worldbook.aol.com/ar/?na/ar/co/ar117060.htm>>.

¹⁴ Wernick, “The Rise and Fall of a Fervid Third Party.”

¹⁵ Miller, “Know-Nothing Party.”

African Americans. For example, Irish immigrant Mary White worked as a housekeeper for Ann Francis—a Negro woman who kept a sailors’ boardinghouse at No. 94 Park Street in Five Points. Francis hired White in 1857 but soon fired her for the theft of a petticoat.¹⁶

The age of minstrelsy coincides with the age of problematic whiteness. Perceived “whiteness” was essential for upward social mobility in nineteenth-century America, and minstrelsy laid its claim to whiteness by appropriating certain contrasting racial traits of blackness—dark skin and dark, curly hair. The Irish in America fought against their image as wild Celtic tribesmen, naturally violent and uncivilized and considerably less white than their Anglo-Saxon conquerors. Irish immigrants took on a whiter racial identity by joining with white supremacists and nativists and adopting pro-slavery views. Irish actors used the blackface of minstrelsy as a vehicle for “whitening” themselves. By proving that they could artificially “darken” themselves beyond what nature had intended, Irish minstrels tried to demonstrate their own whiteness.¹⁷

Nativism in America changed how blacks were represented on the minstrel stage. Minstrelsy depended on various black character types throughout the 1840s: varied black common people, hunters, fishermen, young lovers, frontiersmen, riverboat men, and content husbands and wives. Pre-Civil War social pressures connected to the nativist movement throughout the 1850s caused characters to become fewer and more negatively stereotyped.¹⁸

¹⁶ Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The 19th-Century New York City Neighborhood That Invented Tap Dance, Stole Elections, and Became the World’s Most Notorious Slum* (New York: Plume, 2002), 219.

¹⁷ Jacobson, 13, 121, 48.

¹⁸ Cockrell, 66.

However, it is important to recognize that while wearing the blackface mask is an example of racial ridicule, it is also a sign of racial interest. Minstrels used blackface to mock their object of loathing—blacks—while simultaneously experiencing in a small way what it felt like to be black. Blackface minstrelsy is about caricature, but it is also about embracing black culture in a love/hate relationship.¹⁹

Blackface performance in New York

Blackface minstrelsy's first home in New York was the lower Manhattan neighborhood named Five Points for its intersection of Anthony, Orange, and Cross Streets. In the early 1700s the land that would become Five Points was a five-acre lake known as "the Collect." With Bunker Hill rising more than one hundred feet to the north-east, this area provided a bucolic picnic spot with breathtaking views of the growing city to the south and the wildlife that gathered at the lake. By the mid-1700s city sprawl had forced slaughterhouses to the area east of the lake to what is now Bayard Street.²⁰ Chemicals used by tanneries and run-off from the slaughterhouses contaminated the Collect so badly that in 1802 The Common Council ordered the earth from Bunker Hill to be used to fill in the putrid lake. By 1813 Bunker Hill had been flattened and the lake had been completely filled, thus literally laying the ground for Five Points. About half of the residents living in the two-and-a-half-story wooden buildings in this neighborhood worked as artisans—shoemakers, tailors, bakers, carpenters, and masons, and merchants, shopkeepers, and professionals also lived in the area. Journeymen and clerks often lived with artisans' families in the buildings where businesses operated.

¹⁹ Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 6.

²⁰ Anbinder, 14.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, distinctions between Five Points and other districts in New York quickly emerged. By 1825, twenty-five percent of the population of Five Points was immigrants—more than double the number in New York as a whole, and fifteen percent were African American—double the city average. Immigrants and blacks tended to be unskilled menial laborers, which accounts for the low per capita income of Five Points—forty percent below the city average.

Even so, Five Points of the 1820s was a far cry from the hell it would become within ten or fifteen years, when vice and crime, especially prostitution, became associated with the district. Brothels attracted a diverse range of men and women. Five Points' prostitutes were known for hanging out of brothel doorways and brazenly soliciting business.²¹ Robberies ranged from violent hit-and-run incidents to the nonviolent bumping technique used by pickpockets. Newspapers reported that thievery and crime were endemic to the neighborhood, and battery and rape of women also were common. Corrupt police often joined in the lawlessness by sometimes refusing to search for stolen property without a prepaid reward and by extorting protection money from Five Points' brothel keepers. New York men became policemen either through party loyalty or by bribing local officials at the customary twenty-five-dollar rate.²²

The arrest rate of the sixth ward was two to three times higher than most other wards in New York, and although relatively rare, murder resulting from love rivalries and alcohol did occur. The murder of children was rare, although abandoning children was common. Abandoned children either lived on the streets or were taken in by the various charitable homes in the neighborhood. Alcoholism, even in children, was rampant

²¹ Ibid., 15-16, 207.

²² Ibid., 219, 222, 228.

throughout the neighborhood. The Irish of Five Points suffered more from alcoholism than did the Germans, Polish Jews, and Italians.²³

The decline of Five Points during the 1820s can be linked directly to the emergence of mass production factories, the dilution of craft skill, the imposition of increased discipline in the workplace, and the growing stratification of the social order.²⁴ The handcrafted goods and small-scale businesses of Five Points were replaced by mass production, as well as in other parts of the country. “Shoemaking, for example, became concentrated in Massachusetts, where footwear could be shipped on the nation’s increasingly thorough network of roads, canals, rivers, and coastal waterways.”²⁵ As business eroded for independent master shoemakers in Five Points, they eventually found themselves without enough income to support their families and few or no work opportunities that would allow them to maintain their previous incomes. These changes caused New York trade neighborhoods where artisans lived and worked to disappear. For the first time sections of the city began to divide along commercial and residential lines, making Five Points one of the first residential areas in New York.²⁶

Theater in Five Points extended from the inside of halls to the street as an unavoidable part of everyday life. Vendors in Five Points’ streets peddled oysters, hot yams, freshly roasted peanuts, hot corn in season, and syrupy baked pears. *Punch and Judy* shows—possibly the first in America—took place on Five Points’ streets. Street performers also sang, swallowed swords, tumbled and juggled, spun plates, and ate live coals of fire. Street musicians were everywhere, including bagpipers dressed in kilts.

²³ Ibid., 229, 225, 232.

²⁴ Eric Foner, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 58.

²⁵ Anbinder, 17.

²⁶ Ibid., 17-18.

There was even “a dark-skinned Savonyard”²⁷ with an organ and a monkey, who would grind out ‘Moll Brooks,’ a Dutch waltz, and the ‘Fisher’s Hornpipe’ while his monkey in [a] red coat and hat collected money.”²⁸

The first blackface acts seen in New York took place at Bowery theaters in Five Points. Even the most destitute resident of Five Points could afford an occasional night out at one of the moderately priced theaters on Bowery or at the Chatham Street Theater (located a few blocks south of Bowery). The early blackface acts seen at Five Points’ theaters from the 1830s revolved around music and were performed in a narrative style. The acts emphasized saccharine love songs, sentimentality, and the joys and sorrows of slave life, all interspersed with instrumental numbers.²⁹ Audiences entered the Bowery Theatre with certain expectations of and preformed ideas about blackface because many of the working-class audience members had blacked-up themselves for callithumpian activities.

The Bowery’s upper galleries had rowdies, fancy men, working girls of poor reputation, and public prostitutes and their “lovyers.” Working-class men and women loved the raucous atmosphere. Audiences frequently interrupted actors on stage with comments about the plot. Actors expected this and responded after important lines, saying to the audience, “‘Is that so, boys?,’ or ‘Don’t you, boys?’” Outcries of approval followed each of these asides. It was in this rowdy, rough-and-tumble neighborhood that minstrelsy found its first home in New York.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid., 178. This is the correct spelling of Savonyard.

²⁸ Ibid., 177-78.

²⁹ Carl Wittke, *Tambo and Bones: A History of the American Minstrel Stage* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1930), 142.

³⁰ Anbinder, 188.

By the 1820s blackface song and dance routines depicting happy slaves became common as entr'actes and afterpieces in American theater, medicine shows, and traveling circuses.³¹ Blackface acts featuring the three important black characters of early minstrelsy—"Blue Dandy," "Jim Crow," and "Zip Coon"—took off in New York around the time of emancipation there in 1827.³² George Washington Dixon (1808-1861), in the 1820s, and Thomas Dartmouth Rice (1808-1860), more elaborately in the 1830s, performed their blackface acts as entr'actes inserted into melodramas. Dixon brought out the first song of the Negro dandy, "Long Tail Blue," in New York in 1827. This song describes a former slave who has left his rural past for the city, and is eager to share in the prosperity of citizenship. White society found Blue Dandy's freedom threatening to the status quo.³³ In 1828, at the Lafayette Theatre in New York, Dixon sang "Coal Black Rose" as part of a longer interlude that he called "Love in a Cloud."³⁴ Dixon and Rice used their characters as vehicles for their farce specialties,³⁵ while operating within the traditions of scripted English theater brought across the Atlantic one hundred years earlier.³⁶

Thomas D. "Daddy" Rice first came to fame in 1832. He brought blackface minstrelsy to a position of popularity in America and qualifies as America's first bona fide star.³⁷ Rice, a minor actor of European descent, born and trained in New York,

³¹ Engle, xvi.

³² Annemarie Bean, James Vernon Hatch, and Brooks McNamara, *Inside the Minstrel Mask: Readings in 19th-Century Blackface Minstrelsy* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University of New England for Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 260. Foner, *Politics and Ideology*, 28. Foner also gives this as the date for emancipation in New York.

³³ *Ibid.*, 258.

³⁴ Lhamon, 29.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁶ Mahar, 57.

³⁷ Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music: The New York Music Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong*. Vol. 3, *Repercussions 1857-1862* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 389-90.

specialized in one-man song and dance blackface acts. In his phenomenally popular “Jump Jim Crow” act, Rice sang his versions of African American folk songs learned during his earlier tours of the Ohio River Valley, and danced grotesque versions of reels and hoedowns. Rice supposedly got the idea for his act during an encounter with a crippled black stable boy in Louisville in the summer of 1830, who sang about a character named Jim Crow while dancing in an ungainly manner.³⁸

Rice’s “Jumping Jim Crow” step—a hitch-jump-step and wheeling movement—became popular in America and Europe.³⁹ The “jump” was a variation of the shuffle in which the feet stayed close to the ground and upper body movements dominated. This was a common tavern, dance hall, and brothel step for both blacks and whites.⁴⁰ In his characterizations of Jim Crow, Rice dressed in shabby clothes and performed this extravaganza dance to the tune called “Jim Crow.”⁴¹ Unlike Jim Crow, whose rags and hedonism fit the expectations of white audiences, Blue represented Northern black prosperity with his sophisticated style and confidence. Jim Crow symbolically brought down the upstart, Blue Dandy, from his refined ways, interest in women outside of his own race, and hopes of economic and social improvement.⁴²

Zip Coon, like Blue Dandy and Jim Crow, was first encountered in song. Either Dixon, on 19 June 1834 at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, or Bob Farrell, a

Rice’s obituary in *Dwight’s Journal of Music* on 29 September 1860 credited him with popularizing blackface acts but not with the conception of the form. Thomas H. Blakely, a comedian who sang “Coal Black Rose” at the Park Theatre in New York as early as 1828 (before Rice and Dixon), received credit for originating the popular blackface performance style.

³⁸ Engle, xvi.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, xvii.

⁴⁰ Cockrell, 87.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 55, 71.

⁴² Bean, 258.

Southern actor at the Bowery Theatre⁴³ in New York on 11 August 1834, composed and first sang “Zip Coon.” Blackface acts were popular at the Bowery Theatre (1826-1929), which specialized in shows of melodrama, pantomime, and spectacle. Working-class New Yorkers flocked to the Five Points’ Bowery Theatre, which the *New York Herald*⁴⁴ in 1836 called the “worst and wickedest” that was ever in New York.⁴⁵ Zip destroyed both Blue’s prosperity and the very idea of Blue. The Zip Coon character combined characteristics of Blue and Jim Crow into a mocking picture of a slave dressed in his master’s ill-fitting fancy clothes. Audiences in the 1830s accepted the negative images of African Americans found in Jim Crow and Zip Coon.⁴⁶ In later minstrelsy the Jim Crow character took on other names such as Cuff, Snowball, Jumbo, Juba, Sambo, and Pompey, but the character remained the same.⁴⁷ Rice changed the face of popular culture with his explosive act. Minstrelsy rocketed to popularity as rock ‘n’ roll would over a hundred years later.⁴⁸

Rice performed what he called Ethiopian operas, expansions of his “Jim Crow” song and dance act, in New York in the early 1830s. These pieces were actually variety show finales with more than one performer in song, dance, and slapstick tied together by a simple plot.⁴⁹ Among these playlets were *Life of Jim Crow*, *Bone Squash Diavolo*, *The*

⁴³ The Bowery Theatre (1826-1929) was located at 48 Bowery between Bayard and Canal Streets. This is not to be confused with the Bowery Amphitheatre, which was located at 37-39 Bowery between Bayard and Canal.

⁴⁴ The *New York Herald* ran daily from 1835-1924 in New York City.

⁴⁵ Anbinder, 188.

⁴⁶ Bean, 258, 267.

⁴⁷ Engle, xvi.

⁴⁸ Lhamon, 56.

⁴⁹ Engle, xvii.

Virginia Mummy, and Jim Crow in London—a reference to Rice’s successful “Jim Crow” performances in that city in 1836.⁵⁰

Blackface acts spread across America in the 1830s when racial tensions surged and improvements in transportation and printing increased dissemination possibilities. The rail boom, which began in August 1830 with the construction of Maryland’s Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) line, and canal construction, which improved water travel, enabled the spread of minstrelsy by allowing performers and goods to move faster and farther throughout the country.⁵¹ Blackface performers’ bawdy humor and comedic commentary on the times was their response to audiences’ need for release from competition for jobs, increasing industrial order, and the introduction of standardization and routine in the workplace.

During the 1830s New York became an agitation center for abolition, as well as a hotbed of racial conflict. The emancipation of New York City’s slaves in 1827, the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831, and the launching of Tappan’s abolitionist newspaper, *The Emancipator* in 1833, increased fear of miscegenation and competition for work among the white population. Many of New York’s white working-class immigrants, some of whom were Irish and Catholic, agreed that slavery was unjust but hated abolitionist leaders for their nativism, anti-Catholicism, and squashing of free workers’ rights. Both rich and poor whites feared that freed slaves would move north and “mulattoize” New York society, and by the mid-1830s, riots against abolitionists were taking place in both the North and South. Even abolitionist colonizationists such as James Watson Webb,

⁵⁰ Charles Hamm, “Review of *Demons of Disorder*, by Dale Cockrell, *Raising Cain*, by W.T. Lhamon, and *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask*, by William J. Mahar,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53 (Spring 2000): 172.

⁵¹ Burrows and Wallace, 554.

who supported the deportation of American blacks to Africa (Liberia) or the Caribbean, feared the loss of business with the South due to antislavery agitation.⁵² Labor spokesmen were hostile to abolitionists because they diverted attention away from the pressing social problems of the industrializing North. Later, during the 1840s and 1850s, many workingmen were attracted to the Republican Party by issues of land reform and opposition to the expansion of slavery.⁵³

Anbinder writes that by the 1840s the Bowery had overtaken Paradise Square as the most popular Five Points location for fun. The Bowery began at the district's eastern edge at Chatham Square and continued northward for several miles. It was a *mélange* of stores and people of all kinds, as well as the resort of the laboring classes—a great social democracy, where everyone, despite differences of social rank or wealth, was treated equally. Broadway, in contrast, was a fashionable boulevard with well-heeled merchants and customers.⁵⁴

Bowery merchants added to the carnival atmosphere of the district with the first brightly lit signs and displays. Groceries, as well as raucous bars, served liquor, and beer halls provided varied amusements. Two of the most popular—the Atlantic Garden and the Volks Garden⁵⁵—faced each other between Bayard and Canal Streets. The Atlantic featured several bars, a shooting gallery, billiard tables, bowling alleys, and an orchestra. Dense clouds of tobacco smoke filled the air as harried waiters banged glasses and

⁵² Ibid., 551-553.

⁵³ Foner, *Politics and Ideology*, 28.

⁵⁴ Anbinder, 176-78.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 177. This is the correct spelling of the Volks Garden.

responded to calls for beer. Bars were mainly a male domain, but women and men drank openly together at groceries.⁵⁶

Working-class New Yorkers came to Five Points from all over the city for amusement. The popular blackface acts that could be seen at Bowery theaters attracted young, poor workers, searching for a cultural form which both reflected their consciousness and responded to their tastes, although audiences of popular blackface acts and minstrelsy certainly were not limited to the young and/or poor. Young men and women went there on dates, many of whom belonged to the subculture of Bowery B'hoys and G'hals and were some of the first people in New York City to witness blackface performance.⁵⁷ B'hoys, G'hals, bootblacks, and newsboys were devoted to the theater and patronized lowbrow melodramas and Shakespearean classics alike.

The term "Bowery B'hoy" dates back to 1834 and describes a working-class young man who loved fun, adventure (generally of an innocent variety), hard drinking, and nights out with his pals. By the 1840s the B'hoys had developed their own unique style of dress and subculture. A B'hoy wore a smoothly brushed black silk hat perched directly on top of his head. His well-oiled hair lay slicked close to the skin, long in front and short in back. He wore a sailor-style cravat with the shirt collar turned over it, a fancy silk vest, black frock coat, and black pants one or two years out of fashion. He wore no jewelry except for the insignia breast pin of his engine company, if a fireman. He wore heavy work boots, dangled a half-smoked cigar out of the left corner of his mouth as perpendicularly as possible, and walked with a certain swing that only a Bowery B'hoy could copy. A Bowery B'hoy lived with an independent spirit but

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 178.

remained faithful to his domestic responsibilities and friends. Many fought courageously in the Mexican War (1846-1848) and were the first to head west for the California Gold Rush (California gold discovery, 24 January 1848). Typical B'hoys worked as clerks in jobbing houses, junior partners in groceries, or as respectable young butchers.⁵⁸

Bowery G'hals were the female counterparts to the B'hoys. They usually worked in pressrooms, at cap sewing, or at book folding and also loved independence and spoke with loud and hearty voices. G'hals dressed flamboyantly in brightly colored knock-offs of expensive Broadway fashions. Compared to the conservative Broadway styles, G'hals wore shorter and fuller skirts, longer and lower bodices, and more wildly flared and gaudily trimmed hats. They carried large handkerchiefs dramatically, tightly curled their hair into long, thin corkscrews, and matched the swinging gait of the B'hoys. Though dominated by native-borns and fervently patriotic, B'hoys and G'hals were not nativists per se. Non-natives did become B'hoys, though not in large numbers. B'hoys' political aspirations extended to upholding democratic principles and ending the perks associated with office and the privilege of wealth.⁵⁹

Charles Dickens, in his *American Notes*, described his 1841 visit to New York. He found the city thoroughly uninviting, with filthy streets, unimpressive buildings, and an unsophisticated, coarse population. The high point of his New York experience was at Almak's dance hall on Orange Street: one of the many black-run dance emporiums in Five Points at that time. Almak's was a low-ceilinged basement dance room where blacks and whites socialized and danced together freely. The dance exhibition witnessed by Dickens began with five or six black couples dancing together, and he was surprised

⁵⁸ Ibid., 178-81.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

when a black teenage dancer jumped on the floor. The fiddler and tambourine player accompanied the dancer in many different steps and dance styles: single shuffle, double shuffle, and cut and cross-out. The young man danced with two left legs and with two right legs, danced with two wooden legs, wire legs, spring legs, and more. He also snapped his fingers and rolled his eyes dramatically while turning in his knees, presenting the backs of his legs front and spinning on his toes and heels like a man's fingers on the tambourine. At the end of his display the dancer leapt on the bar counter and called for something to drink to rounds of thunderous applause. The dancer turned out to be sixteen-year-old William Henry Lane, later known as Master Juba—one of America's most influential dancers in the nineteenth century. Juba was known for imitating his competitors' best moves and then wowing audiences with his own innovations. Two of his most original and characteristic moves involved flinging his legs around recklessly and tying them in a knot.⁶⁰

White working-class New Yorkers had their own dancing style, which applied the athletic approach of African American dance to shuffles and the traditional reels, jigs, and doubles danced by Irish immigrants. Young Walt Whitman (1819-1892), as editor and writer for the *New York Aurora* in 1842, noted that butchers danced jigs and breakdowns in their market stalls when they had nothing else to do.⁶¹ All of these styles and steps were performed in Five Points dance halls.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., 172-173.

⁶¹ Joseph Jay Rubin and Charles H. Brown, eds., *Walt Whitman of the New York Aurora* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1972), 18. Walt Whitman was twenty-three years old when he became editor of the *New York Aurora* in 1842. He also wrote most of the copy for the twopenny paper.

⁶² Anbinder, 173-174. A double is a step in which the dancer strikes the ground rapidly and powerfully with the heel and toe or with the toes of each foot alternately.

Like boxing matches—Irish vs. American, and later, white vs. black—promoters set up dance contests between Master Juba and famous white dancers of the day. Some of the most famous of these challenge matches pitted Juba against his “greatest white contemporary”—Irish-American and native New Yorker, John Diamond (1823-57). Juba and Diamond danced at the Chatham and Bowery Theatres near Five Points beginning in 1844.⁶³ Three judges rated the performers on their time, style, and execution.⁶⁴ While neither dancer was judged to have won these exhibitions, each earned the record sum of \$500 per contest as a result of the huge crowds they attracted.⁶⁵

This interaction of Anglo and African dance styles changed the direction of American dance and became an important part of the minstrel show. Juba incorporated the high stepping and foot stomping of the jig into his own individual footwork, and his combination of the African American shuffle and the Irish jig became a staple of dancing in minstrelsy. Lane was one of the most famous of just a few black minstrels seen in the antebellum period. He performed with White’s Serenaders in 1846,⁶⁶ and then joined an English dance troupe; he died in London in 1852 at twenty-seven years of age.⁶⁷

The Bowery Amphitheatre and the Chatham and Park Theaters exemplify both the division of and fluidity between repertoire and audience that existed in New York during the early 1840s. The Bowery Amphitheatre (1833-66), located at 37 Bowery between Bayard and Canal Streets, was one of the best-known and cheapest Five Points

⁶³ Ibid., 173, 175.

⁶⁴ Winter, 47.

⁶⁵ Anbinder, 175.

⁶⁶ Dailey Paskman and Sigmund Spaeth, *Gentlemen, Be Seated!: A Parade of Old-Time Minstrels* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1928), 16.

⁶⁷ Anbinder, 175.

halls of the 1830s and early 1840s⁶⁸ and fell somewhere between the Park and Chatham in terms of repertoire and audience.⁶⁹ The Bowery held over 2700 people seated and standing on crowded nights.⁷⁰ In 1843 ticket prices were \$.25 for dress circle boxes, \$.18 $\frac{3}{4}$ for second tier boxes, and one shilling for the pit. Children's tickets were half price, and a set of six family seats could be had for \$1.50.⁷¹ The Bowery Amphitheatre put on variety entertainments such as blackface acts, equestrian and gymnastic displays, Virginia and Long Island Breakdowns, and such "Ethiopian Burlesque" as one entitled, "El Bolero."⁷² Five Points entertainment had to be of high quality and low cost in order to be successful, and minstrelsy met these requirements by combining its various musical and dance acts and sketches with low production costs.

In the morning edition of the *New York Herald* on 5 January 1843, the Chatham Theatre⁷³ advertised a "reduction of prices," probably made in order to compete with the Bowery Amphitheatre's cheaper tickets. The Chatham Theatre, which was also called the "People's Theater" in newspaper advertisements and reviews, was known as the "low" theater. Companies performing there seldom produced opera or ballet, but blackface acts were common, along with the other vernacular genres of the day. The Chatham served as a public space appropriated by poor people as restrictions on the use of outdoor public spaces (intended to curb rioting) increased.⁷⁴ The Chatham's prices changed from \$.37 $\frac{1}{2}$ to \$.25 for the dress circle, from \$.09 to \$.06 $\frac{1}{2}$ for the pit, and

⁶⁸ Ibid., 188. The Bowery Amphitheatre was rebuilt in 1854 as the Stadttheatre (Burrows, 757). By 1865 it was known as the Varieties Theatre.

⁶⁹ Cockrell, 31.

⁷⁰ "Theatrical Record, City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 1 (15 April 1865): 6.

⁷¹ "Advertisement page," *New York Herald*, 5 January 1843, 3.

⁷² "Advertisement page," *New York Herald*, 26 January 1843, 3.

⁷³ Lhamon, 29.

⁷⁴ Cockrell, 31.

from \$.18 $\frac{3}{4}$ to \$.12 $\frac{1}{2}$ for the upper tier.⁷⁵ Other theaters catered to New Yorkers who were more affluent than those living in Five Points, and their ticket prices were somewhat more expensive. Niblo's Garden Theatre (located at the corner of Broadway and Prince Street), for example, charged \$.50 for admission to band concerts,⁷⁶ and the Park Theatre (located on Park Row) charged \$.50 for boxes, \$.25 for the pit, and \$.12 $\frac{1}{2}$ for the gallery.⁷⁷ Admission to balls cost one dollar or more and required formal attire—a cost well beyond the means of 1840s Five Points residents.⁷⁸

The Park Theater, considered to be the “high” theater during the 1830s and the 1840s, featured opera intended for a high-brow audience. Unlike today, an evening's entertainment at the Park would have included several pieces even if the program featured a full-length opera. Contemporary genres that were produced along with opera at the Park included Yankee plays, Shakespeare, comedies, farces, songs, melodramas, and minstrelsy, though less than at the Bowery Theatre, the Bowery Amphitheatre, or the Chatham Theatre. Although Cockrell found only one blackface act at the Park, which took place in 1841,⁷⁹ blackface did take place there regularly in 1843.

Several popular blackface acts, as well as some of the first real minstrel performances by the Virginia Minstrels, were advertised during the tenure of Welch's Olympic Circus at the Park Theatre from late January 1843 until at least the beginning of March. An advertisement in the *Herald* on 27 January lists the following as the conclusion to the second part of Welch's variety show: “To conclude with a series of Negro Songs, Dances, Etc. . . , entitled ‘Comic, But Not Commonplace,’ by Master John

⁷⁵ “Advertisement page,” *New York Herald*, 6 February 1843, 3.

⁷⁶ “Advertisement page,” *New York Herald*, 21 February 1843, 3.

⁷⁷ “Advertisement page,” *New York Herald*, 22 February 1843, 3.

⁷⁸ Anbinder, 187.

⁷⁹ Cockrell, 30.

Diamond, whose celebrity is every where acknowledged, Assisted by Hoyt, the Negro Comedian, and W. Chestnut, the great Banjo Player.” This advertisement continues intermittently through the 14 February edition of the *Herald*.

The Virginia Minstrels appeared in Welch’s show at the Park beginning on Friday 17 February. The morning edition of the *Herald* on that date is the first appearance of the troupe in an advertisement for the Park: “The Second Part will commence with A Novel and Original Concert By the Most celebrated Black Vocalists of the present day, who will introduce several of the most pleasing Southern Negro Melodies. The performers are of the highest grade in their art, being W. Whitlock, in the first rank of banjo players and comic vocalists. W. Pelham, the great original dancer. D. Emmet [sic], a superior characteristic singer and musician. Frank Brower, of Bone Celebrity, vieing even with Ellsler⁸⁰ herself in castagnet imitations.” These advertisements for the Park Theatre continue in the *Herald* at least through 1 March. To conclude, the Park and the Bowery Theatres did share much of their repertoire—Shakespeare’s plays, comedies, farces, songs, melodrama, as well as popular blackface acts and minstrelsy. Blackface acts may not have been common at the Park as entr’actes to the legitimate plays that took place there, but they were quite common in the variety circuses of the day regardless of the hall leased and performed at by such troupes.

The fluidity of repertoire and patronage of 1830s and 1840s New York theaters and audiences can also be viewed through the relative prices charged by these “high” and “low” theaters. In terms of overall prices charged, the Park Theatre (highest), the Bowery Amphitheatre (middle), and the Chatham Theatre (lowest) show the range of

⁸⁰ Wittke, 62. This is a reference to Fanny Ellsler, a Viennese dancer who came to the United States in 1840. She performed character acts including a Spanish dance with castanets.

admission prices charged by theaters in New York and the overlap in admission prices between “high” and “low” theaters. Although the Park Theatre charged \$.50—the highest price—for its best seats in February 1843, the prices for its pit and gallery corresponded roughly to the prices of the dress circle boxes and the second tier boxes at the Bowery Amphitheatre and the dress circle boxes and to the upper tier at the Chatham Theatre. If the working classes could afford the better seats at the Bowery Amphitheatre or the Chatham Theatre, they could definitely afford all but the highest priced of the Park Theatre’s seats.⁸¹

Blackface Minstrelsy as the First American Popular Entertainment

Blackface performance emerged as the first Atlantic mass culture after the depression of 1837 hurt theater life and opened up new possibilities for performers to modify English narrative rules with increasingly vulgar acts and a freer approach. Popular theater provided fun for Americans before dime novels and other forms of popular culture existed. Minstrelsy was an extension of folk entertainments: singing, dancing, and the “telling of tall tales.” It fit the mass amusement needs of a population only one generation away from its folk roots. The very popularity became one measure of artistic value.⁸²

As a result of the changes taking place in theater, variety elements emphasizing physical comedy and rapid-fire improvisation combined with the older narrative popular blackface form. This new pastiche format of 1840s minstrelsy resulted from audience-performer interaction and long-term experimentation over the previous twenty-five years.

⁸¹ “Advertisement page,” *New York Herald*, 22 February 1843, 3.

⁸² Engle, xxi, xii.

Although popular blackface acts of the 1840s may have been more vulgar than pre-1840s theater, the Bowery Amphitheatre, the first home of the Virginia Minstrels in New York, continually advertised the appropriateness of its entertainments for respectable families.⁸³ An advertisement in the *New York Herald* on 5 January 1843 read that its shows were patronized by “the highest order of the community—including the Pulpit and the Bench—the heads of the most respectable families of tradesmen, mechanics, and merchants—and enthusiastically supported at all times and under all circumstances by the people.” As mentioned earlier, Bowery Amphitheatre audiences paid \$.25 for boxes in the dress circle and one shilling for the pit.⁸⁴

As an art of the people, minstrelsy was shaped largely by the tastes and expectations of its audience. For example, sexual innuendo or “broad” jokes, either by gesture or vocal inflection accompanying double entendre, was a standard characteristic, which minstrels regulated according to the makeup of an audience. A Friday night show made up of mostly male adults could include liberal amounts of sexual references, whereas a Saturday matinee full of ladies and children would dictate a more conservative approach.⁸⁵ Minstrels improvised their lines within the set structures of sketches, musical numbers, and monologues, but if displeased with a performer, nineteenth-century audiences would hoot and throw vegetables, eggs, and rocks at him or her.⁸⁶ Managers watched receipts closely and modified shows according to which acts attracted patrons and which acts repelled them.

⁸³ Lhamon, 58. Toll, 52. “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 7 January 1843, 3.

⁸⁴ “Advertisement page,” *New York Herald*, 5 January 1843, 3.

⁸⁵ Engle, xxiii.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, xvii-xviii.

The formulaic nature of minstrelsy allowed the audience a sense of familiarity with and the chance to participate in the show—as per the nineteenth-century custom. Audiences sang along to well-known songs, yelled out punch lines to timeworn jokes, and interjected their opinions as to the quality of the show, the predictability of which rivaled church.⁸⁷

As with all mass arts, minstrel act authorship tended to be anonymous. The composers of songs and the authors of scripts are difficult to identify due to lack of clarity in advertisements and printed editions. Also, adapting their shows to please audiences complicates the authorship issue further by giving the audience partial responsibility for the resulting show. It was art produced by committee—the performers and the audience. Television and film continue this mode of operation today.⁸⁸

The Virginia Minstrels reworked the “Ethiopian” shows of 1820s and 1830s blackface performers, such as Micah Hawkins, George Washington Dixon, T. D. “Daddy” Rice, into their pastiche format and more sophisticated style.⁸⁹ They and troupes that followed replaced Rice’s outrageous and grotesque style of blackface performance with a cleaned-up concert approach, and within one year minstrelsy became the most popular form of entertainment in America.

Dan Emmett came up with the name of his group, the Virginia Minstrels, and subsequently named the genre of “Ethiopian Minstrelsy” early in 1843.⁹⁰ By adopting the minstrel name, which implied a concert style setting and program, and by focusing more than earlier blackface performers had on musical performance, Emmett was able to

⁸⁷ Ibid., xxi.

⁸⁸ Ibid., xxii.

⁸⁹ Lhamon, 56.

⁹⁰ “Advertisement page,” *New York Herald*, 6 February 1843, 3.

legitimize the image of blackface performance. In fact, Emmett used the term “Negro Concert” to advertise a benefit for the Virginia Minstrels on 9 February 1843 during their run at the Bowery Amphitheatre. This change enabled the Virginia Minstrels to charge higher admission prices than those charged by earlier blackface performers, as well as to expand the group’s audience. To the working class minstrelsy was a satire of middle class values, and to the middle class, the name simply described the content of the group’s shows, which Emmett advertised as respectable, clean, without vulgarities, and appropriate for families.⁹¹

Emmett, Billy Whitlock, Dick Pelham, and Frank Brower, the four original Virginia Minstrels, met in a New York boarding house and worked out their idea for a blackface minstrel show. Whitlock, the troupe’s original banjoist, recalled how Emmett, Brower, Pelham, and he formed the group:

One day I asked old Dan Emmett, who was in New York at the time, to practice the fiddle and the banjo with me at his boarding house on Catherine Street. We went down there, and when we had practiced two or three tunes, Frank Brower called in by accident. He listened to our music, charmed to the soul. I told him to join us with the bones, which he did. Presently, Dick Pelham came in (also, by accident) and looked amazed. I asked him to procure a tambourine and make one of the party, and he went and got one. After practicing for a while, we went to the old resort of the circus crowd—the “Branch,” in the Bowery—with our

⁹¹ Cockrell, 150-53.

instruments, and in Bartlett's Billiard-room performed for the first time as the Virginia Minstrels.⁹²

These former circus performers got their first advertised job by giving one of the proprietors of the Bowery Amphitheatre a charivari, during which they made noise on their instruments until he hired them to perform in his show.⁹³ They had immediate success with their first appearance at the Bowery Amphitheatre (located at 37 Bowery, down the street from the Bowery Theatre) on 6 February 1843.⁹⁴ The Bowery Amphitheatre's advertisement in the *New York Herald* on that day describes the Virginia Minstrels in this way: "Being an exclusively musical entertainment, combining the banjo, violin, bone castanets, and tambourine and entirely exempt from the vulgarities and other objectionable features, which have hitherto characterized negro-extravaganzas." The show revolved around a standard entr'acte and was an expanded version of Rice's Ethiopian Opera finale acts of the 1830s.⁹⁵ This program also featured a diverse range of other acts including Mrs. Camille Gardner, the Parisian Equestrian, Mr. R. Williams, the "celebrated Clown and Buffo Singer," McFarland, the "Champion

⁹² "William M. Whitlock: The Origin of Negro Minstrelsy," *New York Clipper* 26, no. 3 (13 April 1878): 21. It is interesting that this anecdotal evidence predates the first advertised performance of the Virginia Minstrels on 6 February 1843 at the Bowery Amphitheatre, but I have been unable to corroborate it in a printed source.

⁹³ Cockrell, 151.

⁹⁴ "Advertisement page," *New York Herald*, 6 February 1843, 3. Advertisements in the *New York Herald* from Thursday, 26 January 1843 through Tuesday, 31 January 1843 for the Chatham Theatre list "Negro Dancing" as a feature of the program. Paskman and Spaeth (*Gentlemen, Be Seated!*, 15) cite this as the probable first appearance of the Virginia Minstrels in New York. These blackface acts were most likely in the style of T. D. Rice's entr'acte inserts performed between sections of legitimate plays. Cockrell (*Demons*, 155) cites a short article in the 4 February 1843 *New York Sporting Whip* that mentions the plans of the Virginia Minstrels to tour England. This does suggest that by this time they had been performing in New York long enough to be well-known and recognized by the readers of this paper. It is both possible and probable that the Virginia Minstrels first performed in New York at the Chatham Theatre or at another venue that was never advertised, but the only clear advertisement evidence that I have found in contemporary sources supports the Bowery Amphitheatre performances beginning on 6 February 1843 as their first New York performances.

⁹⁵ Engle, xvii.

Vaulter of the World,” Miss McFarland, four-year-old actress, and Master Walter Aymar, in his “unequalled and thrilling Acts of Horsemanship.”⁹⁶

The Virginia Minstrels soon performed the first evening-length blackface minstrel show with street-style acts in staccato rhythm, including Negro songs and dialect humor, unexpected and rude interruptions, and short, flexible songs and skits meant to interact with and adapt to the audience’s expectations and responses. The Virginia Minstrels performed fast-paced dance and included such “peculiarities” of blacks as contorted bodies and clumsy speech in acts like the “Virginia Jungle Dance” and the “Nubian Jungle Dance.” They developed more varied and exaggerated characters than Rice had performed earlier.⁹⁷

The four performers sat on stage in a semicircle partly turned toward the audience and partly turned toward each other. They stretched their legs straight out and bent their feet upwards. They wore ill-fitting, shabby clothes in the style of popular blackface characterizations of the plantation Negro, and their costumes included oddly shaped hats, gaudy pants and shirts, and frightening faces. The makeup that they wore was more dramatic than the makeup used by the blackface performers that came before them. Wide-open mouths, bulging lips, and eyes like full moons accompanied their boisterous, rowdy, and grotesque behavior, in which they contorted their bodies and rolled their eyes in a frenzied manner.⁹⁸

The instrumentation of the Virginia Minstrels was the group’s most unique feature. Although the combination of the banjo, tambourine, bones, and fiddle probably existed in the South before the Virginia Minstrels’ premier in New York in 1843, they

⁹⁶ “Advertisement page,” *New York Herald*, 6 February 1843, 3.

⁹⁷ Toll, 31, 34.

⁹⁸ Bean, 35.

appear to be the first to put these four instruments together on stage.⁹⁹ Their use of rhythm, melody, and simple chord progressions created a sparse texture and an ensemble sound characterized by percussive strikes and simple melodies. The banjo, which was the loudest melody instrument in the ensemble and thus was the heart of the minstrel sound,¹⁰⁰ accompanied eight out of the nine songs in the troupe's show during March 1843, and one song featured banjo alone. Songs with instrumental accompaniment alternated with banjo solos in both parts of their shows.¹⁰¹

Pelham and Brower, the Virginia Minstrels' endmen, played tambourine and bones and were positioned on the left and right of the group, respectively. They sat on either side of Dan Emmett, on fiddle, and Billy Whitlock, on banjo, who were seated in the middle.¹⁰² Each of the instruments in the ensemble performed different functions: bones and tambourine provided the rhythm, and the fiddle and banjo executed the melody.

The bones were flat or slightly curved animal rib bones or carved hardwood clappers that were played by holding a pair between the fingers of one hand, while the other hand struck the two clappers together. Like spoons, they were clicked together with a rapid up-and-down wrist motion in order to produce a sound similar to that of castanets, which are some of the most ancient instruments in the world and are widespread throughout Africa.¹⁰³ Virtuoso bones players sometimes performed with a pair in each hand and were capable of great rhythmic complexity.¹⁰⁴ The bones made crisp single

⁹⁹ Conway, 111.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 104.

¹⁰¹ Bean, 37.

¹⁰² Ibid., 35.

¹⁰³ Eileen Southern, comp. and ed., *Readings in Black American Music* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1971), 14.

¹⁰⁴ Bean, 142.

clicks and trills of varying durations and volumes, maintained a unifying beat for the ensemble, and occasionally played syncopations along with the fiddle and banjo.

Frank Brower had actually introduced the bones into blackface performance by 1841. He played ten-inch-long bones, which were sawn-off horse ribs that he fashioned himself in order to bring a rhythmic kick to the musical performances. He shook the bones with a loose wrist or with his whole arm for greater virtuosity, and tossed and twirled the sticks as he played them—a showman's technique passed down to jazz and rock drummers.¹⁰⁵ Later, ebony sticks or other hardwoods were used. The Virginia Minstrels, who were savvy businessmen and promoters, advertised that they each made their own instruments in order to give their show country authenticity. Although it is true in Frank Brower's case, it is not known whether the others in the troupe actually made their instruments.¹⁰⁶

The tambour, a shallow drum of Middle Eastern origin found in Spain, Provence, and Italy, is the ancestor of both the modern and the nineteenth-century tambourine (the diminutive form of the tambour).¹⁰⁷ The tambourine of the nineteenth century was a shallow, single-headed drum constructed with a wooden frame in which metal disks or jingles were set. Tambourine sound can be produced by striking the head with the hand, by rubbing a thumb along the edge of the head for a continuous jingling sound, by shaking it, or by hitting it with a stick. The tambourine functioned in much the same way as the bones, but its sound was less clearly defined because of the jingles on the instrument.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 36.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Paskman and Spaeth, 29.

Dick Pelham jingled his tambourine and also beat it like a drum. The minstrel tambourine was larger and had fewer jingles than the modern instrument and was more like a drum than the jingling instrument that we know today.¹⁰⁸ At times the entire troupe would carry tambourines to emphasize climaxes in the first part of the show, but Tambo alone showed his virtuosity on the instrument. He juggled his instrument, threw it up in the air, ran it behind his back, and under his chair. He hit it with his knuckles, elbows, head, and feet, and could play several tambourines at once while tossing them around.¹⁰⁹ Tambourine solos imitated the sounds of trains, canon, bugle calls, French drummers, and grist and cotton mills.¹¹⁰

Emmett played his violin in the country fiddle style, with his instrument held in front of his chest and his bow drawn across the strings like a pole. He performed the tunes of songs with variations using dotted notes and syncopations. Whitlock played banjo with abandon and held his instrument with the neck upright like a bass. With the nail of his forefinger, he struck the strings of his banjo, which had a long thin neck and four strings, roughly. The fifth string, which was placed below the bass string and used primarily as a drone, was added during the middle of the nineteenth century.¹¹¹ Whitlock varied melodies by occasionally playing open notes on the two highest strings of the instrument.¹¹² Banjoists often kept the beat by tapping their feet, which added a dull and thuddy percussive sound to the ensemble.

¹⁰⁸ Bean, 142.

¹⁰⁹ Paskman and Spaeth, 29.

¹¹⁰ Bean, 145.

¹¹¹ Don Randel, ed., *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), 77.

¹¹² Bean, 36.

Emmett, the troupe's leader, had the idea of a semi-circular seating arrangement and a program medley of "close, harmony songs," instrumental solos, and comic skits (dialogues). According to Holmberg and Schneider, the semicircular seating arrangement, circular dancing in the olio's last march, the walkaround, call and response between minstrels and the audience, and the use of clattering instruments are elements of West African funeral, festival, and medicine cult practices brought to America by African slaves.¹¹³ The four original Virginia Minstrels directly observed the dancing and singing of African Americans while on circus tours through the South during the 1820s and 1830s and incorporated these practices into the first blackface minstrel show. They sang and played at the same time and used no printed music. The African American musical materials that they mimicked via their own Euro-American music, as well as the music that they learned from Southern African Americans, were available only by oral transmission. This resulted in a genre that was a combination of Anglo and African characteristics.¹¹⁴

The Virginia Minstrels' show was structured around the running dialogue between the quick-witted dimwits, Mistah Tambo and Mistah Bones and the interlocutor. Tambo and Bones, blackface characters so named for the instruments they played—tambourine and bone castanets, respectively—wore gaudy, swallow-tailed coats, kinky fright wigs, and striped trousers.¹¹⁵ Their blackface makeup, made of burnt cork mashed into a petroleum or grease product, parodied African American facial features by emphasizing thick lips and large, protruding eyes. After the Civil War a box of burnt

¹¹³ Carl Bryan Holmberg and Gilbert D. Schneider, "Daniel Decatur Emmett's Stump Sermons: Genuine Afro-American Culture, Language, and Rhetoric in the Negro Minstrel Show," *Journal of Popular Culture* 19, no. 4 (spring 1986): 29-30.

¹¹⁴ Conway, 87-88.

¹¹⁵ Engle, xvii

cork makeup cost between \$.25 and \$.50, fright wigs cost \$6, and various other styles of wigs cost \$12.¹¹⁶

Tambo and Bones played their uncouth and childlike behavior off of the middleman, or interlocutor: a white male dressed in formal attire, whose florid rhetoric, clear diction, and unruffled dignity contrasted sharply with that of the end men. The show climaxed with a hoedown or walk-around, in which each performer did a specialty number in turn, while the rest of the company sang and clapped.¹¹⁷

Early minstrels traded off performing the different roles featured in their shows: end men, interlocutor, songs, dances, walk-arounds, and instrumental music.¹¹⁸ Specialization and the breakdown of stock companies did not occur until the 1850s, when troupes began hiring performers specifically for their specialty dance, vocal, curiosity, or comic acts.

Edwin P. Christy (1815-62) and the Christy's Minstrels, made up of six men, followed the Virginia Minstrels in New York in 1846 and pioneered the two-part minstrel show. Christy's Minstrels were the most important of the early troupes and performed at 472 Broadway at Mechanics' Hall for nearly ten years. E. P. Christy was the first to combine the types of songs, comedy, and instrumental music pioneered by Dan Emmett and the Virginia Minstrels with lively repartee between the middleman and the endmen in the first part of his show.¹¹⁹ Christy lengthened, cleaned up, and added more instrumental music to Emmett's original blackface minstrel format. He brought together the rustic group comedic/musical style of the Virginia Minstrels with the concert-style

¹¹⁶ Wittke, 141

¹¹⁷ Engle, xvii.

¹¹⁸ Wittke, 136.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 158, 150.

musical programs of Buckley's Ethiopian Serenaders, which produced a show that retained the fun of early blackface acts combined with the respectability demanded by 1840s audiences recovering from the 1837 depression.¹²⁰

Christy's capitalized on their mainstream acceptance by aiming their programs at an even wider audience. A review of Christy's Minstrels in *The Spirit of the Times* on 6 October 1847 describes the second part of Christy's show as highly original, with their costumes and colored faces correctly impersonating the "witty Negro."¹²¹ The critic contrasts Christy's show with that of Buckley's Ethiopian Serenaders, who were performing at Palmo's (located at 39-41 Chambers Street behind City Hall Park) at the same time. He wrote that Buckley's Serenaders were too elegant, their singing too fine, and that they failed at Negro delineation. The critic praised Christy's for not being too elegant and predicted that they would overtake Buckley's in popularity.

Many minstrels of the 1840s, including the Virginia Minstrels, had performed in circuses, which probably inspired Christy's two-part format. Similarities between such circuses as Welch's Olympic Circus at the Park Theatre, in which blackface acts were performed, and antebellum minstrelsy were the two-part show with a homogeneous first half, followed by a variety second half. The Circus and minstrelsy both included Shakespearean burlesque, burlesques on Asian acts or subjects, inclusion of the entire troupe in a single act, and individual acts. Welch's concluding act, an operatic burlesque scene, corresponds to minstrelsy's operatic or theatrical burlesque afterpieces.¹²²

¹²⁰ Cockrell, 152.

¹²¹ William T. Porter, "Christy's Minstrels," *Spirit of the Times*, 16 October 1847 (Accessed [7 February 2002]): <<http://jefferson.village.Virginia.edu:1852/utc/pretexts/minstrel@ebt-link?root=query>>.

¹²² "Advertisement page," *New York Herald*, 7 January 1843, 3.

Christy's emphasized the musical part of the show but also began to incorporate variety acts into the old narrative style.

The first and most characteristic part of antebellum minstrel shows such as Christy's commenced with an instrumental overture and a lively grand entry song and dance around the stage by the whole troupe accompanied by the band. The performers arranged themselves in a semicircle and responded to the interlocutor's command, "Gentlemen, be seated!"¹²³ Tambo and Bones, the end men, sometimes made a special entrance and were positioned at the left and right ends of the semi-circular line, respectively. The entry march was followed by lively repartee between the end men and the interlocutor, interrupted at regular intervals by the interlocutor "ponderously and portentously"¹²⁴ announcing the many sentimental, comic, and love songs and instrumental numbers (usually on banjo or fiddle) to be performed.¹²⁵ The puns (taken from English pantomime and extravaganza), conundrums,¹²⁶ and one-liners of the end men became a characteristic feature of antebellum and all future minstrelsy.

Tambo and Bones performed wild and grotesque movements while playing their instruments. They grimaced while balladists sang their sentimental songs and combined their own comic songs with wild dance steps.¹²⁷ They used childish antics and wit to "deflate the formal pretensions of the interlocutor,"¹²⁸ who served as emcee for the show and held center position in the line.¹²⁹ Besides bearing the brunt of jokes, the interlocutor introduced the entertainers, announced songs to be sung, and began the chatter with the

¹²³ Engle, xviii.

¹²⁴ Paskman and Spaeth, 23, 29.

¹²⁵ Engle, xviii.

¹²⁶ Paskman and Spaeth, 80.

¹²⁷ Wittke, 141.

¹²⁸ Engle, xviii.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

endmen. The half-wits, Tambo and Bones, always got the better of the intellectual in a symbolic triumph of the working class over the elite.¹³⁰

The interlocutor, a character based on the circus ringmaster, contrasted in every way with the end men. He wore a full dress suit, sometimes performed in whiteface, wore his own hair, sang ballads, had a resonant voice (usually a basso), and served as prey for the buffooning Tambo and Bones. He corrected their grammar, mispronunciations, and malapropisms, while never comprehending their jokes and conundrums.¹³¹

In the second part, or olio, minstrels presented a series of individual variety acts such as plantation breakdowns, clog dances, steamboat imitations, short comic skits, and monologues called stump speeches: pompous orations performed by one of the end men, filled with malapropisms lampooning the art of oratory. All of the performers would gather with a full set and costumes for the finale, called the afterpiece. The afterpiece was either an original farce or a burlesque of legitimate theater or opera. It presented the highest style of humor during the show and was the highlight of the evening's various entertainments.¹³² Love triangles with female roles played by men were a common afterpiece theme, and "playing the wench" revolved around the humor found in the "simpering lady suddenly displaying a huge pair of feet from under her dainty skirts."¹³³ Female impersonation was a necessary device for the presentation of female characters by an all-male cast. Minstrels turned this necessity into an opportunity for satirizing women and reinforcing widely held beliefs about appropriate behavior of and places for

¹³⁰ Wittke, 138-139.

¹³¹ Paskman and Spaeth, 23, 26.

¹³² Engle, xviii.

¹³³ Paskman and Spaeth, 91.

women in American society. The burlesques had great impact because they combined the various theatrical forms from which minstrelsy developed.¹³⁴

Pre-war Minstrelsy

By 1850 eight American cities had populations over 100,000. Between 1840 and 1860 the population of New York, the greatest stronghold of minstrelsy until after the Civil War, increased from 410,000 to 910,000, mostly because of immigration.¹³⁵ In addition to knowledge of folk theatrical practices, new arrivals from Europe, especially Irish and Germans, brought with them musical and literary knowledge. Accelerated urban growth in the first half of the nineteenth century powered by immigration led to larger and culturally knowledgeable audiences, many of whom carried with them rural folk traditions from their homelands. The popularity of burlesques of legitimate theater and opera in minstrel shows attests to minstrel audiences' awareness of serious forms of musical and theatrical expression.¹³⁶

The urban explosion meant that rural migrants from the American countryside and Europe underwent dramatic and disturbing lifestyle changes in order to adapt to city life. Horrible living conditions, lack of adequate housing, disease, and the widening gap between rich and poor led to strong anti-elitist views among common people. These people needed a substitute for the folk culture left behind in the move to urban areas. They needed a new way to see themselves with a cultural form that glorified plain people's egalitarian and nationalistic sentiments. Minstrelsy provided this culturally unifying and most popular of entertainment formulas, and its flexible nature meant that it

¹³⁴ Engle, xviii.

¹³⁵ Toll, 12.

¹³⁶ Mahar, 33-34.

could adapt rapidly to the changing needs and wants of its audience, even during the performance of a show.¹³⁷

By mid-century New York's places of amusement had followed the population North to the area around Union Square. Minstrelsy reigned as one of the most popular sources of amusement in New York's bustling entertainment district, which ran from Canal to Fourteenth Street.¹³⁸

The decline of show business and musical productions before and during the Civil war caused theaters around the country, including some in New York, to close, but minstrelsy was largely unaffected by the difficult times. Minstrel troupes in New York in the late 1850s—Buckley's Serenaders, Bryants' Minstrels, Charley White's, and Christy and Wood's Minstrels—continued running and remained largely untouched by the downturn in theatrical life.¹³⁹

By December 1857 the poor state of legitimate theater sent hordes of entertainers to New York in search of work. Many stars of the legitimate stage turned to minstrelsy, and top performers often took substandard pay and worked in low-class concert saloons in order to survive. Veteran English comedian George Holland (1791-1870), beloved of New York theater for thirty years, left Wallack's in 1857 to perform with Christy and Wood's Minstrels. Various newspapers ran the following commentary on this situation on 18 December 1857:

George Holland, late of Wallack's Theatre, respectfully informs his friends and the public, that in consequence of the unfortunate state of the times--which has prevented the managers of what are termed the legitimate theatres from fulfilling

¹³⁷ Toll, 5.

¹³⁸ Bean, 69.

¹³⁹ Lawrence, vol. 3, 95, 98.

their contracts, and thus caused him to be unable to provide the comforts for his family as heretofore—he has made an engagement with Wood and Christy’s Minstrels . . . He . . . begs to assure his friends and the public that he will appear before them in the same public capacity—in the same or similar pieces in the line of low comedy--the only difference will be that instead of coloring his face with red paint, it will appear black; which, when washed off, he hopes they will perceive the same honest countenance he has hitherto maintained.¹⁴⁰

English opera singers David Miranda, Brookhouse Bowler, and Aynsley Cook also joined minstrel troupes and appeared at concert saloons, which were the lowest and most successful halls during this time.¹⁴¹ The low prices and irreverence of the entertainments at minstrel halls, concert saloons, and beer gardens attracted out-of-towners on war business to New York and kept these venues running while legitimate theater suffered many losses.¹⁴²

Because of the lack of legitimate theater, opera, and instrumental concerts, the Academy of Music (located on East 14th Street at the corner of Irving Place), which held 4600 patrons (seated), housed well-attended shows of acrobats with wires strung throughout the hall, magic, and blackface minstrelsy. Out-of-towners seeking big city thrills made up a large part of New York audiences during the war.¹⁴³

The trend toward a tripartite structure and the addition of variety acts (non-“Ethiopian” song- and dance-based acts) to minstrelsy began during the late 1850s when public interest began to turn toward variety entertainments. This change in public

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 98-99.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 466.

¹⁴² Ibid., 98, 465.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 464-65.

demand is reflected in the types of acts presented by minstrels. Buckley's show, as described in the *Dispatch* on 24 May 1857, included finales such as opera burlesques, burlesques of either an Old Folks concert or of the Hutchinson Family, or skits based on current events. On this date they performed "Honor to Dr. Kane," advertised as an "allegorical, operatic, patriotic, and melo-dramatic tribute to the recently deceased Arctic explorer Dr. Elisha Kent Kane" (1820-1857) and "Aladdin," advertised as "a 'Glorious Chinese Feast,' costing upwards of seven thousand dollars to produce." The company colored their faces "à la Chinese" for authenticity.¹⁴⁴ On 5 October 1857 Christy and Wood's featured their "Concert à la Jullien"¹⁴⁵ by their longtime violinist Leopold Meyer. Master Eugene played Mad. Fretsoleani,¹⁴⁶ G. W. H. Griffin (George Griffin, 1829-79) played contrabass, Sig. Bottleseeni,¹⁴⁷ and George Christy (1827-68) played conductor Anshoot.¹⁴⁸ The partnership of George Christy (named George Harrington

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 95.

¹⁴⁵ Mahar, 31-32. The act "Concert a la Jullien" was a burlesque of the "monster concerts" given by European conductor Louis Antoine Jullien (1812-1860) and his hundred-piece orchestra while on a highly successful tour of America beginning 17 August 1853. Jullien's visiting group was the largest orchestra heard in the United States at that time. Jullien charged \$1 per seat for his New York concerts when minstrel troupes in New York at the same time charged \$.12 ½ for admission. Minstrel burlesques of his concerts go as far back as 1849.

¹⁴⁶ Lawrence, vol. 3, 45. The character Madame Fretsoleani was a burlesque of Erminia Frezzolini (1818-1884), an Italian soprano who came to America in 1857 at the age of thirty-nine. Frezzolini carried on a singing career in New York with groups such as Maretzek's Italian Opera Company performing at the Academy of Music in 1857. Critics were hard on her and pointed out that she must have sung well in her youth, but that she was past her prime by the time she came to America.

¹⁴⁷ Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music: The New York Music Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong*, vol. 2, *Reverberations 1850-1856* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 34-36. The character Sig. Bottleseeni was a burlesque of Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889), an Italian virtuoso double-bassist and composer. Bottesini was well known for his bass version of Paganini's "Carnival of Venice." He was also an excellent but unsung composer. Critics praised his introduction for clarinet to Act I, scene 4 of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermor*. Bottesini directed the Havana Opera Company, which performed operas six nights a week, as well as a few orchestra concerts, at Niblo's Garden, the Astor Place Opera House, and the Castle Garden. Bottesini played solos and duet with other members of his orchestra during opera intermissions. He also performed with Jullien while in New York.

¹⁴⁸ Lawrence, vol. 3, 98. The character Anshoot was a burlesque of German conductor and pianist Carl Anschütz (1815-1870). Anschütz had a highly successful career in New York performing piano in chamber concerts and accompanying singers and conducting such groups as the German Opera Company.

before his adoption by Edwin P. Christy) and Henry Wood¹⁴⁹ (manager of Wood's Minstrels) was a successful one and made them one of the best-known companies before the Civil War.¹⁵⁰

Troupes also deviated from the Christy model (a two-part show that emphasized blackface song and dance) by experimenting with blackface afterpiece burlesques and farces as the features of three-part shows.¹⁵¹ Resident New York troupes had certain advantages over touring companies or those that worked in provincial areas. Performing in a large port city such as New York made the acquisition of properties relatively easy, and since resident troupes did not have to travel with their sets and costumes, they could use more elaborate accoutrements than touring troupes. New York companies had to meet the demands of sophisticated and jaded New York audiences, which were used to a high level of performance and wide variety in their theatrical diets.

Woods' Minstrels' show on 18 October 1858 at Nos. 561 and 563 Broadway, near Prince Street, provides a pre-war example of this highly successful three-part form.

Figure 1.1
Wood's Minstrels' Program
18 October 1858

Wood's Buildings
Nos. 561 and 568 Broadway
Near Prince Street,
Proprietor, Henry Wood
Wood's Minstrels
Stage Manager, Sylvester Bleeker
Treasurer, L. M. Winans
Front Seats Invariably Reserved for Ladies
Programme:
Part First

¹⁴⁹ Bean, 76. Henry Wood came from an interesting and politically active family. His brother Benjamin Wood served three terms as a Democratic congressman from New York City, one term as a state senator, and presided over the aggressively Democratic New York *Daily News* for almost fifty years. His brother Fernando Wood served as a congressman several times, was also the mayor of New York, and fought for control of Tammany Hall.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Engle, xviii.

Grand Introductory Overture, "Shanghae Quick Step," Troupe
 Opening Chorus, Company
 "Belle of Tennessee," Eph Horn
 "Good News From Home," Mr. J. H. Collins
 "An Inconstant Lover," new, Mr. J. H. Budworth
 "The Song My Mother Sang," new, Mr. J. Lynch
 "Julius' Bride," Mr. Eph Horn
 "Machine Song and Chorus," new (composed by E. Warden), Messrs. Eph Horn, J. H. Budworth, and Company

Part Second
 Fancy Dance, Master Carr
 Banjo Solo, Mr. J. H. Budworth
 "Power of Music," Messrs. Eph Horn and T. Vaughn
 "Comic Pas De Deux," Messrs. C. White and J. H. Budworth
 Solo, Boehm Flute, Mr. E. Haslam
 Ethiopian Dance, Master Eddy
 "The Surprise Party," Messrs. Eph Horn, J. H. Budworth, and T. Vaughn
 The Orchestra will perform a new Medley Overture.

After which, first time of Laughable Protean Burletta entitled,
 "In and Out of Place,"
 in which Miss Julia Daly will appear in five characters:
 Letty Duster, a Stage Struck Chambermaid out of place
 Paddy O' Splutter, all the way from Ould Ireland after a place
 Mad'llie Adelaide, a French Danseuse, after a place
 Mynheer Hannibal Vonpickenstoffemsholtermans, a soldier not after a place
 Sally Sackarappee, a Yankee Gal, ready for any place
 Mr. Punctilious Etiquette, a wealthy bachelor, proprietor of "Etiquette Place," Mr. M. Campbell
 Clod, a country servant, in place, Mr. E. Warden
 Incidental to the piece, Miss Daly will sing the "Saileur Boy," "Trust to Luck," "On the Mountain High," and "Independence Day."
 Several novelties are in active preparation. Due notice will be given of their production. Gentlemen will report to Mr. Wood any inattention on the part of the Attachees of this Establishment.
 Tickets, 25 cents

The first part consisted of an introductory overture ("Shanghae Quick Step") and chorus, ballads, and comic songs, which Wittke (1930) writes were sometimes performed in whiteface.¹⁵² The variety, or second part, of the show consisted of dances and instrumental music. Master Carr performed a "Fancy Dance," J. H. (James) Budworth performed a banjo solo, Eph Horn (b. 1823) and T. Vaughn performed in an act called

¹⁵² Wittke, 150, 157.

“The Power of Music,” Charley White and J. H. Budworth gave the “Comic Pas De Deux,” E. Haslem, a flute virtuoso, performed a Boehm flute solo, and Master Eddy gave an “Ethiopian Dance.” Eph Horn, J. H. Budworth, and T. Vaughn concluded the second part with the skit, “The Surprise Party.” The third part of the program began with an introductory medley overture performed by the orchestra and the “laughable protean burletta entitled, “In and Out of Place,” in which Julia Daly played multiple lead roles (a common practice during this period for the star of a skit).¹⁵³

The inclusion of Hiffert and Daly, female actors, in a minstrel troupe before the war and the prominence of their roles in this show was unusual. Unlike minstrel troupes, variety troupes of the time combined both male and female actors, and the inclusion of Daly and Hiffert in Wood’s and Buckley’s programs signals a move in this direction. Daly played five different characters in this Wood’s afterpiece: Letty Duster, “a Stage Struck Chambermaid out of place,” Paddy O’ Splutter, “all the way from Ould Ireland after a place,” Mad’lle Adelaide, “a French danseuse, after a place,” Mynheer Hannibal Vonpickenstoffemsholtermans, “a Soldier not after a place,” and Sally Sackarappee, “a Yankee gal, ready for any place.” M. Campbell played Mr. Punctilious Etiquette, “a wealthy bachelor, proprietor of ‘Etiquette Place,’” and E. Warden played Clod, “a country servant in place.” Daly performed four songs in this piece: “Sailleur Boy,” “Trust to Luck,” “On the Mountain High,” and “Independence Day.” The shows of the late 1850s and early 1860s began to depart from the E. P. Christy model of the mid-1840s by increasingly emphasizing burlesque afterpieces over straight comedy and musical acts.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ See Ephraim Horn’s roles in Bryants’ burlesque entitled, “Un Ballo” (pages 84-85).

¹⁵⁴ Engle, xviii.

Minstrels still performed the same acts and songs in different versions for evening and matinee performances. They avoided anything that parents might find bawdy or objectionable at Saturday and Wednesday matinee performances, which were instituted specifically to attract families. The *New York Herald* critic who reviewed Christy's matinee and evening shows on 2 December 1865 (2pm and 8pm) reported that over 300 children attended the matinee show along with adults, and that everyone enjoyed the performance.¹⁵⁵

A letter published in *The Sun*¹⁵⁶ recounts a Bryants' Minstrels performance and provides an example of the improvisation going on in shows. Years after attending the 1859 Thanksgiving Day evening performance of Bryant's Minstrels, the article's author, E. S. E. from Montclair, New Jersey, describes Dan Bryant's improvised performance. The author relates how the troupe sat in a semicircle with Bryant on one end, while another member of the troupe began singing a melody by Stephen Foster (1826-1864). The audience was hushed during the sentimental song, and at the end of each stanza the band played a soft interlude. During the first interlude Bryant spontaneously leaned forward, not saying a word, but making a funny, grotesque face while looking into the face of each minstrel. "The corneter made a desperate attempt to do his work; he tooted twice uncertainly, hesitated, tried it again, and then gave up. Dropping his instrument upon his knee, he threw back his head and roared uncontrollably."¹⁵⁷ Bryant continued

¹⁵⁵ "Amusements: George Christy's First Matinee," *New York Herald*, 3 December 1865, 4.

¹⁵⁶ This letter to the editor of *The Sun* was signed E. S. E., Montclair, New Jersey. The date of this edition is unknown, but it is estimated to have been published near the end of the nineteenth century. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center, Research Collection, Music Division, Minstrels clippings file.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

his improvised pantomime, making stranger and funnier faces until the troupe gave in, shaking and laughing at his grimaces.

By 1860 the raucous, noisy minstrel show of the early 1840s, which was targeted at working-class men had emerged as a more refined production that was also intended for middle-class ladies and children. Three-part shows were standard from this point on, with their spectacular afterpieces becoming more and more fantastic. The earlier narrative two-part form had been reshaped into a tripartite pastiche structure that focused more on musical and dance numbers, variety, and burlesque afterpieces of high theater and music.

Minstrelsy during the war

Because of the lack of legitimate theatrical productions, which had also been the case during the early 1840s, minstrels took over some of the most important theaters right before and during the war. In 1861 minstrels and acrobats performed at the Academy of Music, and Hooley and Campbell's Minstrels ran at Niblo's Saloon until March. Lloyd's Minstrels took over at Niblo's from April until June, but when they closed their season the hall remained vacant for the rest of the year.¹⁵⁸

An advertisement for Bryants' Minstrels in *The Programme*, a publication giving same-day bills for New York theaters, on 6 January 1862 provides an example of a typical war time New York show (Figure 1.2).

¹⁵⁸ Lawrence, vol. 3, 465.

This Monday evening performance took place at 7:30 p.m. at Bryants' resident theater, Mechanics' Hall,¹⁵⁹ at 472 Broadway, above Grand Street, and cost \$.25 for admission. The first part of the program began with the entire company in a "Grand Medley Overture" and the opening chorus, "Hark! Again the Thrilling Horn." Several comic songs and sentimental ballads followed: "Annie Lisle," sung by F. Leslie, "Walk Along John," sung by Eph Horn, "Where Have My Loved Ones Gone?," sung by S. C. Campbell (Sherwood Coan "Sher" Campbell, 1829-74), "Whack, Row de Dow," sung by Dan Bryant, "Tyrolean Warblings," sung by S. C. Campbell, and the finale, "Sleigh Polka," given by the full band. The second part of their show, entitled "varieties" in their ad, featured several different vocal, dance, and instrumental acts: "La Truon Daise" by T. J. Peel; "The Blacksmith's Jubilee," introducing the "Anvil Chorus" from *Il trovatore*¹⁶⁰ by the band; a popular ballad sung by S. C. Campbell; the "Burlesque African Polka" danced by Peel and Dan Bryant; a cornet solo by James Garatagui; the sketch, "Mons. Hairmanhestoprestodigataterist," performed by Eph Horn, as the Black Wizard, and Dan Bryant, as a Confederate; the "Christmas Double Shuffle" danced by Peel and Gettings; Horn, Leslie, Florence, Neil Bryant, and Dan Bryant's performance of "Dr. Tumblety Outdone." Napoleon W. Gould ended the second part of the program with an operatic medley guitar solo. Bryants' concluded the evening's entertainment with the "laughable burlesque afterpiece," "Un Ballo in Maschera,"¹⁶¹ with a cast and production larger in scale than Bryants' 1859 afterpiece example.

¹⁵⁹ Mechanics' Hall was also the resident hall of Edwin P. Christy's Minstrels (established in 1844) from 1847 through 1857.

¹⁶⁰ This instrumental piece is a burlesque of Giuseppe Verdi's (1813-1901) "Anvil Chorus" from his opera, *Il trovatore*, composed in 1853.

¹⁶¹ Giuseppe Verdi composed his opera *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1859.

Bryants' sketch, "Un Ballo," was one of a genre of promenade afterpieces in which troupe members played masked party-goers trying to gain admittance to an upscale soirée without invitations and inevitably landing in comical situations with the doorkeeper. *Un Ballo*'s plot (Verdi 1859) was particularly suited to this genre of burlesque because certain elements of it were also found in minstrelsy: the blackface baritone role of Renato, the Creole secretary of the lead tenor, Riccardo, the Count of Warwick, and the masked ball in the second act. The characters of this and other promenade burlesques were not drawn from *Un Ballo*, but instead were taken from the lead roles of well-known operas, Shakespearean plays, contemporary theater, and historical or contemporary political and entertainment personalities.

Thirteen members of the troupe took part in this afterpiece: Dan Bryant played Sim Dipsey, the Doorkeeper; Neil Bryant played Mr. Ullman, Manager; J. Sivori played Mr. Seedy, Member of the Press; Peel and Gettings played Romeo and Juliet; E. Florence directed the orchestra and played Capt. Schwartz; "Edwin Forest" Horn played Damon; "Gustavus Brooke" Campbell played Hamlet; "Barney Williams" Peel played Judy O' Trot; "Charlotte Cushman" Horn played Lady Macbeth; Hilton played the Ghost; Gun Boat Leslie (Frank Leslie) played Richard III; and T. Gettings played Mose, a la Rarey. Four of the names of performers listed in this sketch are actually burlesques on contemporary actors: Edwin Forrest, Gustavus Brooke, Barney Williams, and Charlotte Cushman. The last names of these characters are combined with the names of the minstrels who performed these roles: Eph Horn, S. C. Campbell, T. J. Peel, and Horn,

again, respectively. Other examples of lead actors playing multiple roles in burlesques may be seen during this period.¹⁶²

“Edwin Forest” Horn is a burlesque character’s name on the actor Edwin Forrest (1806-1872). Forrest made his acting debut in the 1820s and had become the leading actor in America by mid century. His New York stage venue was the Bowery Theatre. In 1849 the standing rivalry between Forrest and British actor William Macready, in their competing New York productions of *Macbeth*, sparked the nativist sentiment that led to the Astor Place Riot, in which twenty-two people were killed. Forrest was most famous for his dashing, melodramatic roles of Spartacus in *The Gladiator* and as Shylock in the *Merchant of Venice*.¹⁶³ “Gustavus Brooke” Campbell is a take-off on the name of the Irish actor, Gustavus Brooke (1818-1866), who was famous for his tragic roles: Romeo, Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth. He successfully toured England, Scotland, Ireland, and the United States, but had his greatest success in Australia and New Zealand. The Australian public hailed him as the “Father of Drama.”¹⁶⁴ “Barney Williams” Peel is a burlesque of another Irish actor, Barney Williams (1823-1876). He debuted in America in Philadelphia in 1845 and toured the United States, and England. Though he was not considered a first-rate actor, his humor and joviality made him popular with the public.¹⁶⁵ The character “Charlotte Cushman” Horn is a burlesque of Charlotte Cushman (1816-1876), who was a successful actress and poet in both America and Europe. Cushman was famous for playing both female and male roles. By 1845 she was hailed as the greatest

¹⁶² See Julia Daly’s roles in the Wood’s Minstrels’ program for 18 October 1858 (pages 58-59).

¹⁶³ “Edwin Forrest,” *Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery* (Accessed [19 January 2004]), <<http://www.npg.si.edu/>>.

¹⁶⁴ “Gustavus Brooke,” *State Library of Victoria* (Accessed [19 January 2004]), <<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/slv/exhibitions/goldfields/entertai/brooke.htm>>.

¹⁶⁵ “Barney Williams,” *The Meserve-Kunhardt Collection* (Accessed [19 January 2004]), <<http://www.picturehistory.com/>>.

actress of her time, both for her melodramatic tragediennes opposite Edwin Forrest, and for her powerful Hamlet and Romeo opposite her sister's Juliet.¹⁶⁶ The burlesque ended with a grand masque festival dance.¹⁶⁷ Bryants' Minstrels continued to be very popular through 1863 and 1864. After returning from their August 1864 tour of New York State, they reopened at Mechanics' Hall on 12 September 1864 with their admission price raised from \$.25 to \$.50.

The *New York Herald* article, "Negro Minstrels: Wood's, Bryants,' and Christy's Entertainments" (25 December 1863), describes minstrelsy in New York during the 1863-64 theatrical season. What follows is a paraphrase of the lengthy article. The anonymous critic wrote that since the time of Rice and his "Negro melodies," minstrelsy had steadily gained popularity as an amusement in New York City. By 1863 three establishments devoted solely to blackface minstrelsy were operating successfully in New York: Wood's, Bryants', and Christy's. Each of their theaters was small but elegant and crowded to capacity every night all year round. The troupes were successful not because their audiences lacked an appreciation for opera and legitimate theater, but because New Yorkers, like people everywhere, enjoyed having fun. Ethiopian minstrelsy provided an escape from daily life and the war with its variety acts, comedic songs and skits, and sentimental ballads.¹⁶⁸ By 1863 minstrelsy was mostly comprised of variety and burlesque skits, and the author comments that the "minute and faithful mimicry of the Negro of the earlier minstrelsy is finished." Jokes and conundrums, which had been the

¹⁶⁶ "Charlotte Cushman," *Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery* (Accessed [19 January 2004]), <<http://www.npg.si.edu/>>.

¹⁶⁷ This Bryants' Minstrels program is taken from the front page of the 6 January 1862 edition of *The Programme*, found at the New York Historical Society.

¹⁶⁸ Minstrels did perform songs, especially sentimental ballads, about the war during this period. Critics had both negative and positive reactions to the war-related material presented by minstrels.

comedic bread and butter of minstrelsy during the 1840s, had been replaced to a large degree with practical jokes and physical humor. The stump speech, with its malapropisms, conundrums, and “Negro” dialect, was one of the acts from early minstrelsy that retained elements of word play after the war.

The slap-stick style of comedy largely replaced the older style. Onstage antics, such as breaking anything or hitting someone, were sure to get a good laugh, and knocking someone down and pummeling them pleased audiences most of all. The author describes the skits employing this type of humor as “half a dozen palpable jokes strung into rudimentary farces.” One such skit performed by Christy’s Minstrels¹⁶⁹ in December 1863, as described by the critic, starts off with “Darkey One” pulling the nose of “Darkey Two.” Darkey One, injured and indignant, dares Darkey Two to do it again, and to the audiences’ delight Darkey Two does pull his nose again. After running off stage, Darkey One returns with a bat in each hand, and some “pummeling” ensues. The fight climaxes when Darkey Two retrieves a larger stuffed club from off stage, and they pound each other while making the “proper grimaces and exclamations.”

Campbell’s Minstrels were also performing three-part shows during the War. Their program for 29 December 1864 (Figure 1.3), which they performed at their Campbell’s Minstrel Hall at numbers 199 and 201 Bowery (future home of Tony Pastor’s Opera House), opposite Spring Street, included the usual introductory overture, opening chorus, and set of traditional blackface songs and ballads. They presented a varied selection of dance and instrumental numbers, including a solo on six instruments given by Lewis Myer during the second part. The evening’s entertainment concluded with

¹⁶⁹ This Christy’s troupe was led by George Christy, the adopted son of E. P. Christy, who led the earlier Christy’s Minstrels successfully in New York from the mid 1840s through the mid 1850s.

dance and juggling acts followed by an afterpiece with a timely war time theme, “the great original octoplexzara pantomime with new tricks, scenery, and gorgeous wardrobe, entitled, ‘The Conscripts, or Jeff Davis’ Draft for the Southern Army.’” Campbell’s third part also included two female actors: Miss Annie St. Clair in a “Fancy Dance,” Miss Josephine Devarnia as “The Bottle Sprite,” and the two together in the “Octoplexzara Dance.” Both actors also played roles in the burlesque afterpiece. Before the war minstrel troupes occasionally employed one woman as part of their addition of variety elements to minstrelsy. Campbell’s may have included two women in their troupe during the War because the draft had taken away so many men, including male performers, in addition to their attempts to associate themselves with legitimate variety shows.

Figure 1.3
Campbell’s Minstrels’ Program
29 December 1864

Campbell’s Minstrel Hall
Nos. 199 and 201 Bowery, Opposite Spring Street
M. C. Campbell, Director
Frank Edwards, Treasurer
Ned Davis, Stage Manager
Programme—Part First
Introductory Overture, Campbell’s Minstrels
Opening Chorus, (new) Vocal Corps
“Beautiful Lizzie,” (words and music by Mahon) N. W. Gould
“Limerick Races,” W. S. Budworth
“I Am Dreaming,” James Copeland
“Villikens and his Dinah,” Ned Davis
“Lost Child,” M. C. Campbell
Finale—“Old Jaw Bone,” J. Copeland and Company

Part Second
“Tambour Major Jig,” Fred Abbott
Guitar Solo, N. W. Gould
“Stocks Up,” Ned Davis and Johnny Booker
Song and Dance, Little Willie Guy
Banjo Solo, W. S. Budworth
“Damon and Pythias,” Ned Davis and Johnny Booker
Clog Dance, Master Louis Collins
Solo on Six Instruments, Lewis Myer
“The Three Hunters,” Davis, Budworth, and Booker

Part Third
 “Octoplexzara Troupe”
 Fancy Dance, Miss Annie St. Clair
 The Bottle Sprite, Miss Josephine Devarnia
 Necromatic or Giraffe Dance, J. C. Rivers
 Great Oriental Juggling Act, Sig. Abijah Couse
 Octoplexzara Dance (original), Miss Annie St. Clair and Mad. Devarnia
 Negro Peculiarities, Master Tommy
 Comic Song, C. Couse
 Ballad, George Germain
 The whole to conclude with the great Original Octoplexzara Pantomime with new tricks,
 scenery, and gorgeous wardrobe entitled,
 “The Conscripts, or Jeff Davis’ Draft for the Southern Army”
 Clown, afterwards a dwarf, John C. Rivers
 Captain Charge, G. Burton
 Drolinski, Mad. Devarnia
 Father Jumps, L. M. Reese
 Young Robin, Miss Annie St. Clair
 Peasants, etc... by the Octoplexzara Troupe
 Doors open at quarter-to-7 o’ clock, to commence at quarter-to-8 o’ clock
 Matinee every Saturday at 2-and-a-half o’ clock
 Adjoining the hall is a first class billiard room with six Phelan tables, P. Tracy, Proprietor

The augmentation of the minstrel instrumental ensemble, which was known as the “band” no matter what its instrumentation, distanced the genre from its folk roots. Between 1843 and the early 1850s, companies added triangle, second banjo, accordion, jawbone, second violin, drums, flute, fireplace tongs, cymbals, guitar, clarinet, piano, as well as winds, strings, and percussion in order to accompany popular songs, musical (sometimes operatic) burlesque afterpieces, and to play non-accompanimental instrumental works. The band typically played an overture at the beginning of the show and later to introduce the third part afterpiece. Minstrel fiddle playing disappeared by the 1850s as the violin transitioned from a folk solo instrument to the lead voice in the minstrel band. The original “plantation” quartet became a specialty act within the greater blackface show.¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ Bean, 142-45.

The issue of respectability was the driving force behind the shifting focus of blackface minstrelsy away from bawdy song, dance, and gags toward inoffensive variety acts. The spread of concert saloons, with their low entertainments, prostitutes, and alcohol, from the Bowery to lower Broadway in the early 1860s, alarmed fashionable New Yorkers and set off a wave of theater reform.

Saloons of the early 1860s offered more varied and elaborate entertainments than in the earlier two decades: circus-style novelty acts, song and dance, staged dramas, minstrel acts, burlesques, and staged re-enactments of military battles, train wrecks, and natural disasters. The smaller and seedier halls presented other acts such as living statues, all-female ballets (“girlie shows”), and medical curiosities. The Bowery’s saloons were the lowest of the low and even on Sunday featured indecent comedies, plays of highwaymen and murderers, and blackface minstrel acts. The main attraction of concert saloons was also one of the main concerns of reformers: the corrupt actresses and “pretty waiter girls” (prostitutes) employed at these establishments. The waitresses’ alluring outfits (short skirts, white shirts, aprons, and pom-pommed socks) and the alcohol that they served cultivated an atmosphere of rowdiness and noise.

The influx of large numbers of Union Army recruits to New York and the move of saloons into fashionable lower Broadway only heightened early-1860s concerns about the types of entertainment and alcohol offered by saloons. As the rich fled North the middle class lobbied hard to maintain the respectability of its street. The Canterbury Music Hall, a concert saloon located at 585 Broadway (the future home of the San Francisco Minstrels beginning in the spring of 1865), advertised the following program in the 1 April 1862 *New York Herald*: “a female tightrope walker, a family of

pantomimists, minstrels in songs, dances, and extravaganzas, a male balladist, two female singers, a female Irish singer and dancer, and a short finale drama presented by the whole company.” Although this was essentially a variety program, which, by definition, was inoffensive, the presence of alcohol and prostitutes at this establishment made it a source of protest for lower Broadway residents, which ultimately resulted in the Anti-Concert Saloon Bill.

The bill was enacted on 19 April 1862 in order to curb the proliferation of concert saloons on lower Broadway by eliminating the sale of alcohol in all theaters. The law raised the cost of New York’s theater and alcohol licenses, which had been instituted in 1829, to \$500 for a one-year theater license and \$250 for a one-year circus license and made it impossible for a theater manager to hold both a liquor license and a theatrical license at the same time. A *New York Times* editorial applauded the action and called for the further targeting of other “immoral entertainments.”

The first enforcement of the one-week-old Anti-Concert Saloon legislation on 24 April 1862 (Thursday) began the reform movement in earnest. It shaped the development of popular entertainment (the move to vaudeville) in America and demonstrated the growing power of the middle class and its influence over entertainment. New York residents came out en masse to witness the raids. By 8:00 p.m. the police had shut down the concert saloons and the bars at both low- and high-class theaters such as Wallack’s and the Winter Garden, but some theaters worked around the bill by walling off their bars and opening them to the street.

The law failed to drive most concert saloons out of business, but it succeeded in changing the scale and types of entertainment presented at all variety halls. Because the

cost of staging large-scale productions was no longer subsidized by the sale of alcohol, such acts as the equestrian display with one hundred artists that the Melodeon had featured in April 1862, were replaced by double and single acts. With the alcohol and waiter girls gone, the saloon comedy became more subtle, relying on winks, physical gestures, and asides to the audience, all of which would have been impossible to see or hear in the earlier rowdy saloons. The smaller acts focused on versatile performers suitable to their newly quiet halls. The small tables and chairs used in pre-bill saloons were replaced with rows of seats that maximized seating capacity now that the show (not drinking and camaraderie) was the focus.

Along with the proliferation of variety halls, this bill ended the “third tier”¹⁷¹ institution and divided variety shows into those that advertised “family” or “chaste” entertainments and those that relied on acts with explicit sexual allure. Respectable halls such as the Olympic Theatre emphasized the skill of the performers in their advertisements, but concert saloons continued to cater to men and featured women and “temptations” to attract their customers. For example, after passage of the law, the Gaities changed their programming from drawing-room-type entertainments to those featuring female performers; there was a thriving market in New York for bawdy humor and women’s bare legs.¹⁷²

Minstrelsy attempted to forge a path somewhere between the respectable and bawdy branches of variety but was faced with an increasingly hostile entertainment

¹⁷¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 42 (27 January 1866): 334. The third tier was a place of rowdy debauchery, the likes of which would be difficult to find in America today. The term refers to the cheapest part of any hall, which was located in the highest tier of seats. The races mixed there, men talked, drank alcohol, ate, and carried on liaisons with the waiter girls, who were actually prostitutes, while the show was being performed. The 1862 liquor legislation removed alcohol and prostitutes from theaters and put an end to these activities during shows.

¹⁷² Gillian Rodger, “New York Theater, Then and Now, Legislating Amusements: Class Politics and Theater Law in New York City,” *American Music* 20, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 381-397.

atmosphere. Evidence suggests that by 1864 minstrel show revenues were in decline, while their hall rents were on the rise. The *Clipper* reported on 12 August 1865 that while variety managers made great profits, no minstrel managers made the list of \$5000 and above incomes during the previous year. The top three—Wheatley, manager of Niblo’s Garden, Robert Butler of 444 Broadway, and George L. Fox, manager of the Old Bowery Theatre—earned \$29, 643, \$17, 903, and \$7,343, respectively. The sheer size of most variety halls, which typically held (seated and standing) between 4000 and 4500 people, was the first difficulty faced by minstrel troupes, whose halls seldom held more than 1000 people. Minstrels found it difficult to compete with the larger-sized variety halls, whether they were family- or “girlie”-oriented. Christy’s Minstrels was the first troupe during the 1860s to build a new and larger hall and to move it further uptown (Twenty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue) than minstrel halls previously had been located. Minstrelsy’s association with low concert saloons was the second difficulty faced by mid-1860s troupes. Minstrel song and dance acts, the backbone of traditional blackface entertainment, had taken place in concert saloons since the 1840s, and changing the popular perception of minstrelsy to one of respectability by separating it from association with concert saloons was important for minstrelsy to remain competitive.

However, Bryant’s, Christy’s, and Wood’s Minstrels continued to attract large audiences throughout the Civil War, and individual performers attained star status. The wide variety of comic and tragic blackface characters seen in early minstrelsy became stock characters exhibiting stereotyped behaviors and the speech patterns of both southern slaves and free northern blacks. Nationalistic tableaux, portrayals of war and the home front, and two black stereotypes of unhappy Northern blacks and happy slaves

replaced the earlier diverse characters.¹⁷³ Songs about the war, dealing with such subjects as leaving home, missing family, and death on the battlefield became popular in shows. Bryant's produced the travesty (afterpiece burlesque) of the "military debacle, 'Bull Run,'" while the legitimate version ran concurrently at the New Bowery Theatre. It provides an example of minstrels taking a somber wartime theme and bending it to their comedic ends.¹⁷⁴

Minstrelsy during the Civil War and beyond developed into a balanced theatrical production of burlesque, variety, and traditional minstrel acts (based on song and dance), while retaining blackface as the characteristic bonding feature. The *New York Clipper* (30 June 1866) described the San Francisco Minstrels' burlesque act based on the famous Buislay Family troupe of acrobats, "The Busy Family": "The San Francisco Minstrels are to do the 'Niagara Leap,'¹⁷⁵ this evening and during the week. The cleverness with which the acrobats and gymnasts of this band performed the famous 'Zampillacrostation,'¹⁷⁶ act in black is an evidence of what may be expected from them in this roaring cataract leap. Stand from under."¹⁷⁷ After the war burlesques of opera and theater and local skits and satire of ethnic groups such as Germans and Irish grew in importance.

The End of the War

¹⁷³ Cockrell, 66.

¹⁷⁴ Lawrence, vol. 3, 465.

¹⁷⁵ The "Niagara Leap," which was an acrobatic act that reproduced a jump from the edge of Niagara Falls, was made famous by the Buislay Family troupe. The troupe, which came from California, gave its first performance in New York on 16 June 1866 at the New Bowery Theatre. The Buislay troupe performed aerial feats and plays for the entire summer season at this theater ("Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 10 (16 June 1866): 78.). The San Francisco Minstrels entitled their burlesque of this act by its original name. Minstrels attempted to reproduce the dangerous stunts performed by professional acrobats and gymnasts in their own halls and sometimes suffered serious injuries.

¹⁷⁶ This act was an earlier burlesque acrobatic act performed by the San Francisco Minstrels.

¹⁷⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 12 (30 June 1866): 94.

Initial enthusiasm for the war waned after time. Volunteers dwindled, and both sides began enlisting soldiers. The Southern draft went into effect in April 1862 and enlisted all able-bodied white men aged eighteen to thirty-five for three years. By February 1864 the draft ages had expanded to include men from seventeen to fifty years old. The Northern draft began in March 1863 and enlisted white men aged twenty to forty-five for three years.¹⁷⁸

Both the North and the South allowed draftees to pay substitutes to take their places in the ranks. Substitution brought many more men into the Union Army than the six percent brought in by conscription. Rich military-aged men paid fees to insurance clubs, which would hire substitutes for those called by the draft.¹⁷⁹ In the North a wealthy draftee could also pay the government \$300 to avoid service.¹⁸⁰ Middle- and lower-class men called into service had no choice but to go to war or face death for desertion. Upwards of 160,000 Northern men illegally evaded the draft.¹⁸¹

The drawing of the first draftees' names in New York City in July 1863 set off four terrifying days of anti-draft rioting, mostly by Irish working men and women. The New York draft riot stands second only to the Civil War as the largest civil insurrection in American history. It reflected working people's resentment of the emerging social order and industrialization initiated by the Republican party, which was relatively new (begun in 1854) and founded on principles of western land reform and free soilism,¹⁸² free speech, responsible citizenship, capitalism, and abolitionism.¹⁸³ The unfair draft

¹⁷⁸ Boritt, "Civil War."

¹⁷⁹ Jeffrey Rogers Hummel, *Emancipating Slaves, Enslaving Free Men: A History of the American Civil War* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1996), 254.

¹⁸⁰ Boritt, "Civil War."

¹⁸¹ Hummel, 254.

¹⁸² Foner, *Politics and Ideology*, 73.

¹⁸³ Jacobson, 13.

practices associated with the widening of the gap between rich and poor fuelled their unrest. The rioters aimed their hostility at the proponents (wealthy Republicans) and the recipients (blacks) of Republican principles of emancipation and equality under the law.¹⁸⁴ After destroying the local draft office, rioters attacked police and blacks throughout the city. Many free blacks, who were blamed for the war, were murdered and lynched on street lamp posts. Rioters also burned down the Colored Orphan Asylum and sacked and looted the homes of wealthy Republicans.¹⁸⁵

Lincoln ordered 4000 Army troops rushed to New York from the Battle of Gettysburg in order to end the violence and unrest.¹⁸⁶ Rioters threw bricks and missiles at troops from rooftops and out of windows on Forty-second Street between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues. After warning rioters to disperse, troops fired on the mob leaving approximately one hundred dead and one hundred wounded, thus ending the worst urban riot in American history up to that time.¹⁸⁷

Despite inflation caused by overprinting paper money, the Civil War brought economic prosperity to the North. Government purchases stimulated agriculture and manufacturing in such areas as coal, iron, steel, weapons, shoes, and clothing. Farmers increased the production of wheat and wool and doubled exports of beef, corn, pork, and wheat to Europe. Northern factories and farms took advantage of laborsaving machines such as the sewing machine and the reaper. The Lincoln administration developed

¹⁸⁴ Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1990), 14.

¹⁸⁵ Hummel, 253.

¹⁸⁶ Boritt, "Civil War."

¹⁸⁷ Hummel, 254.

innovations such as the first national banking system, a uniform currency, the Department of Agriculture, and the Federal Income Tax.¹⁸⁸

By the end of the war 620,000 soldiers were dead—360,000 Union and 260,000 Southern. Farms, industry, trade, and the slave economy of the South were ruined from Virginia's Shenandoah Valley to Georgia and from South Carolina to Tennessee. The bitterness generated by the war and reconstruction lasted for generations¹⁸⁹ and left the country in a state of instability and sorrow. Northern and Southern whites feared competition for jobs with newly freed blacks, as well as the influx of black Americans to Northern cities. Minstrelsy's songs and types of acts during and after the war reflected the thoughts and feelings of the people going through this social upheaval.

Minstrelsy appealed to New Yorkers of all socio-economic levels because of its responsiveness to their desires and its references to their lives and current events. In subsequent chapters I describe how troupes in New York both reflected and challenged opinions of society at large and took advantage of their audience's knowledge of the serious operatic and dramatic repertoire for their satirical and comedic burlesques.

¹⁸⁸ Boritt, "Civil War."

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Chapter Two: 1865-1866

Reconstruction

Although Lincoln had preserved the Union and ended slavery, the legacy of the war clouded what lay ahead for the country. Could freed slaves find justice and equality before the law given the deep-rooted racial hatred in America? And how would Southern life change if the South were remade in the image of the North: a fractured society bitterly divided over the war?

Eric Foner discusses the issues faced and changes experienced by Americans during Reconstruction. The results of the Civil War—a more powerful national government and some degree of protection under the law for blacks—caused a backlash of counter-tendencies such as localism, laissez-faire, and racism. Reconstruction was about confronting these results and finding a new future as a nation beyond the Civil War.¹

The North and the South underwent social transformations after the war. Northern journalists returning from the South at the end of the war brought back reports of a devastated society. Waste and desolation remained wherever the armies had fought and marched. Virginia's Shenandoah Valley—the South's antebellum breadbasket—looked like a desert. The destruction of the land, livestock, and structures severely hampered the South's agricultural recovery during the late 1860s and 1870s. While farm output in the rest of the U. S. increased during this period, the value of Southern farmland and the amount of cultivated land decreased. The number of horses in the South fell by twenty-nine percent, the number of pigs fell by thirty-five percent, and farm values

¹ Foner, *Short History*, 14-15.

declined by fifty percent. More than property, an entire social order had been swept away.²

The South in 1865 was faced with labor shortages and crop failures due to poor weather, old seed, and labor conflicts. Hundreds of thousands of slaves throughout the South had recently become free workers, who, along with poor whites, land owners, merchants, and Northern financiers and industrialists, were left with the task of developing a new social order to replace the shattered world of slavery.³ Freedmen transformed the plantation gang labor system by demanding greater independence and decentralization of farm work. They sought to control the conditions of their labor—shorter hours, payment of wages, and crop shares. Ultimately, freedmen chose tenancy and land leasing over wage labor and share cropping because of the greater potential for economic growth and land ownership. By 1867 land leasing had become the norm for farm families and the gangs of workers began to disappear from the cotton fields.⁴

Radical Reconstruction spurred the spread of violence, which had been increasing throughout the South since 1865. The Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist organizations served the interests of the planters and the Democratic party by working to maintain their pre-war control and the racial subordination of the black labor force. Their violence was targeted toward local Reconstruction leaders, educated blacks, whites who taught blacks, and blacks who achieved even a small level of economic success.⁵

Reconstruction in the North took the form of a manufacturing boom, the entrenchment of capitalist economics, the spread of new industry, expansion of the rail

² Ibid., 199, 55-56.

³ Ibid., 63, 24, 78.

⁴ Ibid., 24, 79, 46.

⁵ Ibid., 184.

network, and the opening of the West to mining, lumbering, ranching, and large-scale commercial farming. Like the South, the North underwent a change in its social order. Increasingly powerful industrialists and railroad entrepreneurs took their places next to the old-guard commercial elite, the class of professional and white-collar workers grew, and the wage-earner supplanted the independent artisan as the typical worker. More than any other industry of this period, the railroad symbolized capitalism in America. Between 1865 and 1873, 35,000 miles of railroad track were laid, which was more than the length of the whole rail network in 1860. By 1868 the industrial economy had completely taken over the old one, which had been centered on agriculture and craftsmanship.⁶

Between 1865 and 1867 New York City built eight new teacher-training colleges, established the state's first Board of Charities, eliminated fees for common schooling, set minimum housing standards, established the first professional fire department, and set up a new Board of Health: one of the few administrative agencies of the period with the power to enforce regulations.⁷ Laws were passed acknowledging the basic political and civil rights of blacks. During the war New York, along with San Francisco, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, desegregated streetcars. Blacks had political rights for the first time, and in February 1869 Congress approved the Fifteenth Amendment prohibiting federal and state governments from depriving a citizen of the vote on racial grounds. Democrats opposed desegregation and the Fifteenth Amendment because they viewed these changes as part of a radical Republican conspiracy to promote black equality.⁸

⁶ Ibid., 199.

⁷ Ibid., 199, 204.

⁸ Ibid., 12, 191-192.

The 1865-66 season was the last year in which the traditional rustic style of blackface minstrel performance was popular in New York. Also, this season had more minstrel activity and sheer number of troupes performing in New York than in any other in this study. Burlesques of current subjects, as well as of contemporary legitimate drama and opera took the spotlight and increased in popularity with each new season. This chapter includes descriptions of the activity and programs of New York's minstrel troupes and Ethiopian Corps at variety halls between August 1865 and June 1866. Such topics as benefits, touring, the size of minstrel halls, show format and content, how programs changed, and the nature of respectability are presented.

Minstrel Troupe Activity

Thirteen different minstrel companies performed in New York between late August 1865 and spring 1866. Troupes tried to come up with distinctive names such as that of the troupe's star, founder, city of origin, or a name describing the type of show that they produced. Of the troupes in New York, Bryants' Minstrels, Buckley's Combination Troupe, Christy's Minstrels, Green's Mocking Bird Minstrels, Hooley's Minstrels, the San Francisco Minstrels, Thorpe and Overin's Minstrels, Wood's Minstrels, and the Georgia Minstrels were straight blackface minstrel companies.

The Ethiopian corps at variety halls also performed blackface acts and skits during this season. Tony Pastor (1832-1908), who was a member of the stock variety company at the American Theatre under Butler, opened his own variety hall called Tony Pastor's Opera House at 201 Bowery on 31 July. The summer heat did not stop crowds

of visitors from packing into his and the other minstrel and variety halls in New York.⁹ On the evening of 17 August, Butler opened the American Theatre for its sixth season of variety entertainment. The large crowd that gathered outside the theater on opening night rushed in as the doors open. As a testament to the popularity of variety shows, all the seats and standing room were filled within fifteen minutes, and empty barrels were placed in the alley leading to the stage entrance for patrons to stand on for the whole evening, peering through the open windows to watch the show. Christy's Minstrels performed at the Old Bowery Theatre¹⁰ for five weeks, from the beginning of July until 11 August.

By the second week of September, the city's theaters had been repainted and refurbished, and most of the wealthy residents of New York, who had been summering out of town, had begun to return.¹¹ Once again the churches were full of fashionable people, and the theaters were filled with audiences gaping open-mouthed at the "thrilling scenes and novel effects" that they favored over good drama with "smooth, poetic language."¹² Because this was the first full season since the war's end, the critic writing for the *New York Clipper* forecast an early opening and an exceptionally brilliant and competitive fall season. This held especially true for the most popular minstrel troupes in New York, which were located within three blocks of each other on Broadway: Bryant's Minstrels (472 Broadway), the San Francisco Minstrels (585 Broadway), and Wood's Minstrels (514 Broadway).¹³ Christy's and Thorpe and Overin's Minstrels opened at the end of November.

⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 18 (12 August 1865): 142.

¹⁰ This theater was known as the Bowery Theatre, at 48 Bowery, until the New Bowery Theatre was built on Bowery between Canal and Hester Streets. At this time the troupe was also known as Raynor's Christy's Minstrels.

¹¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 22 (9 September 1865): 174.

¹² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 17 (5 August 1865): 134.

¹³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 20 (26 August 1865): 158.

Thorpe and Overin's performed at the church on the corner of Grand and Crosby Streets and began their season without a pre-opening tour and after having rehearsed only a few times. Although the troupe's bulletins proclaimed that it sought to revolutionize the genre with a more respectable and a higher level of entertainment at less cost than that of the contemporary New York troupes, the 9 December *Clipper* described their opening night as a fiasco. The hall was unfinished, uncushioned pews served as seats, and the stage was unpainted. Performers entered and exited the stage via a ladder in full view of the audience. The minstrels wore shabby costumes and makeup in their opening act, "Minstrels of All Nations." Their jokes were tame and old and fell flat. They sang songs of other minstrel troupes such as Dan Bryant's "Finnegan's Wake" and claimed them as their own. The Spanish dancer, Sig. Martini, and the singing of the quartet drew open ridicule from the audience. The minstrels of the company, many of whom were seasoned blackface performers, had not prepared properly for opening night, and the hall was barely half full for their second performance on 28 November.¹⁴

George Christy rejoined his troupe at the Brooklyn Atheneum on 21 and 22 November and at Washington Hall, Harlem on 27 November at the end of their tour in order to prepare for opening night at their newly-built Fifth Avenue Opera House on Thursday evening 30 November. The Fifth Avenue Opera House was located at Fifth Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street, adjoining the Fifth Avenue Hotel,¹⁵ on the site of Gallagher's Evening Gold Exchange. Minstrelsy at this time was centered around Broadway, and except for the "Ethiopian corps" at Tony Pastor's, Christy's was the first attempt to put on a minstrel show east of Broadway since Charley White left the

¹⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 278.

¹⁵ The Fifth Avenue Opera House was located at 2 and 4 West Twenty-fourth Street.

Bowery.¹⁶ These preparatory performances allowed Christy's Minstrels the time to polish their opening show before performing it to sophisticated New York audiences who were used to high-level entertainment.¹⁷

The theater orchestra musicians' and ballet dancers' strike was in full swing at the time of Christy's opening, but it did not affect minstrel troupes because these bands already earned more than the \$20 per week living wage that the Musicians' Protective Union was demanding from theater managers.¹⁸ Christy's hall, the only minstrel venue above Fourteenth Street, which was considered uptown compared to the locations of other minstrel halls, was elegant and crowded on opening night. According to the *Herald* critic, the vocal and instrumental music was fine, and their "Ethiopian eccentricities" were original.¹⁹

The Georgia Minstrels, who were African Americans and former slaves, were the only black minstrels that performed in New York during this season. They ran only one advertisement during the season, which was for their opening show at the Broadway Opera House (600 Broadway) on 15 January 1866.²⁰ As no other ads were run and no other mentions were made of the troupe, it is unknown for how long they performed in the city, but they reappeared at the same hall in July 1867. No female troupes performed in New York during this period.

By May 1866 attendance at New York theaters was light because the end of the war brought a reduced demand for many goods and services that had increased pay

¹⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 20 (26 August 1865): 158.

¹⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 33 (2 December 1865): 267.

¹⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 31 (11 November 1865): 246. "Law Reports: The Musicians' Strike--Action Against the Proprietor of the Winter Garden Theatre--the Value of Services," *New York Times*, 7 January 1866, 8.

¹⁹ "George Christy's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 2 December 1865, 5. "City Amusements," *New York Herald*, 4 December 1865, 5.

²⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 35 (16 December 1865): 287.

during the war, because a false cholera scare prevented tourists from visiting the city, and because of May moving; leases began and ended at this time of year.²¹ At the end of May troupes and theaters began to advertise the ends of their regular seasons and their plans and programs for the upcoming summer. Bryants', San Francisco, and Christy's Minstrels were the only straight minstrel troupes performing in New York, and Wood's Minstrels no longer existed. (Wood's Minstrel hall had been renamed Wood's Theatre at its reopening with drama and variety on 15 January 1866.)²²

The end of the season brought several changes to New York minstrelsy: Cool White and his minstrels returned to New York by the middle of May after a tour of the South and the West;²³ Bryants' ended their tenth season at Mechanics' Hall on 28 May 1866²⁴ and left for a tour on 2 June 1866;²⁵ Christy's Minstrels closed on 4 July 1866²⁶ and also went on tour; and only San Francisco remained. Several new minstrel troupes and corps at variety halls took over the minstrel scene for the summer of 1866.

Resident minstrel troupes often left New York for tours during the summer or early fall, and typical touring routes covered the Northeastern and Midatlantic states including New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Troupes generally spent two to four days in each city. Part of Bryants' August 1865 tour took them through Philadelphia, where they performed at the Concert Hall for four nights, and Baltimore, where they performed at the Maryland

²¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 4 (5 May 1866): 30.

²² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 40 (13 January 1866): 318.

²³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 6 (19 May 1866): 46.

²⁴ "Bryants' Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 28 May 1866, 5.

²⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 6 (19 May 1866): 46.

²⁶ "George Christy's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 28 May 1866, 5.

Institute.²⁷ Summer travel allowed troupes to repair and refurbish their halls, to escape the city heat, and to improve their fortunes in other parts of the country.

Raynor's Christy's Minstrels (George Christy's troupe) took one week off before leaving for a tour of New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts on or about 26 August. Although tours during the month of August were common, Christy's tour was unusual in that it began in August and continued through October 1865, well into the fall season. Some of the towns in which they performed (usually for two nights each²⁸) were Trenton, Brunswick, Newark, and Paterson, New Jersey; New Haven, Connecticut; Albany and Troy, New York; and Pittsfield, Massachusetts.²⁹ Master Bobby filled George Christy's bones end when the latter left the tour to join Hooley's Minstrels in Brooklyn.³⁰ The troupe toured until their new hall was completed at the end of November and returned to New York by way of New Haven, Bridgeport, and Norwalk, Connecticut; Harlem's Washington Hall; and Brooklyn.

E. Byron Christy (1838-66), the biological son of Edwin P. Christy and George Christy's mother, Harriet, formed his own troupe, which he called the Original Christy's Minstrels, and ran a competing tour against George Christy's. Most touring minstrel troupes took pains to avoid playing the same towns at the same time, but these two troupes clashed due to overlapping venues and nearly identical troupe names. Raynor and George Christy, who had obtained the New York courts' permission to use the Christy name exclusively, circulated a card throughout Syracuse, New York (where E. Byron Christy's Minstrels were soon to perform) stating that Byron's troupe was

²⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 19 (19 August 1865): 150.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 19 (19 August 1865): 150. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 29 (29 October 1865): 230.

³⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 27 (13 October 1865): 214.

comprised of fakes, imitators, and poor performers “calculated to mislead the public.”³¹

E. Byron then circulated a retaliatory card in Syracuse stating his right to use his own name as the heir and successor to Edwin P. Christy.³²

Benefit shows were common in March and April, especially during the Lenten season³³ but also appeared throughout the year. However, only two benefits occurred during the fall: San Francisco gave an Orphan’s Benefit at the Academy of Music 19 October, and Companies B & I (the cavalry division of the 22nd Regiment) gave an amateur minstrel performance in the Gym Room of the Armory on 16 December for the Gymnasium Fund of the members of the Twenty-second Regiment.³⁴ Minstrels and actors of legitimate theater regularly performed for free in benefit shows, the receipts of which would go to the widows and children of deceased actors, retiring actors, sick actors, theater administrators and managers, and civic organizations and funds. Performers and administrative staff also often “took a benefit” as part of their salaries. Benefits could either be given by a single troupe at its resident hall, or by actors from many different theaters coming together at a hall such as the Academy of Music to honor a worthy cause or person.

Minstrels found several ways to fit into the changing theatrical scene and shift public perception of their shows into the realm of the respectable. They cleaned up their shows, described their shows as legitimate, and integrated variety acts such as acrobats

³¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 29 (29 October 1865): 230.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 49 (17 March 1866): 390.

“Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 52 (7 April 1866): 414.

³⁴ Mary Anne Hunting, “The Seventh Regiment Armory in New York City: Restoration of the Historic Site in New York,” *Magazine Antiques* (January 1999), (Accessed through the website *Looksmart* [26 April 2004]), <http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m1026/1_155/53590433/pl/article.jhtml>. This is a reference to the Seventh Regiment Armory, which shared a space with the Italianate cast iron Tompkins Market on the lower East Side between 1860 and 1880. In 1881 it officially opened at 67th Street and Park Avenue.

and gymnasts and burlesques of these acts, ethnic and specialty dances (and burlesques of these dances), pantomime, burlesques of opera singers and actors of melodrama, burlesques of popular melodramas and classics, instrumental virtuosi, and, later, short comic operas, which they called original opéra bouffe, into their blackface programs.

Minstrels took advantage of the flexible format of their shows, as they had during the past twenty years, and adapted the tone of their acts to the increasingly conservative tastes of their audiences. Joining the “family” wing of variety necessitated a change in the type of humor used in their shows. Until the addition of variety acts to minstrelsy, minstrel humor was verbal. It relied on word play, double entendre, and subtle gestures. Verbal humor did not serve minstrels well in this era of protest. Because it was written down, it made an easy target for documentation and attack. Printed materials such as songs, joke books, and acting editions were well within the grasp of censorship. The type of humor to which they changed, physical slap-stick punching, hitting, pummeling, falling down, and breaking of props, was more difficult to label obscene. Unlike verbal humor, movement or humor of the body was not written down or printed, and because of this it was difficult to pin down and censor. The more ambiguous identification became, the harder it would be to judge the act as immoral. Minstrels made this style of comedy work for them by developing and emphasizing burlesque afterpieces of opera and drama, which were the acts in their shows that could integrate this style of humor successfully.

Minstrels moved away from crass, sexually oriented humor to a performance style geared toward their new audience. The *Clipper* noted this change in W. S. Budworth’s performances with Christy’s Minstrels: “Budworth does pretty well on his end: he has toned himself down so much to suit the locality that nearly all of his former coarseness

and rough gags have disappeared.”³⁵ In addition, minstrel troupes such as Sam Sharpley’s began performing in traditionally family-oriented halls such as Tony Pastor’s Opera House.

The changes instituted at the beginning of the 1860s seem to have worked. By the middle of the decade, they were reaching a wider audience and receiving praise from critics in contemporary periodicals. The *Clipper* of 17 February described Bryants’ entertainments as “unusually interesting” and also wrote that “the public can visit either establishment and be sure of witnessing a varied and amusing performance.” In the same *Clipper* edition, the critic described the programs of the San Francisco Minstrels in this way: “It is good in all its departments; the funny business is in reality funny, and frequently we are treated to new jokes and fresh comic sketches; the vocal department is all that can be desired, whether as regards solo or quartet; the various special acts of dancing, negro eccentricities, burlesque opera, etc. . . are well selected and cleverly performed.”

Who Killed Cock Robin?, a contemporary drama burlesqued by San Francisco under the same title during the drama’s run at the Olympic during February 1866, provides an example of the targets of their “respectable” humor. *Robin*, a farce from London written in two acts, takes place in New York. Its main characters are Abel Tinker, a muffin maker; Satanella, his cantankerous daughter; Robin, her unseen suitor; and Jack, his friend. The story begins as Tinker and Satanella, who was born in Mexico, are settling down in New York. Robin decides against marrying Satanella because of her fiery temper and enlists his friend, Jack, to tell her that he has been killed in a duel in Hoboken. Jack falls in love with Satanella (played by Mrs. Wood) at first sight.

³⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 278.

Satanella believes that Jack has killed her beloved Robin and agrees to marry him so that she may make his life miserable. The second act begins with their marriage and the beginning of the torment. Satanella ties his slipper to a nail in a cupboard, she hangs one of his boots over a picture, sews his handkerchief into his pocket, fills his smoking cap with pepper, and breaks his cigars. Jack eventually discovers Satanella's tricks. He locks her in a cupboard and goes out. The play ends when he returns, and Satanella vows on bended knee to be a good wife. Melodramas such as this provided a wealth of burlesque material, especially on marriage and society's standardized roles of men and women, to minstrel troupes.³⁶

A writer for the *Clipper* remarked that minstrels also changed the name of their genre of popular entertainment from "Nigger Minstrelsy" to the more legitimate name of "African Opera."³⁷ Kelly and Leon's Minstrels described themselves as "The Legitimate Ethiopian College of Art."³⁸ Hooley's Minstrels (Brooklyn), Christy's, and Bryant's all changed the names of their halls to "opera houses:" Hooley's Opera House, The Fifth Avenue Opera House, and Bryants' Minstrels' Opera House, respectively.³⁹ Editors also began referring to minstrels as artists. Changing the focus of their shows to burlesque skits, changing the type of humor used, the addition of variety acts, and the renaming of their genre shifted the association of minstrelsy from concert saloons to legitimate variety halls.

The trend toward respectability is also reflected in the addition of Saturday (and Wednesday, less frequently) matinee shows specifically added to attract female and youth

³⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 45 (17 February 1866): 358.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 25 (28 September 1867): 198.

³⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 13 September 1868, 7.

audiences. They flooded the *Herald* and the *Clipper* with advertisements seeking to attract ladies and children with their inoffensive and appropriate entertainments.

Christy's Minstrels' advertisement for their comedy entitled, "Bal Masque des Arions,"⁴⁰ in the 17 February *Herald*, read that their "matinee will be a great delight for the children." On 17 March George Christy advertised about his show that Saturday afternoon (the troupe's twentieth matinee) that he "has made special accommodations for children. They will be admitted today and hereafter to the balcony for \$.25."⁴¹

Besides fending off attacks on their profession, minstrels had sustained blows to their personal characters for years. In the *Herald* of 23 November 1864, Dan Bryant responded point-by-point to the accusations made by a theater critic in an article published earlier in that paper that defamed the character and musical credibility of all minstrels. Bryant began by stating that minstrelsy had given America its only original music and had entertained generations of Americans. In response to the *Herald's* accusation that most minstrels were not "real" musicians, Bryant wrote that virtually all of the members of the leading troupes, except possibly one or two vocalists, read and thoroughly understood music, and that many had been successful teachers of music. In response to the *Herald's* accusation that temperance was a problem in the minstrel community, Bryant wrote that "no man of intemperate habits can hold a situation for two days in any respectable band in America." He also wrote that minstrel managers were more strict concerning this issue than regular theatrical managers. The *Herald* reported that minstrel managers were vain and had a "weakness for gorgeous jewelry." Bryant responded that minstrel managers lived normal lives like everyone else. They had

⁴⁰ This act was a burlesque of the Arion singing society.

⁴¹ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 17 March 1866.

families, homes, and dressed plainly like regular people. Bryant continued by stating that minstrels did much good in the community, they entertained the public, and they objected to being disparaged by an uninformed reporter in an influential newspaper. The only point reported correctly by the *Herald* was the description of putting on cork. Bryant had written the letter in order to secure justice for a “profession that has labored so long for public enjoyment.”

Attacks on minstrels continued through the 1860s. At times the *Herald* was especially vocal in its condemnation of any perceived immorality and took many opportunities to disparage minstrels. The acrimony reached its peak during the battle between the *Herald*’s owner and editor, James Gordon Bennett, and the Manager’s Association over advertising during the fall of 1865. However, in the midst of the conflict, the *Herald* reported quite favorably on the respectability of the San Francisco Minstrels, who did not participate in the Managers’ Association.⁴² It seems that the only immoral minstrel troupes were those that did not pay for advertising.

The *Clipper* generally commented positively on male and female actors and minstrels, but occasionally negative portrayals were written. For example, the *Clipper* favorably described actors as quirky but good people and particularly praised female actors for their seriousness and chaste living.⁴³ However, in another edition the paper described a minstrel as a “hideous monster at the end of a minstrel band.”⁴⁴ Besides giving a description of a minstrel’s costume as porcupine hair, an elongated mouth, a dark visage, and a banjo, this article labeled the minstrel himself as a man of poor character with a propensity for adultery. Clergymen all over the country took both sides

⁴² “The San Francisco Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 5 October 1865, 5.

⁴³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary, *New York Clipper* 13, no. 43 (3 February 1866): 342.

⁴⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 22 (9 September 1865): 174.

of this issue by attacking and praising the virtue of actors and minstrels. The *Clipper* of 9 December reported that Rev. Dr. Hatfield of Chicago made accusations of immoral living against the acting profession in that city. The Rev. Robert Hollyer of the Unitarian Church in Chicago defended the actors and their plays and praised drama for its ability to teach lessons to its audiences.

Christy's and other minstrel companies responded to audiences' post-war demands for extravagance with larger troupes and by building theaters with stages spacious enough to accommodate the sets, costumes, and machinery necessary to produce spectacular burlesques. A *Herald* article describes the Fifth Avenue Opera House as forty-nine feet high, seventy feet deep, and fifty feet wide.⁴⁵ The stage of the new hall reached back twenty-eight feet and spread forty-eight feet wide. The *Herald* declared it to be one of the most elegant and attractive places of amusement in New York. The front façade of the Fifth Avenue Opera House was constructed of solid marble in a reserved architectural style. The floors of both the gallery (the highest level and only balcony in the hall) and the parquet circle (the main floor of the theater) afforded excellent views of the stage from every seat, which was achieved by gradually sloping the floor downward toward the stage from the back of the hall.⁴⁶ Along with standing space, the gallery sat 400 people on upholstered benches, while the parquet sat 600 in Allen's patented revolving chairs.⁴⁷ Building halls with greater seating and standing capacity was important for minstrelsy to compete with the increasingly popular variety shows.

Even after increasing their size, most of New York's minstrel halls in 1865 were smaller than legitimate theaters. The latter halls, such as Niblo's Garden Theatre

⁴⁵ "Christy's Fifth Avenue Opera House," *New York Herald*, 21 October 1865, 4.

⁴⁶ "Christy's Minstrels' Fifth Avenue Opera House," *New York Herald*, 25 November 1865, 5.

⁴⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 275.

(Broadway and Prince Street) sat 2029, the (Old) Bowery Theatre (48 Bowery between Bayard and Canal) sat 2345 with room for 1400 standees in the pit, the New Bowery Theatre (on Bowery between Hester and Canal) sat 2587 with room for 2000 standees, the Academy of Music sat 2833 with room for 1200 standees, and Wallack's sat 1583. Wood's Minstrel Hall held up to 1000 patrons seated and standing, 444 Broadway sat 1125, Bryants' Minstrel Hall sat 610, and Hooley's Bowery Minstrel Hall sat 1385.⁴⁸ Many editorials in both the *Clipper* and the *Herald* describe the dangerous overfilling of theaters and the potential for disaster in the case of fire. Editors called for the end of camp stools and chairs in passageways and halls built with inadequate exits.⁴⁹

Show Format

Unlike pre-war companies of seven or eight minstrels, troupes during the fall of 1865 were, like George Christy's company,⁵⁰ comprised of approximately twenty performers. Larger troupes were necessary to produce the extravagant variety shows and burlesques that were coming into vogue. Smaller troupes of four to six performers made up the "Ethiopian corps" at variety halls such as Butler's American Theatre (444 Broadway),⁵¹ Charley White's (444 Broadway), Tony Pastor's Opera House (201 Bowery), and the Varieties (37 and 39 Bowery between Bayard and Canal),⁵² which was

⁴⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 1 (15 April 1865): 6. Jackson, *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, 1168-69.

⁴⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 17 (5 August 1865): 134.

⁵⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 33 (2 December 1865): 271.

⁵¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 19 (19 August 1865): 151. Butler's American Theatre opened on Thursday evening, 17 August 1865. Charley White took over the hall later in the year.

⁵² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 25 (30 Sept. 1865): 200. The Varieties Theatre in 1865 was located at 37 and 39 Bowery between Bayard and Canal and was managed by George R. Edeson, who also performed as a minstrel. The Varieties Theatre (so named until October 1865) was formerly known as the Bowery Amphitheatre (1833-54) and the Stadttheatre (from 1854-65).

renamed Montpelier's Opera House in October 1865. By 25 November Montpelier had closed the variety show⁵³ and reopened with a circus.⁵⁴

Troupes began their evening shows at either 7:45 or 8:00 p.m. and matinees at 2:00 or 2:30 p.m. They generally performed seven shows per week on Monday through Friday evenings, as well as on Saturday afternoon and evening. No minstrel or theatrical shows of any kind took place on Sunday, the Sabbath, and Wednesday matinees were uncommon. Extra holiday matinees were performed on Easter, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and July Fourth. The main theatrical season in New York lasted between thirty-six and forty weeks, from September through the middle or end of June. Summer seasons generally ran between five and eight weeks, from mid-June or July through August.

Prior to evening shows troupes sometimes hawked for customers by giving free band and comedy performances in front of their theaters. The *New York Clipper* on 5 August describes how Christy's Minstrel band and the African American dwarf comic, Japanese Tommy, performed in front of the Old Bowery Theatre before their show that evening in order to attract passersby.⁵⁵ These pre-show band performances were not new in 1865 and probably developed from pre-minstrel circus practices.

Minstrel and variety troupes performed the same acts during this season as those they had performed before and during the war: clog, essence, jig, and eccentric dances; burlesque ballet; sentimental, comic, and novelty songs; Irish songs; songs from the 1840s and 1850s; vocal quartets; banjo and guitar songs; song and dance; walkarounds; stump speeches on contemporary topics; tableaux vivant; band music; blackface wench

⁵³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 32 (25 November 1865): 262.

⁵⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 278.

⁵⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 17 (5 August 1865): 134.

acts; double acts; comedic imitations of legitimate actors and opera singers; child performers; Negro, German, and Irish characterizations and skits; instrumental solos; and original musical burlesques, burlesques of local subjects, politics, legitimate theater, opera, gymnastic troupes, Shakespeare, orchestral concerts, historical subjects, and magic acts. The change in minstrelsy away from traditional blackface caricature and toward variety via the extravagant afterpiece reflected the concern with respectability and changing tastes of wartime and post-war audiences. Variety shows featured Ethiopian corps mostly in the small-scale acts of minstrelsy, such as short burlesque skits and “Negro” song and dance acts that remained popular first- and second-part acts in straight minstrel shows. Aside from the minstrel portion of their shows, the majority of entertainments that were seen at variety halls were not performed in blackface.

Within the tripartite structure of post-war shows, the first part retained the traditional characteristics of blackface minstrelsy more than the others: song, dance, banjo solos, and comedy depicting black dialect and caricature. The opening of a typical late-1865 New York minstrel show began with the traditional instrumental overture and a lively opening song and dance in a circle around the stage performed by the whole troupe. “Down the River” (published 1864), a song programmed by George Christy’s Minstrels, one of the most popular minstrel troupes in America, serves as an example of an opening number. Its last stanza follows:

Oh the massa is proud of the old Broadhorn,
 For it brings him plenty of tin;
 Oh the crew, they are darkies, the cargo is corn,
 And the money comes tumbling in.
 There’s plenty on board for de darkies to eat,
 And there’s something to drink and to smoke;

There's de banjo, de bones, and de tambourine,
 And de song, and de comical joke.
 Oh the river is up, and the channel is deep,
 And the wind blows steady and strong;
 Let the splash of your oars the measures keep,
 As we row de boat along.
 Down the river, down the river;
 Down the Ohio.⁵⁶

The second part of the show was comprised of individual and small group acts such as instrumental virtuosi; specialty and folk dances, such as Spanish dances and clogging; stunts, such as dancing wildly on a small square of one-inch-thick glass;⁵⁷ acrobats; burlesque skits; and a stump speech, with “Negro” songs and acts interspersed between the variety numbers. The stump speech, a comic monologue given by one of the end men, was a highlight of the show. The orator traditionally used devices such as malapropisms and conundrums in parody of formal speech making. Bernard’s (William Bayle Bernard, 1807-75) “Reconstruction Views”⁵⁸ and “Views of the Financial Crisis”⁵⁹ and Billy Birch’s “I Am Here,” stump speeches performed with the San Francisco Minstrels, were some of the most popular.⁶⁰ Birch and Bernard used speeches as vehicles for social and political commentary apropos to the day.

The third part of minstrel shows during this season took place in one of four ways: up to five short burlesque skits or acts were followed by a walkaround; up to three short skits were followed by a longer thirty-minute afterpiece; a few short skits, an

⁵⁶ George Christy, *Christy’s Bones and Banjo Melodies* (New York: Boosey and Co., 1864), 11-12.

⁵⁷ Wittke, 158.

⁵⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 33 (2 December 1865): 267, 272.

⁵⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 31 (11 November 1865): 248.

⁶⁰ “San Francisco Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 30 April 1866, 5. “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 26 (7 October 1865): 208.

afterpiece, and a walkaround made up the last part; or a walkaround and an afterpiece concluded the show. Over the course of this season, companies met the increasing demand for multi-scene burlesque afterpieces, which became the most popular attractions of post-war shows.

Christy's 1 December show, on which the *Clipper* reported, provides an example of a typical show for this period. The parquet level and dress circle of the hall were filled but not crowded, and the critic praised the stage scenery and the drop curtain, which depicted "Byron's dream." Fourteen members of the troupe performed in the first part, which featured traditional blackface acts. For the opening week George Christy, as Bones, and W. S. Budworth, as Tambo, had the ends, and as was usually the case, an actor with a deep voice, George Hall, served as the pompous interlocutor and sang bass in the quartet. Hall opened the entertainment by announcing, "Gentlemen, we will commence with the first thing on the programme, which is the overture."⁶¹ The "grand parlor entertainment" followed with an operatic chorus from *Stradella*⁶² performed by the entire troupe. George Christy's bones playing, song, jokes, and special character, Handy Andy, were received well by the audience. He even told one new gag, which was a rarity at the time, when audiences regularly yelled out the punch lines of familiar jokes and sang songs along with the performers. Budworth was praised for cleaning up his former coarse and rough style, but the critic found the instrumental music to be fair and the singing of Birch, Hall, and the quartet to be poor. He suggested that the troupe would succeed in New York only if it improved its vocal department. Walter Birch was the lead tenor, J. Tannenbaum was the troupe leader, Mr. Wannemacher played second violin, F.

⁶¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 278.

⁶² *Stradella*, an opera composed by Friedrich von Flotow (1812-1883), was first performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, on Saturday, 6 June 1846.

Abbott performed wench dances, C. Gardiner performed wooden shoe dances, and Frank Budworth performed a song and dance.

Several variety and blackface acts made up the second part of the performance. J. E. Green received thunderous applause for his “brilliant bird and animal imitations” in his famous “Mocking Bird Song.” Green, a partner in Duprez and Green’s Minstrels, left Christy’s later in the week in order to perform with his own company, Green’s Mocking Bird Minstrels, in Yonkers, New York. F. Abbott appeared next in his “pas de deux” wench dance performed in drag, which the critic found tiresome.⁶³ Christy’s laughable “Challenge dance” (one of the best ever seen by the critic) and W. S. Budworth’s self-accompanied banjo song about the spectacles of Barnum’s Museum followed.⁶⁴ The critic wrote that the subject of the song was good but that some of the verses were written poorly and lacked humor. Budworth, Hall, Hodgkin, and George Christy made up the “‘Committee of Four Maiden Ladies’ who collected money to buy flannel shirts for babies in Africa,” as well as “We Should Have Married Long Ago,” “Scenes in an Apple Orchard,” and the finale piece, “Carnival de Christy,” with the rest of the troupe.

Christy’s troupe ended its show with “It’s All Up in Dixie,” an original walkaround, which was composed by Henry Tucker and performed by the whole company.⁶⁵ “It’s All Up” is one of many take-offs of Dan Emmett’s highly popular walkaround, “Dixie,” which Bryants’ Minstrels had performed since 1859. This strophic song with chorus arranged for piano and voice paints an unflattering and satirical picture of the South and the Confederate Army and supports the hope for a Northern victory.

⁶³ A few minstrel wench or prima donna performers, such as Francis Leon of Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels, became very popular in New York minstrelsy during the late 1860s.

⁶⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 278.

⁶⁵ “George Christy’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 30 November 1865, 5. “It’s All Up” was published by William A. Pond and Company at 547 Broadway in 1863.

The first verse line reads, “This cruel war is almost done, poor old Jeff,” and the first line of the chorus reads, “It’s all up in Dixie! It’s all up in Dixie!” Although the war was over by the beginning of this season, “It’s All Up” and other war songs continued to appear. Minstrels must have felt the public’s need to relive the Northern victory, possibly in an attempt to lessen the growing fears surrounding Reconstruction. The walkaround ended the show at 9:45 p.m. with a banjo solo and clog dance combination.⁶⁶

For the company’s second full week, which began on 11 December, Christy added new attractions and performers to the troupe especially for the holidays—George Brant, Charles Duval, and T. Donaldson, a popular comedian.⁶⁷ Troupes generally started new acts and made changes to shows at the beginning of each week on Monday night, so that audiences attending the show once a week were guaranteed to see something new. Christy’s new acts included the war song, “When You and I Were Soldier Boys Together,” the sentimental ballads, “I Am Lonely Tonight” and “Kathleen Mavourneen,” the comic song, “Monkey’s Wedding,” new comic delineations, and a medley dance, “The Hutchinson Family Burlesque,” banjo solos, wooden shoe dances, and “Dignity of Impudence.”⁶⁸ At the start of the next week Christy’s added the burlesques, “The Black Statue” (an afterpiece) and “Scenes at the Opera,” and N. W. Gould, the famous guitarist, joined the troupe.⁶⁹

Minstrel programs evolved from week to week because of the demand for new acts and because of audience censure or approval of those acts. Troupes performed long runs of shows, while constantly adapting and perfecting the elements of the production to

⁶⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 278. “City Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 4 December 1865, 5.

⁶⁷ “City Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 11 December 1865, 5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ “George Christy’s Opera House,” *New York Herald*, 29 December 1865, 5.

please their audiences, who were highly vocal and demonstrative in their approval or disapproval of performers and acts. The audience participated in the choice of acts making up shows by applauding those that they liked or by heckling the acts that they disliked, often throwing food and other items to register disapproval.

Although minstrels frequently advertised “all new” programs, these programs seldom, if ever, consisted of all new acts. The demands of a week made up of eight or nine shows made the combination of old and new material a necessity. The San Francisco Minstrels, Bryants’, Wood’s, and Christy’s all made use of this old/new structure. They stole and borrowed skits and musical acts from each other, recycled old numbers, rotated acts, and added enough new acts to keep audiences interested.

The program given by the San Francisco Minstrels on 17 March provides an example of a show that combined old and new material.⁷⁰ Cooper and Fields performed the comic song, “Nothing Else To Do”⁷¹ (1839), and David S. Wambold (b. 1836), renowned San Francisco tenor balladist, performed what the troupe’s advertisement called “Wambold’s new song,” “Jennie with Her Bonnie Blue E’e,” although it was published in 1849, along with a variety of other acts on this program that were relatively new: Henry Rice’s prima donna act; the double clog dance, “The Nerves,” which had also been performed by Bryants’⁷² and Christy’s in January 1866;⁷³ the burlesque of the Ravel family, “The Flying Trapeze”;⁷⁴ Bernard’s “Historical Reminiscences”;⁷⁵ “L’

⁷⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 49 (17 March 1866): 390.

⁷¹ Newland is the arranger. The composer is unknown.

⁷² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 29 January 1866, 7.

⁷³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 21 January 1866, 7. Tony Pastor also performed this song with Kathleen O’ Neil.

⁷⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 25 (30 September 1865): 200. “The Nerves” was published in 1865. The composer is unknown.

⁷⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 27 (13 October 1865): 216. The date of this edition of the *Clipper* is a typo. The date should have been printed 14 October 1865.

Africaine, or Gambrino's Opera of Lager Beer";⁷⁶ John B. Donniker's violin solo;⁷⁷ "Living Photographs" by Charley Backus;⁷⁸ the brand new skit, "Scott's Dublin Bay";⁷⁹ and the one-week-old afterpiece, "Innocence and Endurance,"⁸⁰

At the beginning of 1866, Christy's presented a new program that combined songs from the 1840s and 1850s with new songs, acts, and skits, which they called the "Old Song Night."⁸¹ Such songs as "The Camptown Races" (Stephen Foster, 1850), "Wait for the Wagon" (W. Loftin Hargrave, 1851), "Rosa Lee" (composer unknown, 1847), "Jeanie With the Light Brown Hair" (Foster, 1854), "Bob Ridley" (composer and date published unknown) and "Uncle Ned" (Foster, 1848), which George Christy had sung with E. P. Christy's Minstrels in 1847, were some of those performed.

These strophic/chorus songs, which were performed by a solo singer and generally a four-voice chorus, share themes of traditional blackface popular entertainment: sentimental love and courtship, the banjo and bones, descriptions of Southern life and slavery, and caricatures of Southern blacks. The Ethiopian Serenaders probably composed and first performed "Rosa Lee" at the St. James Theatre in London in the early 1840s, and Christy's and other minstrel troupes then incorporated this song into their repertoires by 1847. The Sable Harmonists first performed "Uncle Ned," which Christy's later performed in their shows.⁸² Bringing together these familiar old songs and fresh material appealed to the public and was practiced by all of the minstrel troupes in

⁷⁶ "City Amusements," *New York Herald*, 11 December 1865, 7. This burlesque ran through the end of this season. This is a reference to King Gambrinus, the legendary twelfth-century inventor of beer.

⁷⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 40 (13 January 1866): 319.

⁷⁸ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 48 (10 March 1866): 382.

⁷⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 49 (17 March 1866): 390.

⁸⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 48 (10 March 1866): 382.

⁸¹ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 1 January 1866.

⁸² *Ibid.*

New York and throughout the country.⁸³ The old songs provided audiences with a comforting sense of nostalgia, while the new songs added enough interest to keep the show lively.

Ads and reviews allow us to see how shows continuously changed. Bryants' Minstrels' shows during January combined repeated and new skits and acts every week (Table 2.1). Although theater going in general declined during this pre-Lenten period due to the high number of balls and carnivals, patronage at minstrel halls remained strong.⁸⁴ During these three months Bryants' advertised skits for two or three weeks, either consecutively or split up, beginning on Monday night of each week. On 1 January they performed the acts, "Ici on Parle Français," "The Bad Boys," "Perfect Cures," and "Black-Eyed William."⁸⁵ "Ici on Parle Francais" returned for the weeks of 28 January and 18 February, and they repeated "Black-Eyed William" during the weeks of 7 January and 14 January. "The Bad Boys" and "Perfect Cures" did not repeat during this period. Bryants' added their own burlesque on Meyerbeer's opera, *L' Africaine*, called "Laughyoucansir," on 14 January and "That's My Sister" on 21 January. Between January and March they introduced twenty-one new or recycled acts.⁸⁶

Although the advertisements and reviews tell us which skits and songs the minstrels added to their shows, it is difficult to determine which numbers they deleted from their shows and when this occurred. For example, Rollin Howard (1840-79) joined Bryants' troupe on 7 January, but his prima donna character, Salt-Lick-Her in

⁸³ "Amusements: George Christy's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 4 January 1866, 5.

⁸⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (10 February 1866): 350.

⁸⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 45 (17 February 1866): 358. "Black-Eyed William" was Charley White's nautical burlesque on House's drama, *Black-Eyed Susan*, which was produced at the Olympic on 17 February 1866.

⁸⁶ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 1 January 1866, 7 through "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 30 March 1866, 7. "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 39 (6 January 1866): 311 through "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 51 (31 March 1866): 406.

Table 2.1 Bryants' shows January 1866				
*** = repeat New York Herald advertisements				
January 1, 1866	January 7, 1866	January 14, 1866	January 21, 1866	January 28, 1866
"Ici on Parle Francais"				***
"The Bad Boys"				
"Perfect Cures"				
Cornet soloist, Sig. Jose Garatagui				***
First appearance of vocalist, Charles Henry	***Henry sings the ballad, "Come Home Father"	***		***
Little Mac as Jocko the Monkey	***	***	***	***
Dan Bryant, the Stump Orator	***	***	Dan Bryant's stump speech, "The Streets of New York"	
Nelse Seymour, Dave Reed, Dan Emmett, and Little Mac in "Black Eyed William"	***This is the last week of Charley White's, "laughable, nautical burlesque, 'Black-Eyed William.'"	***One week more of White's, "Black-Eyed William"		
	Mr. Rollin Howard, the great burlesque artist, joins the troupe this Wednesday evening.	***Mr. Rollin Howard, the prima donna, as Salt-Lick-Her, in Lagerbeer's "Laughyoucansir."		
		First appearance in nine years of the basso, Mr. J. W. Raynor		
		The vocal quartet: Charles Henry, C. Templeton, G. S. Fowler, and W. P. Grier	The vocal quartet: Dave Reed, Nelse Seymour, Dan Emmett, and Little Mac	
			"That's My Sister"--Rollini Howard as Mlle. Pay-ripper, Dan Bryant as Count McGinninis	"That's My Sister"--Rollini Howard as Mlle. Pay-ripper, Dan Bryant as Count Houghihan, an Emerald Buffer
				"Used Up, or The Hop of Fashion," a masquerade scene with Dan Bryant as Jim Dipsey, the doorkeeper, Reed, Emmett, Henry, Cox, Grier, Fowler, Howard, Raynor, Hogan, Prendergast,

Table 2.1 Continued

				Morrison, Garatagui, Mullen, Boniface, Ryan, Savori, Little Mac, Seymour, and Neil Bryant

“Laughyoucansir,” did not make an appearance in the advertisements until 14 January.⁸⁷

Bryants’ advertisements and reviews in contemporary periodicals do not mention the deletion of this act from its show during the rest of the season, which means that they either kept it on the program through the end of the season, or they replaced it with another act some time during the spring. The only ends of runs that minstrels advertised during this period were those of afterpieces, especially when a popular piece was being replaced. Bryants’ did advertise the final week of White’s “Black-Eyed William” on 7 January in the *Herald* but then continued the burlesque during the week following that announcement. These end-of-run advertisements became more common in 1868.

Troupes rotated skits or songs in and out of their repertoires intermittently for a few years. A piece would then disappear for several years, reappearing as a “new” number, ready to go back into rotation. Often companies brought out “new” acts that were actually renamed old acts or old acts that they slightly changed in text or staging. Examples include the burlesque opera, “L’ Africaine, or Gambrino’s Opera of Lager Beer” performed by the San Francisco Minstrels as well as by Bryants,’ and “Sonnambula”⁸⁸ and “Les Miserables,”⁸⁹ which Bryants’ performed at least as far back as 1862 and repeated in advertisements off and on during 1866.

⁸⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 14 January 1866, 7.

⁸⁸ This skit was a burlesque of Vincenzo Bellini’s opera, *La Sonnambula*, composed in 1831.

⁸⁹ This skit was a burlesque of Victor Hugo’s (1802-1885) novel, *Les Miserables*, written in 1862. Czernowitz Duniecki composed an opera of the same name based on Hugo’s work in 1864.

Both minstrel and legitimate companies sponsored play- and skit-writing contests in order to inspire composers and writers to produce new dramatic material. Wood's Minstrels sponsored one such contest, which they advertised in the 9 January 1863 "Amusements" section of the *New York Herald*. The contest prize of \$500 for two skits was a huge sum for the time and demonstrates their need for fresh material. Wood's announced "Granddad Joe" as one of the contest winners on 3 March 1863 in the *Herald*.

Family variety halls such as the American Theatre, the Varieties Theatre, and Tony Pastor's Opera House featured similar acts, such as song, dance, pantomime, circus acts, and blackface minstrelsy.⁹⁰ Adding what contemporary editors and hall managers termed "Ethiopian corps" to variety show performances both legitimized minstrelsy and gave it a place in the most viable entertainment format of the time. Minstrelsy remained alive by allying itself with variety, and straight minstrel troupes adapted to the changing popular theater scene by adding elements of variety to their shows. Tony Pastor, Josh Hart, Frank Kerns, and Charley White, important minstrels and minstrel managers, all performed in concert saloons before the Anti-Concert Saloon law was passed. They also performed in the Ethiopian corps at variety halls during the late 1860s and were influential in the development of variety during this period.

Unlike minstrel troupes, which were almost entirely made up of male actors, variety companies of this period combined male and female actors. The minstrel acts that took place at variety halls, the traditional songs, dances, and skits, were taken from the first and second parts of straight minstrel shows. Editors of the time identified these acts

⁹⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 18 (12 August 1865): 144. "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 20 (26 August 1865): 160. "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 18 (12 August 1865): 144.

as real minstrelsy and were aware of the difference between these types of acts and the newer variety numbers.

Minstrel and variety shows both produced afterpieces with local and/or Irish themes, such as Butler's, "Fenianism, on Ireland, Past, Present, and Future," in three tableaux⁹¹ and Pastor's, "The Fenian's Dream, or Ireland Free at Last," which featured several newly painted scenes.⁹²

The opening performance at Butler's American Theatre included the newcomers Billy Holmes, comic vocalist, Mad. Macarte, danseuse, J. K. Campbell, Ethiopian comedian, and George Winship in song and dance. The "old standbys" retained by Butler included Charley White, James Wambold, Denny Gallagher, James Maffitt, W. Bartholomew, Master Tommy (late of Christy's Minstrels), Lizzie Schultze, Millie Flora, Florence Wells, Emma Rose, the La Point Sisters, Lizzie Whelply, Julia Melville, Viro Farrand, Mary Goronflo, and Jenny Lorraine. Billy Holmes, although nervous to perform in front of the critical audiences at 444 Broadway for the first time, was a great success in his comic songs, and one entitled, "Waterfall," in particular. Mad. Macarte, for whom this was also a first performance at 444, had great success with her exotic "Strathspy and Sword" and "Cocoanut" dances. Campbell and the Ethiopian corps, which was also comprised of White, Gallagher, and Wambold, were received well for such numbers as the walkaround, "Red Hot," which they performed "in plantation style."⁹³ The ballet, which was directed by Mons. Grossi and included the lead dancers Schultze and Flora, was one of the best in New York. Like the less-dressed ladies of the "girlie" shows, the

⁹¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 280.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 278.

ballet was one of the main attractions to the American. Maffitt and Bartholomew performed a pleasing pantomime.

Pastor's became a driving force behind refined variety and the top place for family variety entertainment in New York from the time of its opening.⁹⁵ Pastor, a native of New York City, had a diverse performing career that began at age fourteen at Barnum's Museum at Broadway and Anne Street during the fall of 1846. In addition to managing his own variety company, he was also a blackface minstrel, a clown, and a comic singer throughout his career. Pastor is responsible in large part for the transformation of variety into respectable family entertainment and is known as the "Father of Vaudeville" because he was the first to use the term to describe the variety entertainment that his troupe presented in 1876 at their new hall, the Metropolitan Hall at 585 Broadway.⁹⁶

Minstrel Show Finales

Walkarounds and burlesque afterpieces were the two most important elements in 1865-66 shows. The walkaround, which was also called a grand festival scene, a plantation scene, or a plantation song and dance, was a group song and dance number usually performed by the entire troupe. One of the members of the troupe sang the solo sections, and the rest of the troupe joined in for the choruses. Each minstrel would perform a specialty dance in turn, while the rest of the company walked or danced in a circle around the soloist, singing, clapping, and accompanying on instruments.

⁹⁵ Rodger, 381-97.

⁹⁶ Anthony Slide, *Encyclopedia of Vaudeville* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994), 390-91. Pastor and his troupe opened at the Metropolitan Theatre on 4 October 1875. He coined the term "vaudeville" in 1876.

The walkaround is an element of 1840s minstrelsy that was retained during the transition to variety during the 1860s. The Virginia Minstrels concluded their first show in New York in 1843 with the extravaganza on “Lucy Long” (1844), which Dan Emmett described as the “Lucy Long Walk Around.”⁹⁷ E. P. Christy’s Minstrels gave “Reel O’er the Mountain” during the middle of the second part of their first show in New York on 18 April 1844. This was a song and dance number that was designated as a walkaround in the manuscript copy also attributed to Dan Emmett.⁹⁸

Throughout the fall of 1865 and the spring of 1866, Bryants’ Minstrels kept the walkarounds that were composed by Daniel Decatur Emmett (1815-1904) in heavy rotation. Christy’s also performed a few of Emmett’s walkarounds during the spring 1866. Emmett, founding member and leader of the Virginia Minstrels, shared a long and successful partnership with New York’s Bryants’ Minstrels as a composer and performer from 1858 to 1868.⁹⁹

Emmett reintroduced the walkaround during the tumultuous two years before the Civil War, and his works gained great popularity in both the North and South. Even as the larger trend toward variety continued, the minstrel acts that people associated with plantation life, such as banjo solos and songs, eccentric jigs and reels, and song and dance acts such as the walkaround remained highly popular. Elements of nostalgia such as these become popular during times of great stress in a society, and America was certainly in turmoil as it moved closer to war. The presence and popularity of Emmett’s walkarounds in Bryants’ and Christy’s Minstrels’ shows during this period suggests that audiences enjoyed the traditional blackface song and dance acts that his troupe, the

⁹⁷ Mahar, 18.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁹⁹ Holmberg and Schneider, 30.

Virginia Minstrels, and E. P. Christy's Minstrels had pioneered twenty years earlier.

Emmett's plantation pieces became so popular that Bryants' ran special advertisements listing the titles of the walkarounds,¹⁰⁰ and critics wrote in praise of the finale "plantation wind-up" rather than a burlesque "death-bed scene."¹⁰¹ Between December 1858¹⁰² and 1860, Emmett composed more than fifteen walkarounds; at least eleven more appeared between 1861 and 1866; and the last one appeared in 1868.¹⁰³

Emmett composed dozens of songs and musical farces during his lifetime but was best known for his walkarounds.¹⁰⁴ He combined plantation mythology, which was an invention of minstrelsy, with the issues and current events that were important to the lives of New York's men and women.¹⁰⁵ Emmett transmitted the diverse subject matter of his walkarounds via the elements that were essential to minstrelsy's depiction of happy plantation life—blackface, Southern locales, black characterizations, and song and dance. His walkarounds were the highlighted numbers of Bryants' shows and as such were responsible for drawing in audiences, who were aware of the nostalgic draw of Emmett's compositions. In March 1866 the *Clipper* reported that "seeing Dan Emmett perform with Bryants' puts us in the mind of olden times."¹⁰⁶

As seen in the Bryants' program from 8 January 1866 in figure 2.1, only one walkaround was performed during a show, and this act usually concluded a three-part program of songs, band music, dances, comedic skits, and a burlesque afterpiece.

¹⁰⁰ "Theatrical Record," *New York Clipper* 8, no. 39 (12 January 1861): 310.

¹⁰¹ *New York Clipper* (March 1862).

¹⁰² "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 9 December 1858, 7.

¹⁰³ Although New York's Campbell's, Christy's, and Wood's Minstrels, and Brooklyn's Hooley's Minstrels also performed walkarounds by Emmett, none of the variety theaters with minstrel corps such as Tony Pastor's (201 Bowery, from 1865), Charley White's at Mechanics' Hall (from 1866), or the variety company at the American Concert Hall (444 Broadway, 1858-1860)¹⁰³ presented these numbers.

¹⁰⁴ Bean, 76.

¹⁰⁵ Lott, 186.

¹⁰⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 48 (10 March 1866): 382.

Occasionally, it ended the second part or was the penultimate act, followed by the afterpiece. During Emmett's years with Bryants,' the troupe also ended their shows with afterpieces for intermittent periods lasting from one week to three months.

Figure 2.1, Bryants' Minstrels' Program, 8 January 1866

8 JAN 1866

MECHANICS HALL
472

THE BRYANT BROTHERS.
In connection with Fourteen of the most Refined and Talented Artists, every night, in all the New and Laughable Ethiopian Melodies, at
MECHANICAL HALL,
472 Broadway, New York.

THE OLDEST ESTABLISHED AND BEST
Conducted Edifice for the production of Ethiopian Peculiarities, in the world!
Admission 25 Cents.

W. H. Bryant, Printer and Compositor, No. 43 & 45 Centre St., N. Y.

8 JAN 1866

PROGRAM

PART FIRST—FOCAL.

Deafure,
Operatic Chorus,
Marie Allen,
Fanny Perkins,
Linger in Blissful Repose,
I'd Choose to be a Baby,
Sweet Love, Goodnight to Thee,
Finale—"Boys on a Luck."

Bryant's Minstrels Company
T. B. Freudenreich
Dave Reed
W. P. Grier
Dan Bryant
C. C. Templeton

PART SECOND—VARIETIES.

MONSTER TIN-PAN-ONI-ON!
Conductor, Sig. Dan Bryant.

SALLY COME UP—Song and Dance.
Dave Reed

THE BENZEENE GALLOOTS,
Seymour, Emmett, Grier, and Hilson.

THE CHALLENGE DANCE,
Dave Reed and Dan Bryant.

FAVORITE BALLAD.
C. C. Templeton

EXEMPT SHAKERS,
From Lebanon Town, New Hampshire.
Sig. J. Garibaldi

BABES IN THE WOODS,
Nolan Seymour and Dan Bryant.

THE BLACK CHILDMIST.
Reed and Hilson

Head and Toe-Offy,
Reed, Seymour, and Dan Bryant.

Head and Toe-Offy,
Maud. Tommy

LITTLE MAC FOR DE WHITE HOUSE
The performance to conclude with Dan Emmett's original
PLANTATION SONG AND DANCE.

Emmett's walkarounds combine singing and dancing, are comic in nature, were

accompanied by the minstrel band, deal with a diverse array of subjects, sometimes even within songs, and rhyme at the ends of text lines. The form of these five- or six-verse songs is strophic with chorus, usually with a two-bar alternation between the soloist and the chorus in the verse section. They are all in a quick tempo in duple meter, have mostly symmetrical song and chorus phrases, and each ends with an eight-bar dance section.

The diverse influences of Emmett's musical studies with Southern folk musicians and his Irish-American heritage are both heard and seen in his walkarounds. Emmett learned to play the (celtic) country fiddle and to sing Irish folk songs while growing up in Ohio, and learned to play the fife and infantry drum during his year of service in the Army at the age of eighteen.¹⁰⁷ He later absorbed elements of African American music and became one of the first professional white banjo players through his studies with black and white banjo masters while touring the South with circuses during the 1830s and early 1840s.¹⁰⁸ The text and form of his mature works from the early 1840s through his period with Bryants' Minstrels, the instruments he played, and his style of performance combined these two traditions of music-making.

Although Bryants' rotated walkarounds mostly at weekly intervals, they sometimes kept them on the boards for periods as short as four days and as long as several weeks. The popularity of a piece determined the length of its production. "Dixie," for example, initially ran for one week in September 1859,¹⁰⁹ but its time on the

¹⁰⁷ Lott, 52.

¹⁰⁸ Cincinnati Circus Company. Conway, 104-106, 110, 118, 122.

¹⁰⁹ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 11 September 1859, 7. "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 18 September 1859, 7.

boards increased along with its popularity. During its longest run in 1860, Bryants' performed it for seven uninterrupted weeks.¹¹⁰

The most popular walkarounds were performed for years. "Who Struck Billy Patterson" first ran from 6 through 12 November 1859.¹¹¹ It returned to the show three weeks later on 19 December and once more ran for one week.¹¹² Bryants' performed this piece again in 1861, 1864, and 1866. In any single season Bryants' presented at least ten different walkarounds. Between the fall of 1865 and the spring of 1866, they gave Emmett's "Little Mac for de White House," "Old Ky-K-y," "Greenbacks!," "Chaw Roast Beef," "Who Struck Billy Patterson," "Jack on de Green," "U. S. Grant," "Who Can Find Us Now?," "High Daddy," and "De Black Brigade."

Emmett's "De Black Brigade" (1863) exhibits the typical form, melodic style, key scheme, and use of rhythm, dynamics, and accompaniment of his walkarounds. As seen in example 2.1, Emmett maintains interest by composing different verse and chorus melodies with short alternating phrases, and his jaunty accompaniments enhance their folk character. This style is in contrast with the vocal quartet and quintets and sentimental song repertoire of the time, which emphasized four- or five-part vocal harmonizing and more sophisticated, richer accompaniments. To the best of my knowledge and based on the walkarounds that I have examined, the choruses were sung in unison, even though performed by more than one person.

¹¹⁰ *Bryants' Songs and Programme for this Evening* 3, no. 33 (New York: T. B. Harrison and Company, 1860).

¹¹¹ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 6 November 1859, 7. "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 12 November 1859, 7.

¹¹² "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 18 December 1859, 7.

Example 2.1

**THE
BLACK BRIGADE.**

Words and Music by
DAN. D. EMMETT.

Allegro. SONG.

Dar's some - ting rous a

CHORUS. SONG.

brew - in'; Gwine to jine de Un - ion. Dar's

CHORUS. SONG.

some - ting rous a brew - in', Hy - ro! we got We're

8560

Entered according to Act of Congress, AD. 1863 by W^m A. Pond & C^o in the Clerk's office of the Dist^{ct} Court of the Southⁿ Dist^{ct} of New York.

Example 2.1 continued

CHORUS.

on de brink o' ru in; Gwine to jine de Un - ion, Ah,

ah, ah, ah! de loys from Link - um Land.

GRAND CHORUS.

Den har - ness up de mule, Be care ful how ye whip, An'

mind your eye, Sam John - son am de nig - ga Gin' - ral,

8860

Example 2.1 continued

DRESS MUSIC - CHORUS

We're de Brack Bri-gade, Why don't ye let her rip?

Jeemses Rib-ber Mas-sa Gree-ly, O!

DANCE.

2
We am de snolly-gosters, (Repeat.)
An' lubs Jim Ribber oysters.
Chorus: Den harness up &c.

3
We're gwine to fight de South, O, (Repeat.)
All by de 'word ob mouth', O,
Chorus: Den harness up &c.

4
To fight for death an' glory, (Repeat.)
Am quite annudder story.
Chorus: Den harness up &c.

5
Old John Brown dey strung 'im, (Repeat.)
As high as Haman hung 'im.
Chorus: Den harness up &c.

6
I'll take my boat an' paddle, (Repeat.)
For freedom will skydaddle.
Chorus: Den harness up &c.

0340 C

Minstrel ensembles usually were comprised of approximately ten instruments, including winds, strings, and percussion. The piano reductions of Emmett's accompaniments may or may not accurately reflect the instrumental versions that he composed, but they do provide an idea of his style. His accompaniments are usually sparse and are designed to

allow the unharmonized vocal lines to come to the fore. They are composed for three to five parts, which correspond to the number of melody instruments in minstrel bands during the late 1850s and 1860s. In 1866 Bryants' band, which was one of the larger minstrel ensembles, included a clarinet, a flute, three violins, a double bass, a cornet, and probably a banjo, piano, tambourine, bones, drums, and triangle, as well.

Several of Emmett's walkarounds have sections in a minor key and retain a modal sound. Emmett accomplishes this within the framework of equal tempered multi-part accompaniments by restricting the solo and the unison choruses to unharmonized single melody lines. "Old K-y-Ky" is in G Major and e minor (Phrygian), and "Greenbacks!" is in g minor (mixolydian) and B-flat Major. The modal sound is most pronounced in the descending minor third interval used to reach the final. Nineteenth-century Americans related minor keys to folk songs, and to African American songs, in particular.¹¹³ A writer for *Harper's* in March 1863 described "Negro" melodies in minor keys saying, "like all wild, native melodies cast in the minor key [it] is one of the most tragically significant sounds in nature . . . [that] . . . may loose your imagination so that it shall fly over time and sea and land; and as you listen, you are once more floating upon the hushed and melancholy Nile, drifting ever southward into mystery and silence and hearing the slow, mournful, minor monotonous reiteration."¹¹⁴

The dance section of Emmett's walkarounds was as important as the singing part to the success of the act. The dancing took place during the last eight bars of a song, which was probably repeated as a vamp for longer individual displays. Each minstrel in turn would perform a specialty act, while the rest of the company walked or danced

¹¹³ Henry Edward Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs: A Study in Racial and National Music* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1914, 1971), 42-55.

¹¹⁴ "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's* XXVI (March 1863): 563.

counter-clockwise in a circle around the soloist, singing, clapping, and accompanying on instruments. We know that the entire troupe danced during a walkaround because of Bryants' advertisement in the *Herald*, which stated that their show "concluded with [the walkaround] 'Chaw Roast Beef,' introducing the whole troupe in their terpsichorean display."¹¹⁵

The fiddle tunes that Emmett composed for the dance section or took from the repertoire of jigs and reels from the British Isles,¹¹⁶ as well as the types of dances performed during walkarounds reflect his Irish heritage. The dance section is in the same meter as the rest of the piece, which is usually 2/4. Emmett's compositional style changes from vocally oriented in the verse and chorus to idiomatic instrumental writing in the dance, which has no vocal parts. The piano arrangements have rapidly moving eighth and sixteenth notes in broken chords, arpeggios, and octaves, and the highest voice was probably played by the band's violinist.

Emmett did not use syncopation or any elements from African American music in the dance section of the nine walkarounds examined for this study. And, of those examined, none of the dances have melodic material that is related to the rest of the piece except for "Road to Richmond" and "Striking Ile."

The minstrel dancing that was performed during Emmett's time with Bryants' developed directly out of African American and Anglo interaction in New York's Five Points district. The steps and carriage of the Irish jig, such as rapid foot and leg work, heel and toe tapping, and arms at the sides with a stiff upper body, combined with the downward motion, hip swaying, jerking motions, heel stamping, falling to the knees,

¹¹⁵ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 10 August 1859, 7.

¹¹⁶ Winter, 41.

rolling the hands high above the head, and body slapping of African movement.¹¹⁷ Soft-shoe dances in leather-soled shoes were also a popular song and dance style.¹¹⁸

African American culture made its way into Emmett's works via Negro dialect, call and response, syncopation, dancing in circles, semicircular seating on stage,¹¹⁹ banjo instrumentation, and verbal interjections, which Emmett claimed were based on his observations of "slaves of the South."¹²⁰ The alternation of solo and chorus in the verse of "Black Brigade" is in the manner of the West African tradition of call and response. Syncopations in the piece add interest to the simple rhythms by accenting wide leaps and movement to the final. And, group verbal interjections are heard in its chorus holler, "Hy-ro! We go!" in the verse section.

Only songs with subjects such as "De Black Brigade" and "Who Struck Billy Patterson" employ minstrelsy's style of black characterization and use Negro dialect. The spellings that Emmett used in the Negro dialect of his songs correspond to West African Pidgin English and also show a study of African American English. There is no "th" sound (ting = thing), no middle or end "v" sound (debbble = devil), final consonant clusters are simplified (tole = told), and unaccented first syllables are often lost (cept = accept). The use of the derogatory word "nigg" and the use of incorrect grammar, such as the word "am" in place of "is", is also common.¹²¹

The solo and choruses of the first verses of "Billy Patterson" and "Black Brigade" are seen in the following example:

¹¹⁷ Marshall Stearns and Jean Stearns, *Jazz Dance: The Story of American Vernacular Dance*. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979), 41.

¹¹⁸ Stearns, 49.

¹¹⁹ Holmberg and Schneider, 30.

¹²⁰ Hans Nathan, *Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 232.

¹²¹ Holmberg and Schneider, 28-31.

“Who Struck Billy Patterson?” Verse one:

Solo: Dar was an old nigg dat got hit wid a brick,

Chorus: Oh! Billy Patterson

Solo: He wasn’t knock’d down kaze his head too thick

Chorus: Don’t y’e tell me, Don’t y’e tell me,

Solo: De first word he said when he was come too

Chorus: Oh! Billy Patterson

Solo: O, don’t hit agin for dat will doo!

Chorus: Don’t y’e tell me, Don’t y’e tell me

“De Black Brigade,” Verse one:

Solo: Dar’s someting rong a brewin’

Chorus: Gwine to jine de Union

Solo: Dar’s someting rong a brewin’

Chorus: Hyro! We go!

Solo: We’re on de brink ob ruin

Chorus: Gwine to jine de Union

Ah ah, ah ah, de boys from Linkum Land

It is unclear whether audiences of the time believed that minstrel representations of blacks were accurate. The critic writing for the 10 March *Clipper* described the speech of African Americans at a meeting assembled in Five Points for the effort of the Freedman’s Bureau. The *Clipper* quotes the African American leader of the meeting (in dialect), who was attacking Andrew Johnson for trying to squash formation of the Freedman’s Bureau: “Who’s Andy Johnson, I’d like to know? Whar did he cum from? He didn’t know noffin till his sister tout him, didn’t she? Couldn’t spell his own name at de very time dat you niggers war a gwine through Horace Greeley’s History ob de War. Wasn’t it? (Cries from the assembly of, ‘Bress ole Brudder Greeley—bress de lam.’) Is such a Linconpoop as dat fit to veto dat Bureau which was built to hold all de human

family? Hay? (Cries of ‘Oh, heave ‘um, heave ole Andy Johnson nigh. Stan’ by, niggers, stan’ by while de fire’s burnin.’)” The critic compared this speech to what one would witness on the minstrel stage and assured his readers that although many people of the day believed that blackface minstrel acts were “mere caricatures of the peculiarities of the colored race,” these acts actually did depict the absurd and ridiculous behavior of African Americans. I suggest that minstrel musical, dance, and speech practices were based in part on West African traditions as transformed in the New World, but that the exaggerated and negative portrayals of blacks in minstrelsy were inaccurate. As minstrels incorporated variety acts into their shows during the 1860s, they described themselves less and less as “delineators” of real American blacks.

Unlike other walkarounds by Emmett, “De Black Brigade” and “Road to Richmond,” support the Civil War and African American participation in the Union cause. Emmett’s walkarounds with non-black subjects, such as “Greenbacks!,” do not disparage African Americans and do not use dialect in their texts. The success that Bryants’ had with these group song and dance acts as finales shows that audiences still appreciated the traditional style of “Ethiopian entertainments” even as burlesques of opera and legitimate theater grew in popularity.

Emmett’s walkarounds often comment on important local and national issues of the day. The fairly standardized song form and performance style of the walkaround allowed Emmett the freedom to compose a large number of these pieces with subjects ranging from the old-time black characterization of “Old K-Y-Ky” (published 1860) to timely praises of Ulysses S. Grant in the “U. S. G. National Walk Round” (published 1864). Working within this format enabled Emmett to keep the subjects of his songs

immediately relevant to the lives and tastes of his audience, while simultaneously fulfilling the public's needs for nostalgia.

Emmett's "Greenbacks!," for example, published in 1863, deals with the adjustment of the American public from gold and silver currency to paper money. The Legal Tender Acts of 1862 and 1863 made paper money a legal substitute for gold and silver, including for the repayment of existing debts. "I Wish I was in Dixie's Land" (published 1860 and first performed by Bryants' Minstrels on Thanksgiving Day, 1859) became the de facto Confederate national anthem during the height of secessionist fervor in the year before the start of the Civil War.¹²² "De Black Brigade" (published 1863) and "Road to Richmond" (published 1864), which Emmett composed during the war, deal with issues related to the war. Topics in "Road to Richmond" include the slave trade, soldiers, and military camps. The protagonists of "Black Brigade" join the Union Army, fight the South in glorious battle, and paddle their boats to freedom in the North.

"Striking Ile," (Example 2.2) was published in 1865 and is one of the most interesting of Emmett's walkarounds. Textually, the first two verses and the choruses deal with the petroleum industry at the time in the United States when the first rock oil wells were causing the collapse of oil prices and the complete reordering of the oil production system. Out of this grew the wide use of kerosene lamps and a subsequent revolution in work and recreational activities because of the availability of cheap light. John D. Rockefeller made his fortune when he founded his refining company, Standard Oil, in 1865 and cornered the oil market.

In verses three through six, Emmett uses the striking oil theme as a metaphor for satirizing the important news of 1864. The third verse describes the economic and

¹²² Bean, 76.

Example 2.2

The Lester S. Levy
Sheet Music Collection
Box 024 #112

"S T R I K I N G I L E."

D. D. EMMETT.

Allegro.



Song.

1. The world it re-volves on its own ax-le-tree, Once in
2. There's law-yers and doc-tors, and men of all grades, Men that

twen-ty-four hours, says G. O. Graf-fee; The ax-le got hot and the
live by their wits, and men that have trades; Thro' old Penn-syl-va-nia they've

Example 2.2 continued

Sheet Music C

world stop a-while And the people have all gone to bor-ing for ile.
trudgd ma - ny mile, With their forty foot au - ger, they're going to strike ile!

CHORUS.

Nev - er strike ile!

Pro - ple get too - ny: run mad for a - while, They'll

bore thro' to Chi - na, be - fore they strike ile!

Example 2.2 continued

The Lester S. Levy
Sheet Music Collection

f

D.C. to song.

3.

Maxmillian in Mexico, has a hard time,
His pockets are empty, he's not worth a dime;
There's no blood in turnips; he'll not make a pile,
If he lives till he dies, he will never "*strike it!*" *Chorus.*

4.

John Bull in his dotage has smelled a big rat,
He'd rather meet Satan, than one democrat;
There's a doctrine called Monroe will stir up his bile,
He may run the blockade, but he'll never "*strike it!*" *Chorus.*

5.

Napoleon the little has lately grown thin,
He's troubled with nightmare and "Duke Dr. Gwin";
We've a small bill against him: *Abe's got it on file!*
Then to balance his ledger, he'll have to "*strike it!*" *Chorus.*

6.

Jeff Davis in Richmond don't get along well;
"His Southern Confederacy's nought but a shell;"
Let him brag and eat fire in true Southern style,
He may dig his "last ditch," but he'll never "*strike it!*" *Chorus.*

End of Chorus.

political difficulties faced by Maximilian I, a member of the Austrian Hapsburg family, who was proclaimed the Emperor of Mexico on 10 April 1864 with the backing of Napoleon III and a group of Mexican conservatives. Verse four, which introduces the English cartoon character John Bull, is a warning to England to abide by the Monroe

Doctrine and to remain neutral during the Civil War. Verse five calls for “little Napoleon” (Napoleon III) to pay France’s debt to the United States. The sixth verse describes the Confederacy’s failing war effort. These issues had great impact on the daily lives and futures of everyone living in the U. S. Much of Emmett’s popularity lay in his ability to frame issues of importance to Americans of all economic classes in the comedic song and dance, which was safe for commentary and humor. Emmett composed “The Wigwam” in May of 1868 in honor of Bryants’ move from Mechanics’ Hall to their new “opera house” on Fourteenth Street, in Tammany Hall, adjoining the Academy of Music.¹²³ Bryants’ advertised performances of this walkaround through October of that year.

Christy’s Minstrels, like Bryants,’ also ended their shows during this season with an afterpiece burlesque and/or a walkaround. Reviews and advertisements of the troupe commented that “many songs and dances wind up the entertainment,”¹²⁴ and that “the whole show concluded with the grand festival dance by the whole company in Emmett’s ‘Whose Feet Dat a Burning?,’ followed by ‘The Committee of Four Maiden Ladies,’ who collect money to buy flannel shirts for babies in Africa.”¹²⁵ There were at least three clear occasions during the season when Christy’s ended its show with a farcical afterpiece without a walkaround: “New Year’s Calls” on 20 January, “The Grand Masquerade Ball” with Balty Sowers, the doorkeeper played by George Christy on 16 April, and “The Black Statue,” on 30 April.

Wood’s advertisements and reviews show that they were less standardized in terms of the order of acts than either Christy’s or Bryants.’ And, unlike Bryants’ and

¹²³ Ibid., 77.

¹²⁴ “George Christy’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 5 February 1866, 5.

¹²⁵ “Christy’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 19 March 1866, 5.

Christy's, Wood's did not perform finale walkarounds during this period. The troupe's shows revolved around their afterpieces, such as "Manager's Triumph," which had six scenes and a fairly complex plot.¹²⁶ Wood's left New York for a tour of the U. S. on 4 January, after which the troupe disbanded.¹²⁷ Henry Wood, the troupe's leader, turned Wood's Minstrel Hall at 514 Broadway into a variety theater called Wood's Theatre. Thorpe and Overin's¹²⁸ and the San Francisco Minstrels also performed afterpieces without finale walkarounds.

The afterpiece was either a comic skit satirizing opera or legitimate theater or an original piece based on local events and issues. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Othello*, as well as Meyerbeer's opera, *L' Africaine* (1865), and Bellini's opera, *Norma* (1831), were popular burlesque subjects. Afterpieces employed full sets and costumes, several (if not all) of the members of the troupe, and a bevy of acts: female impersonation, singing, dancing, gymnastics, and any act able to amaze and astound jaded New York audiences. Burlesques such as Bryants' "The Streets of New York"¹²⁹ and "Black-Eyed William"¹³⁰ (composed by Charlie White) and "The Monster Tin-pan-oni-on"¹³¹ ran approximately thirty minutes each.

Information regarding the songs and instrumental music used in burlesque skits and afterpieces is often difficult to find because advertisements and programs from this period usually give the titles of skits without listing the music performed. However, some conclusions may be drawn based on the titles of skits and the subjects of burlesque.

¹²⁶ "Amusements: Wood's Minstrels," *New York Times*, 23 October 1865, 7. "Amusements: Wood's Minstrels," *New York Times*, 24 October 1865, 4.

¹²⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 39 (6 January 1866): 311.

¹²⁸ "City Amusements," *New York Herald*, 4 December 1865, 5.

¹²⁹ "Review of Bryants' Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 28 May 1865.

¹³⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 40 (13 January 1866): 318.

¹³¹ "Bryants' Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 8 January 1866, 5.

“The Hutchinson Family Burlesque,” performed by Christy’s Minstrels at the end of December 1865, was their satire on the Hutchinson Family Singers, a successful family singing group popular in America and abroad from the 1840s to the 1880s. Minstrel burlesques of the Hutchinson Family and other family singing groups, which go back at least as far as Buckley’s Serenaders in 1857, probably exploited their song repertoire and stage demeanor for comedic ends. The Hutchinson Family initially became popular by singing glees in an informal style with tightly blended, uncultivated voices. The group appealed to middle class values of respectability, family life, self-improvement, and Protestantism. Their early songs were composed by others, but by the mid-1840s they were performing and publishing songs under their own name that were mostly melodies that they reworked and arranged with new texts. Their repertoire covered a wide range of song types: Negro dialect (“Little Topsy’s Song,” 1853), religious (“Mother’s Bible,” 1843), and comic (“Away Down East,” 1846). By 1843 they regularly performed at slavery meetings and temperance conventions. Through their songs they became associated with these causes and later with communitarianism and women’s rights. Their support for these radical ideas eventually alienated conservative audiences but began a tradition that continued throughout the twentieth century in gospel singing.¹³²

Acting editions of the time also provide clues regarding the type of music that accompanied skits. The most fruitful sources of information on skit music and songs are the contemporary newspaper and journal reviews. Occasionally, a reviewer writes a synopsis of an evening’s entertainment including most, if not all, of the program listed in performance order. Even when we do not know which music was performed in skits, the

¹³² Dale Cockrell: “Hutchinson Family,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed [2 April 2004]), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

skit text and production directions found in the published editions provide a great deal of information. Through the text we may develop an idea as to the positions of minstrels toward current events and issues, either by supporting prevailing tastes and values or by satirizing them. The production directions describe contemporary theatrical performance practices.

“The Black Statue,” an original farcical afterpiece,¹³³ which was written by Charley White, is characterized by unlikely, absurd situations and physical humor (Example 2.3). The piece parodies the classical statue acts that were performed at variety halls, in which actors dressed as marble statues in white makeup and flowing robes, and assumed the poses of famous statues. Parodies of statue acts had appeared in blackface performance and minstrelsy since the 1840s. Master Juba (William Henry Lane, b. 1825) performed a “Statue Dance,”¹³⁴ and Christy’s Minstrels performed a group finale number called “Congo Green Dance, introducing Tableaux of Modern and Antique Statuary.”¹³⁵ “Classical Statues” was also a popular act at the Theatre Comique during 1869.¹³⁶

White described “The Black Statue” as a “‘Negro farce’ in one act and one scene.” French’s Acting Edition, which sold for \$.15 at the time of its publication during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, provides all of the information needed to produce this skit—the “stage business,” the relative positions of the actors on the stage during the skit, the props needed, and the type of scenery used, which groups could obtain from French’s free of charge. At the beginning of the text, White gives advice regarding the appropriate type of music to use in a production of his burlesque afterpiece:

¹³³ “George Christy’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 30 April 1866, 5.

¹³⁴ Winter, 44.

¹³⁵ E. P. Christy’s Minstrels’ Program, 1857, Museum of the City of New York.

¹³⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 28 (16 October 1869): 222.

“The curtain rises to light pantomime music.” This bit of information leads to more questions than answers about the music used in these acts. The acting edition of “The Black Statue” also informs us about stage practices such as using red lights to represent fire and using wire suspended from the rafters to represent lightning bolts.

Christy’s performed “The Black Statue” at their Fifth Avenue Opera House for two weeks from 30 December¹³⁷ through 6 January,¹³⁸ on 10 February,¹³⁹ for one week beginning on 30 April,¹⁴⁰ and for one week beginning on 27 May 1867.¹⁴¹ Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels also performed this skit in mid-December 1866¹⁴² and again in January of 1868, while George Christy performed with them at 720 Broadway.¹⁴³ Bryants’ Minstrels put on a burlesque of this minstrel skit (a burlesque of a burlesque) during October 1869 at their Fourteenth Street Opera House.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 38 (30 December 1865): 302. “George Christy’s Opera House,” *New York Herald*, 29 December 1865, 5.

¹³⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 39 (6 January 1866): 311. “Amusements,” *New York Herald* 1 January 1866, 5.

¹³⁹ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 10 February 1866, 5.

¹⁴⁰ “George Christy’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 30 April 1866, 5.

¹⁴¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 7 (25 May 1867): 56.

¹⁴² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 35 (8 December 1866): 278.

¹⁴³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 41 (18 January 1868): 326.

¹⁴⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 26 (2 October 1869): 206.

Example 2.3

THE BLACK STATUE.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Curtain rises. PETE and JAKE discovered thrashing one on a m., the other L. M. Light Pasternine music.*

PETE (*advances front*). Say, Jake, I'm tired.

JAKE (*also comes front*). Oh, pshaw! Pete, you're the greatest fellow I ever saw. You no sooner get your breakfast dan you holler out for your dinner, and as soon as you get your dinner you want to go to bed.

PETE. Well, I ain't a going to work any more, I'm tired.

JAKE. Tired already, eh? and you haven't been out of bed over half an hour. Pete, it wouldn't do for old Squintum to see you idling your time away in this manner.

PETE. I don't care for old Squintum—I wouldn't go to work if he was to tell me to.

SQU. (*cooaks from inside*). Yes, mommy, that will do, my love. I'll jest go out and see how the boys are getting along.

[PETE and JAKE work much faster.]

SQU. Ah! that's it, my boys, I'm glad to see you work so lively. Look here, Jake (*calling*). Have you got that bag of grain ready for me?

JAKE. Yes, sir, I hab had it ready for you half an hour ago.

SQU. Well, then, just give me a lift with it (*gets bag*), and I will be off down to the mill. Now be sure to have the other bag ready by the time I get back.

PETE and JAKE. Yes, sir, we'll have it ready.

[SQUINTUM is leaving, and JAKE hits him on the bag with flail. SQUINTUM turns round, but JAKE lays the blame on PETE. They repeat the same thing once more.]

SQU. Ah! that's the worst boy I ever saw. I got him from a Quaker family, and that's the reason I like him. [*Bells, &c.* JAKE (*watches him*). Out of sight, out of mind.

[*He throws down his flail. PETE does the same.*]

PETE. Say, Jake, let's hab some fun.

JAKE. I'd like to see anybody hab fun dat works for old Squintum.

The Black Statue.

PETE. Let's get Rose out, and hab a game of blindman's buff.

JAKE. A game of blindman's buff. I golly! I'd like to see some blind man play buff with us. Oh, how we would skin him.

PETE. No, no! I don't mean bluff wid de cards, I mean blindman's buff wid a han'kerchief.

JAKE. Oh, yes, wid a han'kerchief ober de eyes.

PETE. Yes.

JAKE. Why dat's what de little boys play; but it ain't no matter, I'll play anything. But we must hab somebody else to play dat, 'kase you and me ain't enough.

PETE. We'll get Rose out, and den we can soon find play more dat will play.

JAKE. Yes, get Rose out, and I'll go and get Jim, too.

PETE. Well, get Rose out first.

[JAKE goes to the Cottage in theatrical style (*music*), and gives three claps with his hands. ROSE opens the door and pushes JAKE away. She then discovers PETE, and runs down to him.]

ROSE. Dear me! what are you making such a noise about? what do you want?

JAKE. I don't want anything 'ticular. Pete, dar, wants to see you 'bout somethin'. [*He walks up stage.*]

ROSE. What do you want, Pete?

PETE. Why, Rose, we want to hab a little fun. A game of blindman's buff; won't you join us?

ROSE. Well, I have no objections, although it doesn't look very nice to be so familiar with colored people.

[*Looking at Jake.*]

PETE. Oh, nonsense, Rose. I would as lieve associate wid Jake as with any brother I have. Jake is an honest feller if his skin is dark. Come, won't he blind first?

JAKE. It won't be me 'kase I want to see how to better my buckwheat cakes; besides, if you go blind first I can see you.

ROSE. Well, Pete, you be blindfolded first.

JAKE. Yes, 'an de one dat gets catched first must git a shilling (*he proceeds to tie the handkerchief round PETE's eyes—after doing which he turns PETE around three times*). There now, catch whoever you can.

[*All accompers around to keep from being caught. JAKE hits ROSE to look out; and at the same moment is himself caught by PETE.*]

PETE (*holds him fast*). Ah, Rose, I know'd I'd catch you. [*He pulls handkerchief from his eyes, and is much annoyed at his great mistake.*]

JAKE. Pshaw! what a fool I was! No matter, it was fair, and I owe you a shilling.

Example 2.3 continued

<i>The Black Statue.</i> 5 ROSE. Now, Pete, tie the handkerchief around Jake's eyes, and let's see who he can catch. [PETE is about putting on the handkerchief.] JAKE (<i>interrupts him</i>). Now, Pete, understand! I owe you a shilling, if I catch you, dat will make us square, and dee you will owe me a quarter. PETE. All right. [And he whips him about as before. ALL run around in various directions, when SQUINTUM is observed coming home. ROSE hurries off into the Cottage. PETE resumes his threshing, leaving JAKE groping his way to find them.] JAKE (<i>catches SQUINTUM in his arms</i>). Ah, ha! I got you for the quarter! SQU. Let go, you rascal! [JAKE still holds the OLD MAN firmly. SQUINTUM tears the handkerchief from his eyes. Picture. JAKE runs to his work instantly.] SQU. (<i>calls him front, and demands an explanation</i>). Come here, sir, you vagabond. [JAKE advances slowly and foolishly.] SQU. Now, sir, what's been going on here? Come, out with it immediately! JAKE. Nuffin. SQU. "Nuffin?" Come, tell me all about it. What was all that running about just as I came in? JAKE. I dun know, sir. SQU. What was you doing with that handkerchief over your eyes? JAKE. I had a headache. SQU. "Had de headache," eh? Well, who was it that ran into the house? JAKE. Oh, dat was me. SQU. Why, you rascal, how could it be you, and you right here having hold of me? Now, you black devil, if you don't tell me what's been going on here, I'll break every bone in your body! So come, out with it. JAKE. Well, we was only playing blindman's buff. SQU. What? Was you playing bluff? where did you get the cards from? JAKE. Oh, no, we didn't hab any cards; we was playing wid a han'kerchieb' ober de eyes. SQU. Oh, you mean blindman's buff? JAKE. Yee, dat was it. SQU. Who was playing with you? Speak, or I'll murder you! [PETE in the background, very noisy, tries to catch JAKE's eye, and excites him from telling.] JAKE. Why, it was Pete, and Rose, and—	<i>The Black Statue.</i> 6 SQU. (<i>very angry</i>). What! and was my daughter Rose out here? JAKE. Yee, sir. SQU. Look here, sir; how dare you presume to take the liberty of getting my daughter out here to play with you fellows on the farm, and that, too, with such company! Come here, sir (<i>to PETE</i>). Go right into the house, and get your things—I don't want you any longer. [PETE starts for the house reluctantly.] JAKE. Say, Mr Squintum, don't turn him away. SQU. Hold your tongue, you black rascal, or I'll turn you away, too (<i>PETE returns from the house with his bundle</i>). Now, sir, I believe there is three cents coming to you on the last month's wages (<i>he pays PETE</i>). There, sir, don't ever let me see you round my premises again. JAKE. Say, Pete, don't take my overcoat. OLD MAN. Jake, you come right in the house as soon as you can get done with that grain. [<i>Exits in cottage.</i>] JAKE. Yee, sir. [PETE and JAKE stand looking at each other for some moments without speaking.] JAKE (<i>begins to cry</i>). Pete, dat was all my fault. PETE. Never mind, Jake, I forgive you. [PETE and JAKE still stand looking at each other, when they advance and embrace. JAKE crying as they shake hands.] JAKE. Say, Pete, I'll come to work wid you wherever you go. I always liked you, Pete; 'kase when we used to sleep together you kept me so warm. PETE. Very well, Jake. [<i>SQUINTUM calls from within.</i>] JAKE. Yee, sir. PETE. Good-by, Jake. JAKE. Good-by, Pete. [<i>Exits, crying, into cottage.</i>] PETE. Well, I didn't think that old Squintum would turn me away for such a trifle. Never mind, I don't care; I've got plenty of clothes (<i>looks at bundle</i>), and I may yet get Rose in spite of him. [<i>He prepares to start.</i>] <i>Enter PILGRIM, R.H.</i> PIL. Hallo, my lad, do you want a job? PETE. Well, yes, I think I do, for I've just lost one. PIL. Ah! then you're just the chap I'm looking for. PETE. You see, old farmer Squintum turned me away because I'm in love with his daughter Rose. PIL. Well, do you love her? PETE. Yee, sir—ee! PIL. Now, what would you do to get her? PETE. What would I do? I would do most anything but murder.

"The Black Statue," although not a local skit in the strictest sense, deals with several subjects of interest to contemporary audiences, including race and slavery, class, love, and marriage. The story comprises a series of comedic situations held together by a thin plot. The comedy of the skit, which relies on flour gags, hitting, and punching, is designed to show the foolishness of the central authority figure, wealthy Farmer Squintum, and to bring about the victory of the underdog hero, Pete, the poor white farm hand. Jake, the black slave, plays an important role in the drama as the driving force behind all of the comedy in the skit.

This afterpiece takes place on the farm of Old Squintum (played by Carroll), a farmer who is known to love curiosities, and opens with a “warm landscape, a picket fence, and a cottage set on the right” of the stage. The scene opens with Pete (played by W. S. Budworth) and Jake (played by Charley White) thrashing wheat sheaves. The plot revolves around the desire of Pete and Squintum’s daughter, Rose (played by Vincent) to marry against her father’s wishes. After Pete gets thrown off the farm for fraternizing with Rose, he meets a swindler named Pilgarlic (played by Wood). Pilgarlic, “a sly cove at money-making,” senses an opportunity to separate Squintum from some of his money after listening to Pete’s story. Pete agrees to participate in Pilgarlic’s scheme in order to get back into the farm to see Rose. Pilgarlic paints Pete white to look like marble and sets him on a base with a fake crank. He rolls his “statue” up to the home of Squintum and for \$1000 offers to sell him his amazing curiosity that changes into the positions of famous statues such as Ajax defying the lightning, Hercules, Cain killing Abel, and others when the crank is turned. Squintum buys the statue immediately, but Jake is not fooled. When Jake inspects the statue later, he realizes that it was Pete in disguise, and that he and Rose have run away to get married. Jake decides to try to swindle another \$1000 out of Squintum and turns himself into a black statue (thus, the skit title) and steps onto the base. Squintum, however is not fooled twice, and threatens to break every bone in Jake’s body when he learns of Rose’s departure. The skit ends with the return of Rose and Pete, who are now married. Squintum and Mrs. Squintum (played by Sexton) accept Pete into their family and begin preparations for a party to celebrate the nuptials. Suddenly, a terrible storm overtakes the farm and lightning sets the cottage on fire. The skit ends with a melodramatic final scene and an exciting finale stunt in which the

Squintums run around the stage chaotically, Jake is hoisted into the air in order to pour a bucket of water on the cottage, and Rose faints in Pete's arms.

The four principal relationships in "The Black Statue" provide examples of the slipperiness of attitude that minstrels presented on important issues. The relationships between Jake and Pete, Pete and Rose, Pete and Squintum, and Jake and Squintum either reflect or satirize prevailing views on race and class, depending on how one interprets the text. Jake, the black slave, and Pete, the white farm hand, work together and are friends who team up against authority, Squintum. The characteristic that they share and that ties them together at the bottom end of the social strata is that they both speak in "Negro" dialect. Although Jake is black and Pete is white, their speech, which separates them from the rest of the cast who speak proper English, clearly binds them together. Charley White is either confirming (favorably) the friendship of Jake and Pete or satirizing it through a short conversation between the two men and Rose at the beginning of their game of Blindman's Bluff. When Rose objects to appearing "so familiar with colored people," Pete responds that he and Jake "are as close as brothers, and she shouldn't worry about such stuff."¹⁴⁵ This text is an example of minstrel writing that simultaneously satirizes and upholds majority values. One could interpret this line of text as either a satirical dig at black emancipation or as a vote in favor of it. Only the tone of the actor's voice while speaking the line would enable an audience to discern the real meaning of this text. Whether most white audiences of the time shared a feeling of closeness to blacks is debatable, but the tone of this text at least partially supports the idea that some

¹⁴⁵ Charles White, "The Black Statue," French's Acting Edition, n.d., New York Public Library, Humanities, 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, General Research Division, third floor. The first acting edition of Charley White's "The Black Statue" was published in 1859 by Frederic A. Brady (Brady's Ethiopian Drama, 24 Ann St., NY). It cost \$.13 per copy or \$1 for ten copies. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 12, no. 36 (24 December 1859): 286.

segments of contemporary white society agreed that this was a positive sentiment.

Unlike the diverse array of German and Irish characters in minstrelsy during the 1860s, black characters were limited to a few types such as contented plantation blacks, low-comedy fools, and pretentious incompetents.¹⁴⁶ Jake serves as an example of the last category. He always knows who is being swindled or fooled but continually breaks things and gets into trouble during the skit.

The forbidden love between Pete and Rose, Squintum's daughter, shows the class conflict between the rich farmer (and his daughter) and the poor worker, Pete. Although Squintum forbids her marriage to Pete and expects Rose to improve herself and her family by marrying an affluent man from a similar financial background as her own, she wants to marry Pete. After their elopement, Squintum accepts the marriage and welcomes Pete into the family. Unlike Jake, who has no avenues by which to escape the class to which he was born through marriage or otherwise, Pete, who is white, is able to raise himself up to a higher class through his marriage to Rose.

The relationship between Jake and Squintum involves race—the conflict between blacks and whites—and class—the conflict between slave and master (or worker and employer). Jake is not viewed as a real or complete person by the audience or by the other characters. He has no real responsibilities, no hope of self-improvement, and no hope for the future—nothing for which to strive. The only role he is expected to play is that of the ignorant but street-smart servant who is always getting the better of Squintum. The one dimensionality of Jake leaves him available to serve as the vehicle for the comedy. Jake takes every opportunity that presents itself to undermine Squintum's authority. The first gag that he pulls off involves hitting Squintum with his wheat

¹⁴⁶ Bean, 99.

thrasher every time he turns around to leave the scene. Every time Jake pokes him with his tool, Squintum quickly wheels around to see who is taunting him. Jake successfully deflects blame to Pete and repeats the gag. The second gag of the skit takes place at the end of Rose, Pete, and Jake's game of Blindman's Bluff. Unlike Rose and Pete, Jake is blindfolded and does not see Squintum approaching them. Jake grabs Squintum and rejoices thinking that he has won the game. All he has won, however, are the fists and curses of Squintum. In the next gag Jake puts flour in the handkerchiefs of Squintum and Pilgarlic while on his way to feed the hogs. When Squintum wipes the sweat off of his brow, he unknowingly covers his face with white flour. The use of white powders in gags in America goes back to the Callithumpians of the 1820s and 30s. The *New York Clipper* also reported flour gags at both the San Francisco Minstrels and Bryants' Minstrels on 21 April 1866. The final gag between Jake and Squintum occurs when Jake, who is pretending to be the statue, belts Squintum with his fist as Squintum cranks the statue's handle. Physical comedy of this kind, including the continuous breaking of crockery throughout the skit by Jake, was the bread and butter of farces in post-Civil War minstrelsy.

Minstrels drew on current local and national events, including the war, for sketch material, and few subjects were beyond the reach of parody. Burlesque skits that dealt with subjects of interest to the people of New York and its environs were very popular and made up a large percentage of the burlesques performed between 1865 and 1870.

T. "Daddy" Rice, a native New Yorker, born in the seventh Ward in 1808, originated the tradition of popular blackface acts on local subjects in his Ethiopian operas. His *Long Island Juba, or Love by the Bushel*, performed at the Bowery Theatre

in January 1833, featured a group of New York “blacks.” In May 1834 again at the Bowery, he cast his Jim Crow character in a New York topical production entitled *Life in New York, or the Major’s Come*. In this Ethiopian opera, Rice, as Jim Crow, sang a description of an omnibus ride, a trip to Harlem, and life in Five Points.¹⁴⁷ Local minstrel burlesques, as well as legitimate dramas based on New York life, grew in popularity with the working class during the following three decades because they fostered a sense of community through satirical and humorous commentary on the issues that were important to them.¹⁴⁸

The local skits that minstrels performed also reveal much about contemporary popular thought. The plot and subtext of the skits show which topics were important enough to lampoon, what type of humor audiences appreciated, and what people of the time thought was funny or interesting. “Manager’s Triumph, or Black-Mailer’s Defeat,” performed by Wood’s Minstrels, is a six-scene blackface skit dealing with the conflict over advertising between New York’s theater Managers’ Association, especially P. T. Barnum (1810-91) and Max Maretzek (of the Italian Opera), and James Gordon Bennett, the elder (1795-1872) of the *New York Herald*. After Barnum’s Museum burned down in July 1865, Bennett purchased the land on which Barnum’s had stood in order to construct a new building for his *New York Herald*. Barnum and Bennett argued over this underhanded purchase, and the *Herald*, as a result, refused to run advertisements for Barnum. At the same time Bennett was also attempting to strongarm the theater managers of New York into advertising their show programs in his daily theatrical publication called *The Playbill*. For several years many of the managers had been

¹⁴⁷ Burrows and Wallace, 489.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 758.

advertising their playbills in *The Programme*, an independently published theatrical daily, and the main competition for Bennett's *Playbill*.

The members of the Managers' Association (William Wheatley, [President], Mrs. Wood, Max Maretzek, P. T. Barnum, J. Lester Wallack, Mr. Stuart, James Lingard, G. L. Fox, Dan and Neil Bryant, R. Butler, Henry Wood, and R. Platt) met at the Metropolitan Hotel on 25 September, across from Christy's Fifth Avenue Opera House and decided to side with Barnum and throw over Bennett. They also threatened to withdraw their advertisements and patronage from the *Herald* if Bennett did not reinstate Barnum's ads, to which Bennett responded that he would do as he liked.¹⁴⁹ Max Maretzek went so far as to cut off Bennett's free admission to the Italian Opera.¹⁵⁰ By the middle of October the managers and Bennett had reached an impasse. Bennett ridiculed Barnum and Maretzek in the *Herald*, calling Barnum "Joyce Heth¹⁵¹ in breeches" and Maretzek an "oily gammon." Theater-goers came out on the side of the managers, and this conflict did not hurt business for any of the theaters in the association. In fact, the 13 October edition of the *Clipper* reported that the halls in the association actually had the highest attendance of all of the theaters in New York.¹⁵²

Bennett used the anti-obscurity movement, which was expressed through the Anti-concert saloon legislation of April 1864, as a convenient tool for exacting revenge on the Manager's Association for their rebellion. In retaliation for the manager's boycott, Bennett called on Beecher, Chapin, and other leaders of the church to aid him in bringing

¹⁴⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 26 (7 October 1865): 206.

¹⁵⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 22 (9 September 1865): 174.

¹⁵¹ Burrows and Wallace, 643. P. T. Barnum began his career in show business when he purchased the black slave, Joyce (or Joice) Heth, in 1835. Barnum advertised her as General George Washington's nurse, although this would have made her over 160 years old. Her body was examined at the time of her death in 1836, and it was determined that she was not above seventy years old.

¹⁵² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 27 (13 October 1865): 214.

about moral reform in New York by closing down certain immoral theaters: those that did not advertise in the *Herald*. In the 16 December edition of the *Herald*, Bennett called for the state legislature to put these theaters out of business and to aid reform by imposing an increased theatrical license tax of \$5000 on these establishments. Through the *Herald* Bennett campaigned against what he called the particularly irreligious establishments: theaters, minstrel halls, and concert saloons.

However, the rupture between the *Herald* and the Manager's Association was nearly healed by November. The members of the association (except for Barnum and Maretzek) finally responded to Bennett's overtures asking them to return to the *Herald*. As a result, after a year of poor reviews, the *Herald* praised *The Black Crook*, a highly popular bare-legged female revue show being produced at Niblo's.¹⁵³

Wood's parody, "Manager's Triumph," was a huge success and ran for five weeks from 23 October through the week of 9 December. The critic for the 4 November *Clipper* wrote that the first week of this production was fraught with problems (actors did not know their lines and backdrops came down at the wrong times) but improved with each performance. Attendance also improved during its first week, so that the hall was packed by the Saturday night show on 28 October. Wood's Minstrels "get off first-rate hits at the expense of the editor man, which affords the audience a fund of humor."¹⁵⁴

"Manager's Triumph" opens with Satan (played by Cool White, 1821-91) in council. Satan learns about the quarrel between Gordon the Black Mailer (James Gordon Bennett) and the theater managers from his messenger and decides to give the New York boys some excitement. Satan begins stirring up trouble by burning down Barnum's

¹⁵³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 28 (21 October 1865): 222.

¹⁵⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 30 (4 November 1865): 238.

Museum, and Barnum, played by James H. Budworth (d. 1875), enters and soliloquizes over his misfortune. Gordon (played by Clark) then enters and discusses buying the Museum property from Barnum while he scratches Barnum's back with a stage wing. They exit to talk the matter over. The third scene takes place in Gordon's office, where several other men (and Satan in disguise) are seated at desks busily writing. Gordon enters and orders a column to be written damning Maretzek¹⁵⁵ and the Italian Opera and threatening the destruction of the Academy of Music (the home of the Italian Opera) for refusing to loan fancy dresses to him for a party in Washington Heights. The scene changes to the theater managers' meeting (Lester Wallack played by C. Henry), in which, after much deliberation and discussion of their rights, they decide not to advertise in the offending paper and "vote the *Playbill* a bad bill." They sing "We Will Be Free" and "Ain't we glad to get out of the Wilderness."¹⁵⁶

The skit continues in Gordon's home, where he is visited in his sleep by the ghosts of Kellogg,¹⁵⁷ Bellini,¹⁵⁸ and the managers, who "announce his fate *à la Macbeth*." Satan arrives to take Gordon to hell, and as Satan grabs for Gordon, he seizes a huge pen and duels with Satan and his fork. The skit ends in an enchanted grove where the managers bid farewell to hell-bound Gordon. They sing "Goodbye, Jim" and "From Black Mail We are Free" as Gordon falls through the trap door with Satan. The

¹⁵⁵ Max Maretzek (1821-1897) came to New York and began conducting the Italian Opera at the Astor Place Opera House in 1848. He began his impresario career in 1849, conducting and managing companies in New York, mainly at the Academy of Music, and on tours in the U. S., Cuba, and Mexico.

¹⁵⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 30 (4 November 1865): 238.

¹⁵⁷ This is a reference to Clara Louise Kellogg (1842-1916), the famous American soprano from Sumter, SC. Kellogg debuted in New York as Gilda in *Rigoletto* with Max Maretzek and the Italian Opera Company at the Academy of Music on 27 February 1861. She appeared in London, toured the United States, and ran her own opera company, the English Opera Company, from 1873 to 1876. "Clara Louise Kellogg," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [5 January 2004]), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.

¹⁵⁸ "Amusements," *New York Times*, 8 October 1866, 5. This is a reference to the basso opera singer, Sig. Bellini, who sang with Kellogg in Maretzek's Italian Opera Company in New York. Bellini and Kellogg were performing with the Italian Opera Company at the Academy of Music (and at the Brooklyn Academy on 10 October 1865) at the time that Wood's produced "Manager's Triumph."

burlesque ends with a banner hung across the stage reading, “This Establishment Does Not Advertise in the *Herald*.”¹⁵⁹

The large and growing community of Irish in New York and around the country fostered the popularity of Irish subjects with Irish and non-Irish people alike, and by December Fenianism and Fenian dramas were popular all over the country. Wood’s followed “Manager’s Triumph” with “A Fair Fenian Fight for Freedom,” which was a six-scene blackface skit written expressly for Wood’s Minstrels that was favorable to the Irish cause for freedom, a sentiment popular with Irish immigrant audiences.¹⁶⁰ The *Clipper* reported on 9 December that this drama was favorable to the Fenian cause and that it showed the present and future states of Ireland. The *Clipper* expected the burlesque to be very popular, writing that “if only a small portion of the Fenians in this city attend, the hall will not be large enough to accommodate them.”¹⁶¹ Besides Wood’s production, three other halls in New York were producing Fenian dramas at this time—*Arrah na Pogue* alternated nights with Edwin Forrest’s classical productions at Niblo’s, 444 Broadway put on the afterpiece, “Fenianism: Ireland Past, Present, and Future,” and Tony Pastor (1835-1908) produced the drama, “The Fenian’s Dream,” or “Ireland, Free at Last,” as part of his variety show.¹⁶²

Wood’s “A Fair Fenian Fight” deals with the secret revolutionary society organized in America and Ireland circa 1858. Fenians took their name from the ancient Irish military corps that governed Ireland in the third century B. C. in the service of the high kings. Known as the Fenian Brotherhood, the Fenian Society, the Irish Republican

¹⁵⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 30 (4 November 1865): 238.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 278.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

Brotherhood, and the Irish-American Brotherhood, the Fenians sought the violent removal of the English from Ireland.¹⁶³ “A Fair Fenian Fight” is in six scenes and deals with subjects such as Irish friends fighting wrongs together, rebellion, mastery over one’s life and property, and triumph over tyranny. Wood’s advertisement in the 9 December *Clipper* lists its scenes and songs: Scene one: Brother Jonathan’s Yankee Notion Shop, Squaring Up Accounts, Prosperity of the Concern, Mike Fenian Claims Protection from J. Bull, etc. . . , Pat’s Wrongs, Jonathan’s Promise to Stand by him, ending with the song, “When Fenians Fight for Freedom;” Scene two: A street in Jonathan’s Village, Jonathan Resolves to Help the Fenian Brotherhood because “He’s Nothing Else to Do;” Scene three: Hall in John Bull’s Mansion, Bull, Nappy, and Max conspiring against the Peace of Jonathan, Jonathan’s Bill of Damages, A-la-bama Rage of Bull, The Fenians Troublesome Customers for the British Lion, The Forbidden Song, “Wearing of the Green,” This is Rebellion; Scene four: Pat’s Cabin, The Fight for Freedom, Pat is Master of his own House, Defeat of Bull, Nappy, Max, and Co., Triumphs of the Fenians, Jonathan and Co., The Lion Subdued; Scene five: Grand Allegory, “The Shamrock,” Ireland is Free, Erin go Bragh; Scene six (finale): the song, “The Voices of Irish Patriots” and Grand Tableaux.¹⁶⁴ The skit contains the songs “When Fenians Fight for Freedom,” “He’s Nothing Else to Do,” “The Shamrock,” “The Voices of Irish Patriots,” and “The Wearing of the Green.” “The Wearing of the Green” (composed by Dion Boucicault and E. H. House, published 1865) is a two-verse song written in an Irish dialect that deals with anti-British Irish nationalism. The lyrics of the first verse are:

O Paddy dear, and did ye hear the news that’s goin’ ‘round?

¹⁶³ “Fenian Movement,” *Columbia Encyclopedia*, 2003 ed. (Accessed [28 January 2003]), <http://encyclopedia.com/html/section/Fenianmo_origins>.

¹⁶⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 34 (9 December 1865): 280.

The shamrock is by law forbid to grow on Irish ground!
 No more Saint Patrick's Day we'll keep, his color can't be seen,
 For there's a cruel law ag'in the Wearin' o' the Green.
 I met with Napper Tandy, and he took me by the hand,
 And he said, 'How's poor ould Ireland, and how does she
 stand?'
 She's the most distressful country that ever yet was seen,
 For they're hanging men and women there for the Wearin'
 o' the Green.¹⁶⁵

Both "Manager's Triumph" and "A Fair Fenian Fight" succeeded in the mass market because they had immediate relevance to their time, and they both portrayed the victory of underdogs over tyranny. The minstrel audience identified with the plight of the managers, the Irish, and people everywhere who fought back against oppression.

Both Bryants' and the San Francisco Minstrels performed Shakespeare and Menken burlesques during May 1866. Bryants' "Shylock" ("painted in dark colors") combined blackface, Irish, and local elements with Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* (1596 or 1597). Bryants' kept the original names of the characters in *Merchant*. Dan Bryant, as the Duke, brought new life to this role, although his rich Irish brogue made his performance much different than what the "immortal Shakespy intended."¹⁶⁶ Rollin Howard, as Shylock, "pleaded passionately for the colored flesh" and became enraged when he found himself foiled.¹⁶⁷ Nelse Seymour (1835-75) played a commanding Portia, and the *Clipper* praised the clear tone of his voice, the accuracy of his costume, and the breadth of his intellectual capacity. Charles Henry, as Antonio, was brought into the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 4 (5 May 1866): 30.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

New York Court of Justice for debts. The critic wrote that Henry played his role so well, that he must have had an “attack of the shorts” in real life.¹⁶⁸

The San Francisco Minstrel’s burlesque of Adah Isaacs Menken’s (1835-68) *Mazeppa* performances at the Broadway Theatre was entitled “Mazeppa a la Menken.”¹⁶⁹ Menken played minor roles until June 1861, when she began performances as the lead in *Mazeppa, or The Wild Horse of Tartary*—a melodrama based on Lord Byron’s poem, *Mazeppa* (published June 1819)—that opened at Albany’s Green Street Theatre. For the sensational climax of the piece, Menken’s captors stripped her and strapped her to a horse while wearing flesh-colored tights that gave her the appearance of nudity under dim lights. She rocketed to fame overnight with this production and toured extensively throughout the United States and Europe.¹⁷⁰ Charley Backus, in drag as Mazeppa, shared the spotlight with the Trained Mule Foxey and was received with “shouts of laughter.”¹⁷¹ Bryants’ Minstrels’ burlesque of Menken’s *Mazeppa*, also entitled, “Mazeppa a la Menken” and performed on 12 May 1866, included a hurdle act given by Dan Bryant.¹⁷²

Pastor’s variety troupe continued to attract large audiences through May 1866 with Johnny Mack, Charley White, and Lew Brimmer, one of the best banjo players in burnt cork, in his Ethiopian corps.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 8 (2 June 1866): 64.

¹⁷⁰ “Adah Isaacs Menken,” *New York Public Library Online* (Accessed [3 October 2003]), <<http://www.digilib.nypl.org/digital/>>.

¹⁷¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 8 (2 June 1866): 62.

¹⁷² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 5 (12 May 1866): 38.

¹⁷³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 4 (5 May 1866): 30.

Conclusion

The minstrel show as pioneered by Christy's Minstrels in the late 1840s and standardized during the 1850s came to an end during the 1865-66 season. The reordering of society by the Civil War allowed for change in the business of entertainment. Newly freed blacks asserted their independence, resulting in the first all black male troupe, the Georgia Minstrels. The style of productions began to change as minstrelsy absorbed elements of variety and began to experiment with the traditional three-part format.

Chapter Three: 1866-1867

The 1866-67 season was a turning point in New York minstrelsy. The genre began to respond to changes in audience demands, especially those of the increasingly powerful female patrons.

The close of the previous season brought an end to three of the most popular, influential, and long-running resident troupes, Bryants', George Christy's, and Wood's Minstrels, which opened the way for new resident and short-term troupes and repertoire. Many of the minstrels from Bryants', Christy's, and Wood's troupes continued to perform in the city in new or reorganized companies. This is the first season after the war in which women, who had been performing legitimate acts at variety halls, were seen in traditional blackface acts at these halls, and in one case as a member of the traditionally all-male minstrel corps. In this chapter I describe the activities of New York's minstrel troupes and variety companies with Ethiopian corps, the role of the minstrel band, the instrumental music heard in minstrel and variety halls, burlesque subjects, theater earnings, and the role of women in minstrelsy.

The State of the Union

The Union's leniency toward the South after the war did not lead to a reconciliation of the former enemies. Like New York's exporters, importers, shippers, and bankers, theater managers and performers wanted to repair their antebellum connections with the South. Although Southern planters, merchants, entrepreneurs, and entertainers were eager for Northern funds, the hatred of the general Southern populace toward the North made it difficult to conduct business in safety. Much of the Southern

white population seemed more determined to subordinate newly freed blacks than to reestablish pre-war business ties. The massacre of blacks and the pillaging of their churches, schools, and homes by whites in Memphis, Tennessee in May 1866 and in New Orleans in July 1866 angered and shocked New York businessmen. These events bolstered the radical wing of the Republican Party, which argued for tougher treatment of the South. Although this movement began in New York City and won many federal congressional seats in both the Senate and the House, the city government remained staunchly Democratic after the fall 1866 elections.¹

After the war great changes occurred in terms of who paid for and ultimately led the direction that industrialization took in the United States. New York bankers largely replaced the city's merchants in financing economic growth. The panic of 1857 wiped out most of the older generation of traders, and a new breed of brash, big-stakes gamblers took its place. These financiers wheeled and dealt in an atmosphere of fast-paced growth and virtually unregulated trading. They were adept at maneuvering within the New York City political system of bribery and graft, as well as at conducting high-risk market speculation. Brokerage houses proliferated in downtown Manhattan, especially after the completion of the Transatlantic Cable² and the invention of the stock ticker, patented in 1867.³

Northern bankers turned their attention westward when the South did not accommodate their drive to industrialize. The race to complete the transcontinental railroad created a national marketplace and brought in huge foreign investments. The rail boom spurred industrial growth including iron, and later, steel production and mining

¹ Burrows and Wallace, 906-07.

² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 17 (4 August 1866): 134.

³ Burrows and Wallace, 909, 911.

from Pennsylvania to Colorado. As immigrant workers poured into the U. S. to fill the new jobs, urban development accelerated, commercial agriculture began, and the West and Northeast entered a new era of growth and change.⁴

Veterans returning from the war and newcomers from Europe and the South exacerbated New York's housing crisis. A looming cholera outbreak that had reached Europe in August 1865 forced New York State's legislature in Albany to create the Metropolitan Board of Health in February 1866. The board had the power to order sick individuals into the hospital and to force landlords to rectify unsanitary living conditions. For the city's more than 700,000 residents, 495,592 of whom lived in 15,309 multifamily dwellings (seven families per building, on average), facing the threat of diseases such as cholera was a part of everyday city life. The fourth ward, which encompassed all of lower Manhattan below Chatham Street,⁵ had the highest population density in the entire city: 290,000 people per square mile. Due to the board's efforts, the cholera, which killed 1200 people in Cincinnati and 3500 in St. Louis, killed only 500 in New York, despite its much larger population.⁶

In addition to improvements in city health, an important development in theater safety occurred at the end of 1866 when the state government enlarged New York's Department of Buildings with a full-time staff and ratified the United States' first comprehensive building code. The head of this bureau, the inspector of public buildings, finally banned the use of camp stools in theater aisles.⁷ New York was cleaning up in both a physical sense and at least partially in terms of its image. Despite the popularity of

⁴ Ibid., 908-09.

⁵ "The Fourth Ward: Life and Death in New York, 1860-70." Accessed 1 February 2005 <<http://vm.uconn.edu/~pbaldwin/sanmapl.html>>.

⁶ Burrows and Wallace, 920-21.

⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 40 (12 January 1867): 318.

family-oriented variety shows, critics in both the *New York Herald* and the *New York Clipper* railed against the bare legs and the vulgarity, which continued to flourish in legitimate shows such as Niblo's *The Black Crook* and *The White Fawn*.

New York Minstrelsy

The theater world also attempted to renew pre-war ties between the North and the South during the 1866-67 season, but progress was slow, and the entertainment business suffered. A *Clipper* editorial advocated the free exchange of Northern and Southern performers and a normalization of relations between the former enemies.⁸ Although newspaper reports abound as to the poor state of theatrical business at this time, blackface minstrelsy continued to draw large audiences: "the nigger business is growing more popular every day—the people rush to minstrel halls in droves—children cry after the colored folks, and smooth-faced maids and whiskered men alike pay homage to the blacks."⁹ Ticket speculation also became a problem, which indicates that there was a healthy demand for theatrical entertainments.¹⁰

The 23 December 1865 *Clipper* stated that New York, with a population of less than one million people, had almost as many halls and theaters as London, with a population of three million: one opera house, nine theaters, two circuses, two first-class music halls, several minor halls, and five minstrel halls. At the start of the fall 1866 season, only three halls of minstrelsy—the San Francisco Minstrels, Hussey and Taylor's Original California Minstrels, and Budworth's Minstrels—and two variety shows with

⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 36 (15 December 1866): 286.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 25 (29 September 1866): 198.

minstrel acts—Pastor’s and Charley White’s—were active. The San Francisco Minstrel troupe was the only resident company that returned from the previous season.

New York’s three remaining resident troupes at the end of the spring 1866—Christy’s, Bryants’, and the San Francisco Minstrels—left the city during the summer for tours of the states. Christy’s closed at the beginning of June and departed on 9 July with the intention of returning to the Fifth Avenue Opera House at the end of August.¹¹ Bryants’ closed at Mechanics’ Hall (472 Broadway) on 2 June with a benefit for Neil Bryant, briefly toured through New Jersey, New York State, and Connecticut, and commenced a summer season at Philadelphia’s Chestnut Street Theatre under Neil’s management.¹² Dan Bryant left his minstrel troupe and joined the legitimate boards in Irish dramas on 11 June at Wallack’s,¹³ where he performed the lead roles in *Born to Good Luck*,¹⁴ *Handy Andy*,¹⁵ and *The Colleen Bawn*¹⁶ during the summer season. Although the *Clipper* reported on 23 June that the failure of the Fenian invasion in Canada had weakened the popularity of Irish productions by this time, the Irish dramas and skits at Wallack’s and at other New York theaters remained highly popular.

The San Francisco Minstrels played their last month of the 1865-66 season as the sole minstrel troupe on Broadway.¹⁷ They ended their uninterrupted run of sixty-one weeks on Broadway on 7 July.¹⁸ Like Bryants’ and Christy’s Minstrels, who were on the road in July, the San Franciscans left for a short tour of the states surrounding New York

¹¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 12 (30 June 1866): 94.

¹² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 8 (2 June 1866): 62.

¹³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 7 (26 May 1866): 54.

¹⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 10 (16 June 1866): 78. Charles Reade (1814-84) wrote *Born to Good Luck* in ca. 1866.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Samuel Lover (1797-1868) wrote *Handy Andy* in 1842.

¹⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 12 (30 June 1866): 94. Dion Boucicault wrote *The Colleen Bawn* in 1860.

¹⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 9 (9 June 1866): 70.

¹⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 13 (7 July 1866): 102.

on 9 July, beginning in Newark, New Jersey. During their absence their hall at 585 Broadway was refurbished, cleaned, and repainted in anticipation of the fall opening.¹⁹ With the improved gas lighting and rearranged and increased seating capacity, every person in the audience could see the entire stage. They also frescoed the ceiling and put new carpeting in the orchestra section for the comfort of their fashionable patrons.²⁰ The fate of Cool White's troupe, which opened in New York in the middle of May 1866, is unknown.

New minstrel companies and variety troupes with minstrel corps took over the city's entertainment scene during the summer, when the resident troupes left town. The short summer season began in earnest toward the end of June and closed around the beginning of August, lasting approximately six weeks. The summer troupes performed combinations of minstrelsy and variety acts that were similar to those performed by New York's resident troupes, with slightly more emphasis on variety.

Tony Pastor's regular variety troupe left his Opera House for Boston by 9 June²¹ in order to make way for Sam Sharpley and Tony Pastor's Minstrel and Variety Troupe, which opened for the summer at that hall two days later.²² They closed at 201 Bowery earlier than expected due to slow business caused by the extreme summer heat.²³ In spite of the early closing, Sharpley's short four-week run had financial success. The *Clipper* reported their receipts for the season at \$69,029.00. After subtracting the \$47,611.00 that

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 19 (18 August 1866): 150.

²¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 9 (9 June 1866): 70.

²² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 10 (16 June 1866): 78.

²³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 13 (7 July 1866): 102.

Sharpley claimed to have used for expenses, the *Clipper* reported that he would probably use his profit of \$21,418.00 “to invest in a brownstone front uptown.”²⁴

Charley White’s Great Variety Troupe opened on (Monday) 25 June at Bryants’ lately vacated Mechanics’ Hall (472 Broadway) with a show similar to Sharpley and Pastor’s. White’s company had been performing at 444 Broadway (Butler’s American Theatre) when the theater burned down on 15 February 1866.²⁵

Sam Sanford’s Minstrels opened at the Old Bowery Theatre on Friday, 6 July, bringing minstrelsy back to its Bowery roots. After the San Francisco Minstrels and Sharpley’s closed, Sanford’s became the only minstrel troupe performing in New York at midsummer.²⁶ But the intense heat kept visitors away from the city, and Sanford’s, like Sharpley and Pastor’s, experienced poor patronage and closed their season early on 28 July. The close of Sanford’s meant that not one minstrel troupe was now performing in New York.²⁷ Sanford’s left New York to continue touring soon after their close at the Bowery.²⁸

By the beginning of August, the fate of New York’s resident troupes was in question. The 9 June *Clipper* reported that the Bryant brothers were dissatisfied with the downtown location of their hall and wanted to look for a spot farther uptown when they returned from touring. Their revenues were too low and their rent too high to sustain their troupe at Mechanics’ Hall. But instead of relocating to a new hall at this time, Bryants’ Minstrels disbanded, and the members joined other troupes. Charley White leased Mechanics’ Hall for the upcoming regular fall season and employed Neil Bryant

²⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 15 (21 July 1866): 118.

²⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 46 (24 February 1866): 366.

²⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 14 (14 July 1866): 110.

²⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 16 (28 July 1866): 126.

²⁸ “Theatrical Record: Negro Minstrelsy,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 19 (18 August 1866): 150.

and Nelse Seymour, late headliners of Bryants, in his Ethiopian corps.²⁹ Bryant also managed the company for White. Dan Bryant continued with legitimate drama at Wallack's.³⁰

Although the 23 June *Clipper* reported Christy's intention to return to the Fifth Avenue Opera House at the end of August,³¹ they were still touring at this time due to their poor income during the 1865-66 season.³² Charley White's and Pastor's variety troupes (with Ethiopian corps), which had reopened at the beginning of August, evidently did enough business through the month to justify remaining open.³³ By mid-August troupes that spent the summer away from New York and people who had escaped the city's summer heat began to return.³⁴

The first to open for the regular fall season (25 August) were the California Minstrels, who had not performed in New York in sixteen years.³⁵ They remodeled Hope Chapel at 720 Broadway and renamed it the Academy of Minstrels, which, depending on one's point of view, was intended either to poke fun at the Academy of Music or to associate the troupe with legitimacy. However, due to the troupe's poor quality, it did not last long in New York's competitive scene and closed on 5 September "for want of patronage."³⁶

Kelly and Leon's Minstrels leased Hope Chapel by the middle of September³⁷ and began further renovations to the hall. They opened for their first season in New York on

²⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 16 (28 July 1866): 126.

³⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 15 (21 July 1866): 118.

³¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 11 (23 June 1866): 86.

³² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 14 (14 July 1866): 110.

³³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 17 (4 August 1866): 134.

³⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 19 (18 August 1866): 150.

³⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 20 (25 August 1866): 158.

³⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 23 (15 September 1866): 182.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

24 September,³⁸ and their operatic burlesques greatly influenced New York minstrelsy in this and future seasons.

W. S. Budworth, manager and leader of Budworth's Minstrels, leased the Fifth Avenue Opera House from George Christy and opened on Monday, 27 August.³⁹ Minstrels late of Bryants', including James Garatagui, the cornet virtuoso, made up a large part of Budworth's company.⁴⁰ The San Francisco Minstrels opened on 3 September,⁴¹ and Sharpley's Minstrels returned to join forces with the variety company at Tony Pastor's Opera House later that month. Christy's Minstrels remained on tour and were performing in Baltimore at the Maryland Institute at the start of the season.⁴²

By the time that the fall season was in full swing in November, three minstrel troupes—San Francisco (585 Broadway), Budworth's (Fifth Avenue Opera House), and Kelly and Leon's (720 Broadway)⁴³—and two variety troupes with minstrelsy—Charley White's Great Variety Troupe (472 Broadway) and Tony Pastor's Combination Troupe with Sam Sharpley (201 Bowery)⁴⁴—were operating in New York. Although the *Clipper* reported that Dan Bryant had secured the New York Theatre around 10 November⁴⁵ for a new minstrel troupe, he was still performing on the "white boards" in Pittsburgh during the first week of January 1867.⁴⁶

Receipts between January and November 1866 (Table 3.1) show that legitimate drama and pantomime earned the highest profits of New York's theaters during this year.

³⁸ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 24 (22 September 1866): 191.

³⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 19 (18 August 1866): 150.

⁴⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 20 (25 August 1866): 158.

⁴¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 1 September 1866, 7.

⁴² "Theatrical Record: Negro Minstrelsy," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 19 (18 August 1866): 150.

⁴³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 30 (3 November 1866): 238.

⁴⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 30 (3 November 1866): 240.

⁴⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 31 (10 November 1866): 246.

⁴⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 39 (5 January 1867): 310.

The average amount of income generated per month ranged from \$31,453 at Niblo's to \$15,297 at the Olympic. Niblo's earned staggeringly more than any other theater with its wildly popular musical extravaganzas such as *The Black Crook* and *The White Fawn*, both of which were also subjects of minstrel burlesque. The minstrel shows for which 1866 receipts are known—Kelly and Leon's and the San Francisco Minstrels—made between one-sixth and one-third of what the legitimate theaters earned. The variety shows with minstrelsy earned about the same or slightly less than minstrel troupes.

Table 3.1, Theater receipts, January-November 1866

THEATER	RECEIPTS JAN.- NOV.1866
Niblo's Theatre	\$345,987
Winter Garden	\$208,740
Wallack's Theatre	\$195,456
Olympic Theatre	\$168,277
Tony Pastor's Opera House	\$67,128
Charley White	\$33,850 (June-Nov. 1866)
The San Francisco Minstrels	\$72,635 (for nine months in 1866)
Kelly and Leon's Minstrels	\$11,618 (Oct. and Nov. 1866 only)

Aside from a short post-holiday slump during the first two weeks of the New Year, October through March was the best time for theater revenues. Earnings declined steadily from April through June, which was the last month in the regular theatrical season. Although resident troupes and troupes from out of town gave short summer

seasons between June and August, the summer months were generally poor for earnings, with July being the worst month of the year.⁴⁷

The elections that took place on 6 November⁴⁸ and cold weather activities such as skating, sledding, weddings, balls, parties, and distracted the public from theater-going during the fall.⁴⁹ The political meetings at the Cooper Institute at the beginning of November drew huge crowds and hurt business. “The streets were alive with men and boys, who came to the institute from all directions and the firing of rockets and Roman candles, as well as the music as the processions moved along took the crowd with them, and this knocked show business higher than a kite.”⁵⁰ Only three halls had crowded houses during this week—Niblo’s with *The Black Crook* (Barras), the Broadway Theatre with Maggie Mitchell in *Little Barefoot*, and the San Francisco Minstrels.⁵¹ The scantily-clad ballet girls of Barras’ *The Black Crook*⁵² (Niblo’s) and *Cendrillon*⁵³ (New York Theatre) filled their halls and attracted all of “masculine New York.”⁵⁴ The heavy winter snow in mid-December also hurt business for New York’s indoor places of amusement, but attendance picked up somewhat during the Christmas holidays. The matinees around Christmas at legitimate theaters, circuses, minstrel halls, museums, and variety halls were especially well-attended.⁵⁵ By mid-January the *Clipper* reported that the whole country

⁴⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 41 (19 January 1867): 326.

⁴⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 31 (10 November 1866): 246.

⁴⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 37 (22 December 1866): 294.

⁵⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 31 (10 November 1866): 246.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 37 (22 December 1866): 294.

⁵⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 38 (29 December 1866): 302.

⁵⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 39 (5 January 1867): 310.

was waiting to see what Congress would do about Reconstruction. Subsequently, the trades were dull and theatrical business in the West and the East was in decline.⁵⁶

At mid-season W. S. and J. H. Budworth disbanded their troupe, Budworth's Minstrels, at the Fifth Avenue Opera House, and George Christy left Kelly and Leon's to open Griffin and Christy's Minstrels at that hall on 21 January.⁵⁷

Performers, their family members, and members of management at theaters continued to take benefits during this season and throughout the rest of the 1860s. A benefit given for Mrs. James Connor took place at Tony Pastor's Opera House on the afternoon of 25 February. All but one of the volunteer performers appeared, and the house filled up with more women than had ever been present at a Pastor's matinee. The box office receipts (\$340.75), other tickets sold (\$303.50), and contributions (\$68.00) totaled \$712.25. After deducting \$47.20 for expenses, Mrs. Connor received \$665.05, which was more than the receipts from any variety hall benefit in New York up to that time.⁵⁸

A few minstrel and variety troupes with minstrel corps opened towards the end of the regular season: Chases's Minstrels, Butler's American Theatre, and the Worrell Sisters. Chase's troupe, a new minstrel organization, leased the hall on the corner of Eighth Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street and opened on Monday evening 13 May. H. A. Chase, the manager and director, secured Hughey Dougherty, S. S. Purdy, George H. Coes, James Buckley, J. W. Clark (banjoist), Charles Church, Adolph Nicols (violinist), W. Robertson, W. Fields (dancer), M. Riley, R. H. Burchard, and H. Melville for the

⁵⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 40 (12 January 1867): 318.

⁵⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 20 January 1867.

⁵⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 48 (9 March 1867): 382.

troupe.⁵⁹ Butler's, a variety company with a minstrel corps, was reorganized at Mechanics' Hall (472 Broadway), and the Worrell Sisters, who headed a burlesque drama and music troupe, opened at the New York Theatre (728 and 730 Broadway, opposite the New York Hotel).⁶⁰

At the end of the 1866-67 season women began to perform traditional minstrel acts in blackface for the first time since the end of the war. Wood's had advertised a female member of their troupe as far back as 1858,⁶¹ and an entire troupe called The Female Minstrels had performed at the Broadway Varieties (12 Grand Street) in 1859.⁶² During the war women also occasionally appeared in minstrelsy but were not seen on the minstrel stage during the 1865-66 season. The return of male performers from the military and from the South and West may have swelled the numbers of male minstrels in New York, temporarily excluding the female performers from the stage. The blackface performances given by women during this season mark the beginning of women as a powerful force in American popular musical entertainment.

Easter week did not revive theater attendance after the usually poor period for theaters during Lent. During the war people in New York had money and spent it. Now theaters, even Niblo's *Black Crook*, were hardly crowded.⁶³ As the season drew to a close the temperatures in New York steadily rose. The summer heat severely reduced theater attendance in New York, and even the San Francisco Minstrels were doing only fair business at the end of June.⁶⁴ Tony Pastor began providing free ice water and fans to

⁵⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 6 (18 May 1867): 46.

⁶⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 1 July 1867, 7.

⁶¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 26 September 1858, 7. See Julia Daly, page 86.

⁶² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 26 October 1859, 7.

⁶³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 4 (4 May 1867): 30.

⁶⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 12 (29 June 1867): 94.

patrons during the second week of June in order to alleviate the effects of the heat.⁶⁵

Pastor closed on 29 June and went to Boston for the summer.⁶⁶ He made approximately \$90,000 during this forty-eight-week season,⁶⁷ which was an increase of an average of two thousand dollars per month from his January through November 1866 monthly income. Pastor's income for this season made his show the most profitable of the variety shows with a minstrel corps in New York.

Griffin and Christy's ended its regular season on 29 June with a benefit for G. W. H. Griffin. The highlight of the show was a revival of "The Biglimb Ballet Troupe in the characteristic features of the 'Black Crook.'" ⁶⁸ To heighten the excitement during this final show of the season, during the afterpiece a \$100 dollar note was thrown at the most "graceful" dancer on stage.⁶⁹ Dan Bryant was still touring and performing in New York on the white boards in May.⁷⁰ He returned to Wallack's for the summer in legitimate Irish productions on 10 June.⁷¹ White closed his variety hall on Tuesday night 30 April and went on tour for three weeks, beginning in Pittsburgh on 4 May.⁷² The San Francisco Minstrels closed during the last week of June and commenced a season in Washington, D. C. at the National Theatre on 31 June.⁷³ Kelly and Leon's closed on 22 June and appeared in Boston for a short season.⁷⁴

Minstrels and variety troupes sought to attract the same breadth of audience, although reviews of their shows and descriptions of audience behavior are sometimes

⁶⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 11 (22 June 1867): 86.

⁶⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 12 (29 June 1867): 94.

⁶⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 13 (6 July 1867): 102.

⁶⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 12 (29 June 1867): 94.

⁶⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 12 (29 June 1867): 95.

⁷⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 4 (4 May 1867): 30.

⁷¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 12, no. 11 (22 June 1867): 86.

⁷² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 3 (27 April 1867): 21.

⁷³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 12 (29 June 1867): 94.

⁷⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 11 (22 June 1867): 86.

contradictory. The variety programs presented by companies such as Charley White's appealed to people ranging from old men to "sweetly disposed young ladies,"⁷⁵ and because no smoking or drinking were allowed, White's audience in particular was filled with women.⁷⁶ The *Clipper* reported that White's "performers are very guarded as to what they say on the stage, and we have yet to hear anything said that would cause any lady to wish that she had not attended."⁷⁷

Although these and other reviews of White's shows describe them as respectable and indicate that women made up the majority of the audience, it seems that the rowdy spirit of Five Points and the interaction between performers and audience was still alive. A critic writing for the *Herald* reported on a night in October 1866, when White's audience yelled "cat-calls, whistl[ed], and hiss[ed] in the democratic manner in the true old Bowery style without regard to sex or time, and the audience [was] almost as ludicrous as the troupe."⁷⁸ Regarding the same performance, the critic also wrote that "sometimes the audience made such queer and telling remarks that the actors laughed at them."⁷⁹ Notwithstanding the *Herald's* description of the movements of White's ballet corps as "chaste and classic" (including dancing *en pointe*) and the report "that [the dancers] were not too scantily dressed,"⁸⁰ they seemed to elicit a response from the audience that could only be described as crude.⁸¹

The *Clipper* reported on 20 October that although Budworth's Minstrels' hall was located on Fifth Avenue, it also attracted an economically diverse audience and gave "a

⁷⁵ "Amusements: Charley White's Combination Troupe," *New York Herald*, 21 August 1866.

⁷⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 23 (15 September 1866): 182.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ "Amusements: Charley White's," *New York Herald*, 10 October 1866, 7.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ "Charley White's Combination Troupe," *New York Herald*, 23 October 1866, 7.

⁸¹ "Amusements: Charley White's," *New York Herald*, 15 October 1866, 4.

program to amuse all classes—Fifth Avenoodles, Broadwayders, and Bowery Slopers.”⁸²

Attendance at Budworth’s must have been acceptable to the “Fifth Avenoodles” because the “ladies and gentlemen in their neighborhood” bought a matinee performance of the troupe, which was open only to those invited. Over 200 private carriages pulled up to the front of the hall for the performance.⁸³

Between 1864 and 1866 the price of the cheapest minstrel hall tickets in New York increased by at least twenty percent, and the prices for private boxes more than doubled. In 1864 Campbell’s Minstrels charged \$.25 for general admission, .50 for orchestra seats, and \$2 for private boxes at the Bowery Theatre (199 and 201 Bowery).⁸⁴ At its opening in fall 1866, Budworth’s Minstrels charged \$.35 for the dress circle, \$.50 for orchestra chairs, and \$.75 for reserved seats,⁸⁵ which was in line with what Bryants’ had charged earlier that year: \$.30 for the family circle, .50 for the parquet, and \$5 for private boxes.⁸⁶ Kelly and Leon’s charged \$.75⁸⁷ at the same time, which was more than twice the price of Budworth’s cheapest seats.

For a brick layer who earned approximately five dollars per day, the thirty-five cent ticket price amounted to about seven percent of his salary, or roughly the percentage of the cost of a ten dollar movie ticket purchased by someone earning one hundred and fifty dollars a day in 2005. The same thirty-five cent ticket for a seamstress or a dressmaker, who earned between one hundred and two hundred and fifty dollars per year,

⁸² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 28 (20 October 1866): 222.

⁸³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 38 (29 December 1866): 302.

⁸⁴ Ad page, *New Yorker Staats Zeitung und Herold*, 26 June 1864.

⁸⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 20 August 1866.

⁸⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 1 January 1866, 7.

⁸⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Times*, 8 October 1866, 7.

amounted to a much greater expenditure of between forty and one hundred percent of the daily wage.⁸⁸

Both minstrel and variety shows generally began at 8:00 p. m., with Saturday matinees at 2:00 p. m. or 2:30 p. m., and lasted approximately two hours.⁸⁹

Minstrel troupes continued to recycle old skits and songs during this season. George Christy of Griffin and Christy's Minstrels (Fifth Avenue Opera House) brought acts and skits that he had performed during the 1865-66 season with his troupe, Christy's Minstrels, with him to the different troupes that he later joined. Griffin and Christy's performed the afterpiece, "The Black Statue" (Example 2.3, pages 132-33), which Christy's Minstrels had performed during the previous season,⁹⁰ at the end of May 1867.⁹¹ Minstrels also brought back the old songs, such as Otto Burbank's performance of "Old Bob Ridley" with Griffin and Christy's during the same month.⁹²

Minstrel Programs

The format of minstrel shows during this season mostly remained mostly unchanged from the previous one, with vocal and minstrel band music and the comedy of the endmen in the first part, an olio with a variety of skits and group and individual numbers, and an afterpiece (third part) comprised of one long musical burlesque. The blackface song and dance acts, stump speeches, and comedy that were traditional to minstrelsy were still present in the first part and olio, but more of the music in shows, such as ballads and instrumental music, came from the popular and legitimate realms.

⁸⁸ Burrows and Wallace, 988, 878.

⁸⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 24 (22 September 1866): 190.

⁹⁰ "George Christy's Opera House," *New York Herald*, 29 December 1865.

⁹¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 7 (25 May 1867): 55.

⁹² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 4 (4 May 1867): 31.

Walkarounds, which were highly popular during the previous season, were performed by the short-lived California Minstrels in September 1866 and rarely during the remainder of the season. The Ethiopian corps at variety halls continued mostly to perform the small-scale acts of minstrelsy interspersed within variety numbers, which included feats of strength and speed.

The *Clipper* reported that “whatever the sensation of the day may be, the management [of minstrel companies] seize upon it and place it before the public in burlesque shape.”⁹³ In addition to plentiful opera burlesques, burlesques of local and contemporary subjects, as well as dramas, opera and theater stars, and non-minstrel troupes that were in New York, such as the Japanese acrobats, appeared frequently.

During the first two weeks of December, the San Francisco Minstrels produced their burlesque entitled “The Black Crook,” while the *Black Crook*, the subject of the burlesque, was running at Niblo’s. They also produced a burlesque act entitled “Meteoric Showers,” which was based on two nights of meteor showers that were predicted for the first week of December.⁹⁴ Panorama and pantomime, which had been a mainstay at such variety halls with Ethiopian corps such as Charley White’s 444 Broadway and Pastor’s at 201 Bowery during the previous season, were performed for the first time on the minstrel stage by the San Francisco Minstrels.⁹⁵ In fact, their “Shadow Pantomime,” which was seen for the first time on 8 October,⁹⁶ had been performed (probably in a different version) at 444 Broadway during the previous season.

⁹³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 34 (1 December 1866): 270.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 41 (19 January 1867): 327.

⁹⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 26 (6 October 1866): 208.

Dutch characterizations and Irish subjects were also among the most plentiful and popular of their skits.

The increased length and musical complexity of this season's afterpieces brought about a more important role for the minstrel band. New York minstrels had burlesqued opera since the late 1840s, but Kelly and Leon's Minstrels' lavishly produced burlesque opera skits and afterpieces, especially those based on operas by Offenbach, which they produced during this and later seasons, influenced the repertoire of all of the city's minstrel companies. Kelly and Leon's troupe of twenty was the first minstrel company in New York to focus on lengthy opera burlesques, which suited the talents of Francis Leon, the star and (male) minstrel prima donna of the troupe. A typical show by Kelly and Leon's during this season included several burlesque operatic skits and one lengthy operatic afterpiece. The emphasis on music and topics of local interest by Kelly and Leon's is seen in this *Clipper* review: "They burlesque topics of the day, sentimentalize, are fun-loving, and make music through all of this."⁹⁷ Kelly and Leon's opening show, for example, on 1 October was highly musical and, specifically, operatic in nature.⁹⁸ It began with the chorus in "selections from 'Sicilian Vespers,'" which were well sung and well received. They continued with their vocal quartet, Kelly's ballad, "Marion Lee," and "Leon in his role of an opera figurante and display of agility in pas excellent, in which he sang 'Il Bacio' in falsetto."⁹⁹ That evening they also performed the operetta, "Two Doves," as well as several short musical burlesques.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 37 (22 December 1866): 294.

⁹⁸ "Amusements: Kelly and Leon's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 1 October 1866, 5.

⁹⁹ "Amusements: Kelly and Leon's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 2 October 1866, 7.

¹⁰⁰ "Amusements: Kelly and Leon's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 1 October 1866, 5. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 27 (13 October 1866): 214.

For their second week in New York, Kelly and Leon's performed Leon's burlesque of Eichberg's *Doctor of Alcantara*¹⁰¹ entitled, "Doctor of All-Can-Tear-Her," for the first time, and George Christy joined the troupe as an endman.¹⁰² In this musical burlesque Kelly sang a "charming serenade, 'Wake Lady, Wake,' which concluded the afterpiece and the show."¹⁰³ Other popular operatic acts produced by Kelly and Leon's during this season include Leon's imitations of some leading contemporary operatic singers in the sketch, "Prima Donna from the Country,"¹⁰⁴ Kelly's operetta, "Matrimony,"¹⁰⁵ Kelly's "Five Minutes of Italian Opera,"¹⁰⁶ Leon's burlesque operetta, "Domestic Bliss,"¹⁰⁷ "Kelly as the Great Director Growl (a burlesque of J. Grau) in Leon's 'Trovatore' burlesque,"¹⁰⁸ "Two Prima Donnas,"¹⁰⁹ and Leon's singing of the Grand Trio from *Lucrezia Borgia*.¹¹⁰ The afterpieces, "Cinder-Leon,"¹¹¹ a burlesque of Niblo's *Cendrillon*, and the operetta "\$7000,"¹¹² which Kelly and Leon's called original burlesque operettas, were their two most popular large-scale pieces of the spring 1867.

Although the extravaganzas *Cendrillon* and *The Black Crook* were wildly popular, there were those who worried about the effects of the bare legs shown by the

¹⁰¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Times*, 8 October 1866, p. 7. Eichberg's *Doctor of Alcantara* was running at the New York Theatre at this time.

"Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 15 October 1866, 7. Admission to the New York Theatre was \$.75.

¹⁰² "Amusements: Kelly and Leon's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 8 October 1866, 5. Leon wrote this opera burlesque.

¹⁰³ "Amusements: Kelly and Leon's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 10 October 1866, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ "Amusements: Kelly and Leon's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 15 October 1866, 4.

¹⁰⁶ "Amusements: Kelly and Leon's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 22 October 1866, 4.

¹⁰⁷ "Amusements: Kelly and Leon's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 30 October 1866, 7.

¹⁰⁸ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 45 (16 February 1867): 359. This may have been similar to Buckley's "Trovatore" burlesque from 1856 (see pages 67-68).

¹⁰⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 46 (23 February 1867): 363.

¹¹⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 6 January 1867.

¹¹¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 46 (23 February 1867): 366.

See also *New York Herald*, 16 January 1867.

¹¹² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 41 (19 January 1867): 326.

ladies of the ballet on the morals of society, especially on men. The *Clipper* railed against the “offensive language and disgusting remarks” that were yelled out by the audience attending *Cendrillon*.¹¹³ The attacks certainly did not dissuade minstrels from burlesquing the day’s most popular theater. The San Francisco Minstrels and Kelly and Leon’s both ran their burlesques of *Cendrillon* while it appeared in December and January. The San Franciscans entitled theirs “Cendrillon” after the original,¹¹⁴ and Kelly and Leon’s was called “‘Cinder-Leon,’ with the Grand Madagascar Ballet Troupe,” with Leon as the prima donna.¹¹⁵ This piece was one of Kelly and Leon’s first extravagant productions with splendid wardrobe, scenery, and tableaux.

Budworth’s troupe of more than twenty minstrels presented blackface shows during the fall that featured many musical acts and appealed to a wide audience. Like Kelly and Leon’s, many of Budworth’s acts were musical and/or operatic, and the troupe’s band figured prominently in shows. Rollin Howard, Budworth’s “wench specialist,” was the highlight of their program for the week beginning on 29 October in the “Grand Burlesque on the Bateman Concerts.” This was Howard’s first appearance in this burlesque on Euphrosyne Parepa (1836-1874), the famous Scottish soprano.¹¹⁶ During the fall Parepa was performing opera excerpts and art songs with other famous singers in Bateman’s Concerts at Steinway Hall,¹¹⁷ which were conducted by Theodore

¹¹³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 38 (29 December 1866): 302. *Cendrillon* was performed at the New York Theatre.

¹¹⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 37 (22 December 1866): 294.

¹¹⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 41 (19 January 1867): 327.

¹¹⁶ Harold Rosenthal and Elizabeth Forbes: “Parepa (-Rosa), Euphrosyne [De Boyescu, Parepa],” Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy (Accessed [9 December 2004]), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>. Parepa made her opera debut in Malta in 1855 as Amina in *La Sonnambula*. In 1865 she came to the United States on a concert tour with Carl Rosa, whom she married in February 1867.

¹¹⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 2 November 1866, 7.

Thomas.¹¹⁸ Example 3.1, an excerpt from “The Nightingale’s Trill,”¹¹⁹ a song about a bird, is an arrangement of a song that she performed in a concert in 1865, which may have been performed by Howard. This strophic song with chorus is arranged for soprano and piano and is meant to display a trained and talented voice. The melody of the piece is comprised of chord outlines, wide leaps, ornaments (including lengthy trills), rubato sections, and extends to a high B. The vocal cadenza near the end of the piece would have been a moment for Parepa to demonstrate her virtuosity.

¹¹⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 7 November 1866, 7.

¹¹⁹ The music for “Nightingale” was composed by Wilhelm Ganz, the words were written by Zeila, and the piece was arranged for piano and voice by D. Angelo.

Example 3.1, “Nightingale’s Trill,” excerpt

The image shows a musical score for an excerpt titled "Nightingale's Trill." The score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. The first system begins with the tempo marking "a tempo." and the lyrics "But be it by day or at eve as you will..... Song bird of night, I would". The second system continues with the lyrics "hear thy sweet trill". The third system has the lyrics "Song bird of night, I would hear thy sweet trill, I would hear thy sweet trill, thy". The fourth system concludes with the lyrics "sweet, sweet trill. I would hear thy sweet trill, thy sweet, sweet trill!". The piano accompaniment features a variety of textures, including arpeggiated figures, block chords, and trills. A first ending bracket is present in the fourth system. The score is numbered "4" in the top left corner and "1007 - 4" in the bottom left corner.

Budworth's band would have accompanied Howard with arrangements of the orchestral parts of the opera selections and songs for which Parepa was famous. The *Herald* critic wrote that Howard "most effectively acted the buffoon; screeched in falsetto

with no time or tune; copied her style, dress, manner, and habitual smile; mimicked her peculiar habit of bowing first to the orchestra and then to the audience and finally to the leader; and copied her style of singing.”¹²⁰ In later advertisements the troupe retitled Rollin’s piece “Mad. Red Pepper in Bakeman’s Concerts.”¹²¹ Parepa and other prima donnas of the opera, such as Tostee and Ristori,¹²² were also subjects of Leon’s burlesques. In one such act he sang the new Parepa waltz, “L’ estasi,” which was one of Luigi Arditi’s vocal waltzes, with Kelly as the conductor, Thomas.¹²³

During their second week, Griffin and Christy’s, like Budworth’s and Kelly and Leon’s, also gave a Parepa burlesque. Their version was done as an afterpiece and included a parody of conductor Theodore Thomas as well. It was entitled, “The-o-door Tom-a-toe’s Grand Orchestra,” with Sig. George Chrissirio (played by George Christy), Mme. Red Pepper Abbottino (played by Fred Abbott), and Sig. Carlo Foremost. Abbott, who was famous for his wench acts, performed the role of Parepa. The minstrel orchestra, which was integral to the burlesque of Theodore Thomas’ orchestra,¹²⁴ was directed by J. Morrison.¹²⁵ Another orchestral burlesque that Griffin and Christy’s performed was called “The Philharmonic Concert.”¹²⁶

Howard’s and Leon’s Parepa burlesques demonstrate the fluidity of theater patronage that existed in New York at this time. Minstrel audiences must have attended opera and classical concerts, otherwise no one would have gotten the comic thrust of the

¹²⁰ “Amusements: Budworth’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 30 October 1866, 7.

¹²¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 30 (3 November 1866): 240.

¹²² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 25 (29 September 1866): 198. The San Francisco Minstrels and other troupes burlesqued Ristori.

¹²³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 29 December 1866. J. Leybach arranged this piece for piano and it was advertised in the *New York Herald* in December 1868. *New York Herald*, 20 December 1868.

¹²⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 28 January 1867.

¹²⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 49 (16 March 1867): 387.

¹²⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 10 (15 June 1867): 79.

burlesque. Preston writes that American instrumental ensembles of all kinds during the last three decades of the nineteenth century—marching and concert brass bands, dance bands, and theater orchestras—played a repertoire that was highly operatic in origin: arrangements of opera and operetta pieces, quadrilles, lancers, and waltzes, as well as instrumental versions of popular songs. Theater orchestras at dramatic, comedy, opera, or variety halls played operatic selections before the show began, during scene changes, and at intermission. Americans of various social and economic classes were familiar with the music of opera because they heard it played at concerts, at operas, in theaters, and at dances.¹²⁷

As seen in the many Parepa burlesques that minstrel troupes produced concurrently during this season, troupes often parodied the same popular subjects, especially hits of the legitimate theater and opera, at the same time. Griffin and Christy's, Kelly and Leon's, and the San Francisco Minstrels all performed burlesques on Niblo's musical extravaganza *The Black Crook*,¹²⁸ emphasizing the bare-leg revue, as well as of the Japanese acrobatic troupe during the spring.

The San Francisco Minstrels' performed their burlesque afterpiece¹²⁹ on the *Black Crook* from 29 September¹³⁰ through the end of October.¹³¹ It was advertised under various titles including "The Black Crook"¹³² and "The Screaming Black Cook and the African Ballet Troupe."¹³³ The *Herald* reported that the "colored ballet [at the San

¹²⁷ Katherine K. Preston, "Between the Cracks: The Performance of English-Language Opera in Late Nineteenth-Century America." *American Music* 21, no. 3 (fall 2003): 360.

¹²⁸ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 10 (15 June 1867): 79. The *Black Crook* ran at Niblo's Garden. Its performance there on 4 May 1867 was its 233.

¹²⁹ "Amusements: San Francisco Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 1 October 1866, 5.

¹³⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 25 (29 September 1866): 198.

¹³¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 28 (20 October 1866): 224.

¹³² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 25 (29 September 1866): 198.

¹³³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 41 (19 January 1867): 327.

Francisco Minstrels was] in a state of undress almost as good as a white-skinned corps at a Broadway theater.”¹³⁴ Griffin and Christy’s burlesque on this piece, which was entitled similarly, “The Black Crook with the Biglimb Ballet Troupe,” was their afterpiece hit of the spring.¹³⁵ The final scene of the piece (and the show) was the “Palace of Dewdrops,” in which real water was used for special effect.¹³⁶ It ran for eight weeks and was withdrawn from the boards on 13 April.¹³⁷ Kelly and Leon’s did their own “Black Crook” burlesque with “refreshing beauties” in the cast,¹³⁸ and rather than an afterpiece, theirs was a short burlesque skit. The troupe’s advertisement in the *Clipper* on 29 April marked the 115th performance of this act.¹³⁹ Kelly and Leon’s performed this skit through May and continued to program it in 1868.

Gymnastic and acrobatic acts had been popular throughout the season but reached the height of their popularity when the Japanese troupe [of acrobats, gymnasts, high-fliers, and top-spinners] took up residence at the Academy of Music on 6 May.¹⁴⁰ By the time they had arrived in New York from earlier performances in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D. C., all of the minstrel troupes and musical halls in the city, including the San Franciscans, Griffin and Christy’s, Pastor’s,¹⁴¹ Lingard, and Kelly and Leon’s, were producing burlesques of the acrobats. The Japanese troupe’s performance began with one performer balancing twelve tubs on his feet while lying on his back. Then, “All-Right,” one of the youngest in the troupe, performed antics on top of the tubs, kicked the tubs away, and landed on the man’s feet. This act was followed by top-

¹³⁴ “Amusements: San Francisco Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 10 October 1866, 7.

¹³⁵ “Amusements: Fifth Avenue Opera House,” *New York Herald*, 27 February 1867, 7.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 2 (20 April 1867): 14.

¹³⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 49 (16 March 1867): 387.

¹³⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 3 (27 April 1867): 22.

¹⁴⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 6 (18 May 1867): 46.

¹⁴¹ Pastor began his Japanese burlesque on 20 May 1867.

spinning, the butterfly trick, slack rope dancing, balancing a heavy screen on the feet, gymnastic feats on a suspended bamboo pole, and concluded with the enchanted ladder and the flight of All-Right by a cord from the theater dome over the proscenium to the second circle.¹⁴²

San Francisco's take-off, in which Birch, Wambold, Bernard, Backus, and Lew Brimmer appeared, was entitled, "All-Right and his Japanese Cat."¹⁴³ In Lingard's burlesque, Johnny Allen impersonated All-Right, and the contortionist named Monteverdi parodied the Japanese Ladder act. They concluded the burlesque with a version of the final act of the Japanese troupe, in which they sent a dummy down a wire from the top of the proscenium to the dress circle.¹⁴⁴ Kelly and Leon's was the most elaborate of the Japanese burlesques and was the only one done as an afterpiece. The minstrels dressed in Japanese costumes and burlesqued each of their acts. At the end, several members of Kelly and Leon's came head-long down a rope stretched from the ceiling to the stage over the gallery. Nelse Seymour performed the butterfly act, and Eph Horn concluded the performance with the two-wooden-sticks act. The burlesque was received with uproarious laughter.¹⁴⁵ Minstrel troupes outside of New York also burlesqued the Japanese acrobats. While touring in Ohio later in 1867, Dick Melville, of Campbell's Minstrels, injured himself during their burlesque on the Japanese as he slid down a rope stretched from the gallery to the stage while holding onto a ring.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 6 (18 May 1867): 46.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 7 (25 May 1867): 54. Allen also performed "Nicodemus Johnson" during this show.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ "Theatrical Record: Negro Minstrelsy," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 32 (16 November 1867): 255.

Acts that went under the designation of “Dutch characterizations” provide examples of the stereotyping of white ethnic groups that took place on the minstrel stage. Several troupes such as Budworth’s Minstrels and Tony Pastor’s gave such acts during this period. A member of Pastor’s minstrel corps, George W. Thompson, played the lead character, John Schmidt, in “The Dutchman in Distress.”¹⁴⁷ Budworth’s presented James H. Budworth, whom the *Clipper* called clever,¹⁴⁸ in the act “Echoes From the Fatherland.”¹⁴⁹ Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels called their Dutch act of this period “Schmitt mit a Y.”¹⁵⁰

Minstrel endmen performed in many different acts throughout a show and sometimes specialized in one type of act in addition to their Tambo or Bones roles. Backus was famous for his imitations of legitimate actors,¹⁵¹ in addition to his Tambo end. In one such act he gave a farcical representation of the legitimate actor Charles Dillon (?-1881) as Belphegor, the lead character in Charles Webb’s play, *Belphegor, the Mountebank* (1856), while this play ran at Niblo’s Garden.¹⁵² Birch, like other bones endmen, was famous for his comic songs such as “Would I were a Fly”¹⁵³ (Figure 3.1, San Francisco Minstrels’ Program 22 June 1867, “The San Francisco Minstrels,” *Brooklyn Times*, 28 February 1903), but his

¹⁴⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 41 (19 January 1867): 327.

¹⁴⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 34 (1 December 1866): 270.

¹⁴⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 37 (22 December 1866): 294.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 5 January 1867. Backus’ act was usually entitled, “Imitations of Actors.”

¹⁵² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 7 (26 May 1866): 55.

¹⁵³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 46 (23 February 1867): 366.

Figure 3.1, San Francisco Minstrels' Program, 22 June 1867

FOR A LARGER BOOKS, TO ESTABLISHED THE SAN

SAN FRANCISCO MINSTRELS,

585 BROADWAY.

THE INIMITABLE AND ONLY



SAN FRANCISCO MINSTRELS

IMMENSE SUCCESS OF
MASTER BARNEY
The Champion Jig-Dancer of the World.

Second Week of
Mr. J. H. WILLIAMS
The Great Cornet Player.

Saturday Evening, June 22, 1867.

PROGRAMME.—PART FIRST.

Overture, arranged by J. B. Donaher. Organists
Opening Chorus. Company
Beautiful Daisy. W. F. Grier
Lord Lovel. Charley Backus
My Blue Eyed Nelly. D. B. Wambold
Oh! would I were a Fly. Billie Birch
Meet me To-night. C. Templeton
Finale—Peep o' Day. Full Band

PART SECOND—ORIGINAL NOVELTIES

Plantation Slipper Dance.

PRETTY LITTLE SARAH,
J. Cooper and W. Fields.
Favorite Ballad. D. B. Wambold

TALENT ON A BUST!
BIRY Birch and Charley Backus.

CORNET SOLO. J. H. WILLIAMS
The Walrus Hunted From Prairie America

Messrs. Birch, Backus, Grier and Templeton

DOUBLE CLOG EXERCISES:
J. Cooper and W. Fields.

ITALIAN AIRS BY NATIVE ARTISTS
Jenny Leatherlungs. W. Henry Rice
Manager. W. Bernard

CHAMPION JIG
MASTER BARNEY.

The whole to conclude with the Screaming
Hiss of the

SHADOW PANTOMIME!
By Healthy Shadows.

TREASURER. JOHN A. RUNNETT

Parquette. 20 Cents; Family Circle. 30 Cents
Reserved Seats. 15 Cents; Private Boxes. \$1.00

Admission at 8 o'clock. 10 Cents; at 10 o'clock. 15 Cents

Box Office open daily for securing Seats and Tickets
at 100 Broadway and at the Minstrels' Office
at 585 Broadway, corner of Fulton and Market Streets.

San Francisco Minstrels. As a dancing singer
Wambold had no superior. Bernard excelled
as an interlocutor. The latter was a native
of New York, and became associated with
Birch and Backus in California, where af-
ter the trio had just become established,
Wambold joined them, and the company then
came to New York and opened at 585 Broad-
way.

Charley Backus started life as the pro-

stump speeches on contemporary subjects set him apart as one of the most popular blackface performers in New York. Birch and Backus were also known for their olio double acts such as “Talent on a Bust,” which is listed in figure 3.1. Johnny Boyce¹⁵⁴ and Johnny Allen¹⁵⁵ (1844-85) both held the Tambo end with George Christy on Bones in Griffin and Christy’s Minstrels and in Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels, respectively. In the olios of their shows, Boyce specialized in Irish songs and Allen in banjo solos¹⁵⁶ and song and dance. One of Allen’s most famous song and dances was “Nicodemus Johnson” (Example 3.2, excerpt).¹⁵⁷ The lyrics of “Nicodemus” are an interesting combination of seemingly conflicting ideas. “Nicodemus” is a black man, who sings the song in the first person. He describes himself as a former slave and newcomer to town whose master is against secession. He wishes that the war would end so that he could go back down South to his home as a free man. The song is similar in style to Dan Emmett’s walkarounds in that it is strophic, it has an instrumental introduction and conclusion to each verse, which were probably sections for dancing, and it has a simple triadic and stepwise melody punctuated by octave leaps, and fermatas within verses that break up the flow of phrases. The melody may be an old Irish tune with the words of “Nicodemus Johnson” added to it. The simplicity of the melody and instrumental sections facilitate the performance of combined song and dance.

¹⁵⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 3 (27 April 1867): 21. Fifth Avenue Opera House.

¹⁵⁵ “Amusements: Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 30 October 1866, 7. 720 Broadway.

¹⁵⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 1 (13 April 1867): 6.

¹⁵⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 40 (12 January 1867): 315.

Example 3.2, "Nicodemus Johnson," excerpt

NICODEMUS JOHNSON

Moderato.

f

cresc.

I've just arrived in town to-day, And here I .is be, free you, To

degl a, bout my name and oc - - cu - pa - - tion; I

N.B. For dance repeat the melody.

20747

The image shows a page of a musical score for a piece titled "NICODEMUS JOHNSON". The tempo is marked "Moderato." and the key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is written for piano and voice. It begins with a piano introduction marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piano part consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble and bass staff with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. The second system has a treble and bass staff with a crescendo (*cresc.*) marking. The vocal part enters in the third system with the lyrics "I've just arrived in town to-day, And here I .is be, free you, To". The piano accompaniment continues with chords. The fourth system of the vocal part has the lyrics "degl a, bout my name and oc - - cu - pa - - tion; I". The piano accompaniment continues with chords. At the bottom left, there is a note: "N.B. For dance repeat the melody." and at the bottom right, the number "20747".

Example 3.2 continued



Kelly and Leon's was the first of the New York troupes to experiment with the three-part minstrel show format during this season. Their minstrel version of a popular legitimate panorama presentation entitled, "A Trip Around the World," took the place of their usual musical first part. It ran successfully for several weeks during the fall of 1866. A panorama skit displayed fixed or moving painted panels of foreign countries that were usually accompanied by narrations and songs describing those places, and Kelly and Leon's piece also followed this design. The troupe began the piece with the minstrel band arranged on both sides of the stage. The company then "started for the trip and the

panorama commenced to move.”¹⁵⁸ As they arrived in each country on the tour Edwin Kelly, the interlocutor, described its people and scenery, and the company sang characteristic songs related to each place. On arriving in London, they sang “An Old English Gentleman.” While in London Nelse Seymour gave a banjo solo and the two Masters Guy performed on the tambo and bones. For their three encores, they did an unnamed walk-around and a little “jigging.” In this way the troupe incorporated the spirit and basic sound of a regular first part into their panorama act. In Scotland they sang “Comin’ thro’ the Rye,” which they followed with a balloon ride across the English Channel to Paris, where they sang the “Marseillaise.” As they reached Germany they sang “Bingen on the Rhine,” and they gave a real Irish festival with singing, dancing, and a general good time upon “the green sod of Old Ireland.”¹⁵⁹ “Home Again” was the song to which they returned home to America, and they finished the piece with the “Star-Spangled Banner.” The *Clipper* critic wrote that the panorama paintings were handsome and true to the sights and scenery of each land. A naval battle between the Kearsarge and the Alabama was given at some point during the piece. A regular olio followed the “Trip.”¹⁶⁰

Ethiopian Corps

During the fall of 1866, minstrel corps at variety halls continued in the same manner as the previous year with short burlesque skits, traditional song and dance, and musical presentations on the instruments of minstrelsy. The minstrel portion of a variety program was performed in blackface and made up anywhere from a small part to one

¹⁵⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 33 (24 November 1866): 262.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

third of a show. The five or six performers in an Ethiopian corps usually presented their acts in the section of the show specifically designated for minstrelsy but occasionally alternated their acts with variety numbers during the middle (and longest) section.

Within the confines of this short period of performance, the Ethiopian corps presented the traditional acts of minstrelsy: songs, dances, comedy, skits, and performances on the banjo, tambourine, and bones. As with minstrel troupes, the inclusion of traditional minstrel instruments lent credibility to the minstrel portion of their shows. Members of the minstrel corps also performed in legitimate acts in whiteface during the shows. The programs given by variety companies with minstrel corps were distinguished from those of straight minstrel troupes by a corps de ballet in classical dance, legitimate female singers and actresses, and the absence of blackface in non-minstrel acts.

Sam Sharpley had a long and successful career performing in and managing minstrel companies in New York and other parts of the United States. Prior to their opening in New York on 11 June, Sharpley and Pastor's troupe, which presented a diverse entertainment of variety and blackface acts, had been touring the Eastern states. Although this troupe went by the name of Sharpley and Pastor's Minstrels, it was actually a combination minstrel and variety company.¹⁶¹ The acts included singing, dancing, and "Ethiopianisms" by Kerns and Frank Pell; the clog dancing of Sheridan and Mack; Johnny Thompson and Kerns in song and dance; Billy Pastor in comic songs; gymnast Robert Delaney; a banjo solo, local hits, funny jokes on the times, and a pathetic ballad by Sharpley; vocalists Amelia Wells and Carrie Byron; and the comedy of Robert Butler,

¹⁶¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 11 (23 June 1866): 86.

whose latest variety establishment, 444 Broadway, burned down in mid-February 1866.¹⁶²

One of Butler's most important roles with Sharpley and Pastor's troupe was his comic pantomime in their non-blackface afterpiece, "Vol-au-Vent."¹⁶³ Sharpley and Pastor continued to present this piece even after they dropped the minstrel portion of their show on 30 June, and they continued for one more week in straight variety.¹⁶⁴ Figure 3.2 is a program given by Sharpley and Pastor's troupe that took place some time between 11 June and 7 July:

Pastor and Sharpley's New Consolidad
This evening. Programme—Part First.
Novel Minstrel Scenes
Grand Overture by Emmitt, Full Orchestra
Six Song titles, illegible

Part Second. Novelties.
Double Clog Hornpipe, Jeremiah and Rice
Zouave Drill and Bayonet Exercise, Miss Carrie Austin
New Comic Banjo Song, Sam Sharpley
Scenes at Central Park!
The Nerves, Sheridan and Mack
Dougherty's Dissertation on Men and Manners
Budget of Comicalities!, Billy Pastor
The Two Pompeys
Favorite Song, Miss Blanche Stanley
Nigs of Tennessee, Sheridan and Mack

To conclude with the laughable farce, Mr. and Mrs. Brown, or Matrimonial
Sweets

Under Charley White's management, Mechanics' Hall took the place of 444 Broadway with diverse variety shows and an Ethiopian corps comprised of White,

¹⁶² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 11 (23 June 1866): 86.

"Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 13 (7 July 1866): 102.

¹⁶³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 13 (7 July 1866): 102.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

George Warren, and Johnny Thompson (late of Sharpley and Pastor's).¹⁶⁵ This combination troupe featured a corps de ballet (female dancers), "elegant" burlesques, comic local sketches, pantomimes, operettas,¹⁶⁶ male and female gymnasts, singing and dancing, recitatives, jokes, stories, lectures, and Negro farces.¹⁶⁷ Magic and contortion acts, clog and jig dancing, and stunts were also common. The minstrel corps joined the rest of the troupe in performances such as White's Irish skit, "Fenian's Oath,"¹⁶⁸ and their sensation drama, "The Female Clerks of Washington," the lead roles of which were played by Josh Hart, Charley White, W. B. Cavanaugh (the author of this piece), George Edeson, and Laura Le Claire.¹⁶⁹

Although reviews in the *Herald* and the *Clipper* suggest that White featured minstrelsy over variety, and Pastor did the opposite, their shows appear to have been similar. During the middle of September the *Clipper* wrote that White's talented company and ballet presented good shows but not enough new acts and variety numbers. Except for the farce, his show was almost entirely composed of Ethiopianisms (blackface acts) and dancing, with no singing of comic or sentimental songs by men or women and no miscellaneous performers such as gymnasts. The critic believed that the troupe, like Bryants' at the end of the previous season, would have been forced to close if they continued to run the same bill night after night.¹⁷⁰ By the end of September, White had added the gymnasts, W. H. Ashton and his sons, Frank and George, and the vocalist,

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Although minstrel and variety companies called certain acts operettas, the content, form, length, and authorship of these pieces are unknown.

¹⁶⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 11 (23 June 1866): 86.

¹⁶⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 40 (12 January 1867): 318.

¹⁶⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 33 (24 November 1866): 262. This was his troupe's most popular "sensation drama" during the winter 1866 and spring 1867.

¹⁷⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 24 (22 September 1866): 190.

Fanny Forrest, to the troupe.¹⁷¹ Later in the season, he spiced up his standard fare with novelty performers such as Herr Christian Holm, The Great Fire King of Denmark, and Martini Chiriski. Holm had great success in his act of bending pieces of hot iron,¹⁷² and Chiriski wire-walked, as well as juggled balls, knives, plates, and other objects.¹⁷³

Minstrel Bands

Although minstrel bands grew and decreased in size depending on each troupe's needs, those in New York between 1865 and 1870 usually comprise at least ten and usually more instruments: woodwinds (flute or clarinet), cornet(s), usually two violins, either a cello or a double bass, percussion, banjo, and occasionally, piano. Bryants' band, for example, included a clarinet, a flute, three violins, a double bass, and a cornet in the spring of 1866. B. and H. Isaacs, brothers and prominent minstrel violinists, were listed in an advertisement for the California Minstrels and probably led the troupe's band.¹⁷⁴ Minstrel troupes that operated outside of New York between 1865 and 1870, such as Newcomb and Arlington's Minstrels, sometimes advertised both a string and a brass band.¹⁷⁵ Minstrel bands played an important part in lavish operatic and musical afterpieces, which required instrumental overtures, accompaniments, and finales.

Although variety shows during this season only occasionally produced large-scale operatic burlesques, their bands did accompany ballet, song and dance, melodramas,

¹⁷¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 25 (29 September 1866): 198.

¹⁷² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 28 (20 October 1866): 222.

¹⁷³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 38 (29 December 1866): 302. Martini Chiriski performed ventriloquism and "flying wire" feats at Tony Pastor's Opera House during December 1865. "City Amusements," *New York Herald*, 11 December 1865.

¹⁷⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 20 (25 August 1866): 158.

¹⁷⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 40 (13 January 1866): 320.

musical afterpieces, and pantomime such as White's "Shadow Pantomime,"¹⁷⁶ with incidental music. Charley White advertised his "Great Combination Troupe" as the "largest and best company in America, together with a full and efficient orchestra."¹⁷⁷ According to the *Herald*, White's program at the beginning of September included "overtures, comedies, dramas, and quite a combination of novelties."¹⁷⁸ Tony Pastor's orchestra was comprised of seven instruments and piano.¹⁷⁹

The orchestras at legitimate variety theaters of this period were similar in size and shared some of the instrumentation of minstrel bands, although they were comprised of more orchestral instruments than the minstrel ensembles. Barnum's, the New Bowery's, and the Winter Garden's orchestras, for example, were comprised of the same instruments as the minstrel bands, as well as such instruments as a kettle-drum and a French horn.¹⁸⁰

Neither the *Clipper* nor the *Herald* mentions the tambourine, bones, and banjo, drums, and triangle in bands between 1865 and 1870, but it is likely that these instruments were heard in bands of this period. A *Clipper* article in March 1867 credited the banjoist, Charles Dobson, with "elevating the banjo to a standard with all other instruments,"¹⁸¹ and wrote that he was the first to give a banjo concert as well as the first to play banjo in the orchestra of a theater. And if legitimate theater ensembles had begun to include the banjo by the mid-1860s, it may be speculated that the banjo had remained a part of minstrel orchestras during the 1850s and 60s. The critic wrote that Dobson had

¹⁷⁶ "Amusements: Charley White's Troupe," *New York Herald*, 27 August 1866, 5.

¹⁷⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 2 August 1866.

¹⁷⁸ "Charley White's Combination Troupe," *New York Herald*, 6 September 1866, 8.

¹⁷⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 31 (11 November 1865): 246.

¹⁸⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 31 (11 November 1865): 246.

¹⁸¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 49 (16 March 1867): 390.

great success playing at the Olympic Theatre in the drama *The Streets of New York* and had also been engaged by Edward Mollenhauer, the leader of Wallack's orchestra, where he had been one of the features in the overture during the second week of March 1867.¹⁸²

Pictorial evidence also supports the continued inclusion of the banjo in the minstrel band. The *Clipper* described, but unfortunately, did not print, a caricature drawn by Jerry Thomas depicting a minstrel band performing onstage in white face, surrounded by 172 of the most prominent ladies and gentlemen of the minstrel, dramatic, and operatic professions. Only the members of the band were drawn farcically in the picture. George Christy and Dan Bryant were placed on the ends, and famous political personages of the day were shown holding instruments: General O. O. Howard,¹⁸³ cello; Ben Butler, triangle; John B. Gough and Horace Greeley, guitar; Senator Wilson and W. S. Andrews, first and second violin; Beecher, cornet; Wendell Phillips, flute; and Stanton, Sumner, and William Cullen Bryant, banjo.¹⁸⁴

A case for the banjo as part of the minstrel band may also be made based on the adaptation of the banjo's performance style to suit that of the orchestral and popular instruments in minstrel bands and four-part harmony. A banjoist of the 1830s or the early 1840s would have embellished the pentatonic folk melodies with microtonal inflections

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ General O. O. Howard was the founder of Howard University in Washington, D. C. and was the head of the Freedman's Bureau in 1866. Denise Henderson, *The American Almanac*, "General O. O. Howard's Fight for the Education of the Freedmen," (15 February 1993), (Accessed [2 February 2005]), <http://members.tripod.com/~american_almanac/oohoward.htm>

¹⁸⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 31 (10 November 1866): 246. Wendell Phillips (1811-84) was a Boston abolitionist. "Men and Women of Action: the Most Dramatic Orator in the American Antislavery Movement," (Accessed [20 February 2005]), <<http://www.libertystory.net/LSACTIONPHILLIPS.htm>>.

or added notes in subdivisions of the original rhythms in a semi-improvisatory fashion. The small number of instruments—one (banjo) or two (banjo and violin)—that played melodies during this period increased the options for performance, but the larger minstrel band of equal tempered instruments changed performance practices at least in part to a legitimate style. An advertisement in 1864 for Frank Converse’s “modern” arrangements of minstrel tunes for banjo reflects this change: “The banjo taught by Frank B. Converse. A choice collection of progressively arranged tunes, with all the necessary explanations and instructions.”¹⁸⁴

Contemporary song lyrics also suggest that the banjo played with the band. The first line and chorus of Dave Reed’s song “My Polly Ann” read as follows: “At the fancy ball the other night, my Polly Ann and me, were dress’d to death all in our best/Now strike up the fiddle, and let the banjo ring, then join in the chorus, while merrily we sing.”¹⁸⁵

Figure 3.3 is an image of a minstrel ensemble dated 1867, which is comprised of a banjo, a tuba, a tambourine, a bass, two violins, bones, a singer, and large, double-headed frame drums, which are slung across the body with a shoulder strap and hit with a stick. Bands also relied on the tambourine and the bones for rhythmic interest and time, and it is likely that other percussion instruments were played in these ensembles.

¹⁸⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 12, no. 2 (23 April 1864): 16.

¹⁸⁵ Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection. Dave Reed, words, T. Mc Nally, music, “My Polly Ann,” New York: T. Mc Nally Publications: William A. Pond and Co., 1864.

Figure 3.3, a minstrel ensemble, 1867



A Minstrel Poster of 1867.

In addition to accompanying musical burlesques, minstrel bands also performed instrumental works, including pieces from operas during their shows. The San Francisco Minstrels' program from 22 June 1867 (Figure 3.1, page 174) lists the band in a first-part overture, which was arranged by the troupe's violin soloist, J. B. Donn timer, and a first-part finale number entitled, "Peep o' Day." The *Clipper* reported that Duprez and Green's Minstrels performed the overture to "William Tell" as the opening to their show and "rendered the piece with powerful effect."¹⁸⁶ Minstrels sometimes performed instrumental opera excerpts in a burlesque setting. Verdi's "Anvil Chorus" was a popular piece in the minstrel operatic burlesque repertoire during the late 1850s and 1860s in New York. Bryants' performed it as their opening number in February 1866¹⁸⁷ and as part of their "Blacksmith's Jubilee," an *Il trovatore* burlesque.

Although the instrumental parts do not survive for this piece, D. Krug's piano arrangement of the "Anvil Chorus" (Example 3.3, excerpt), from Act 2, Scene 1 of *Il Trovatore* (1853, revised 1857), provides us with some insight into the techniques used by minstrels to adapt orchestral scores to their small ensembles. Pianos were part of minstrel bands during the late 1860s, and a minstrel pianist may have played something like this arrangement with his troupe's instrumental ensemble. Krug's arrangement is in the same key and is of the same length (two minutes) as the original. It has no vocal parts, although Lawrence reports that minstrel burlesques of the "Anvil Chorus" sometimes set funny words to the original music.¹⁸⁸ The original setting of this piece in

¹⁸⁶ "Theatrical Record: Negro Minstrelsy," *New York Clipper* 11, no. 41 (23 January 1864): 323 and 326. Duprez and Green's Minstrels performed this show at Norombega Hall, possibly in Maine.

¹⁸⁷ "Amusements: Bryants' Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 19 February 1866.

¹⁸⁸ Lawrence, vol. 2, "Reverberations," 725.

Il trovatore, which shows gypsies striking their anvils at dawn while singing the praises of good work and gypsy women, is suited to minstrel parody.

Example 3.3, “Anvil Chorus,” excerpt



Elias Howe's minstrel flute method, *The Ethiopian Flute Instructor, Containing Full and Complete Instructions with All the Popular Negro Melodies of the Day, Including Those of the Christy Minstrels* (1848), provides an idea of what was required of

minstrel flutists and violinists. Howe describes the history of the development of the flute, provides technical instruction for double tonguing, fingerings for major and minor scales, theme and variation etudes for interval practice, basic theory and music reading instruction, and a page of English translations of Italian musical terms. Most importantly, Howe's method gives the flute parts to approximately 108 minstrel songs and clearly indicates that the flute was one of the chief melody instruments in minstrel ensembles, although subordinate to the first violin. The melodies that Howe provides to songs such as "Rosa Lee" (Example 3.4, pub. 1847) are between twelve and thirty-two measures in length. The flutist in George Christy's Minstrels probably doubled the melody in their version of this song, which they performed in 1865.¹⁸⁹ (By the late 1860s some minstrel songs had been performed for twenty or more years in various versions and by different troupes.)

Example 3.4, "Rosa Lee"



¹⁸⁹ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 4 January 1865.

The style of violin performance in minstrelsy changed between the 1840s and the 1860s more than that of the other original instruments of minstrelsy. In contrast to the traditional roles of the banjo, bones, and tambourine in the post-war minstrel band, the violin clearly became the lead voice and was played by the leader of the band. Except for the fiddle tunes in walkarounds and other acts traditional to minstrelsy, by the late 1860s the country fiddle style of Dan Emmett had been replaced with a violin style based on the musical genres that were heard in minstrelsy of the time: popular songs and instrumental forms such as the polka; classical forms such as theme and variations (see Nichols' violin solo with Wood's Minstrels, Figure 3.4); and operatic overtures and accompaniments that were used for burlesque afterpieces. James Buckley, in his *Buckley's New Banjo Book* (1860), gives instruction for the minstrel band violin, in addition to the banjo. He directs the violin to play the melody to Dan Bryant's "Original Essence," a dance for which Bryant was famous. Like the flute and the violin, the banjo played the melody in ensemble accompaniments and instrumental works, as well as solos.

Figure 3.4, Wood's Minstrels' Program, 24 May 1860

THE NEW YORK CLIPPER.
MAY 27, 1860.

WOOD'S MINSTRELS IN PENN YAN, N. Y., IN 1860.

From a scrap-book containing many bills of minstrel troupes, kindly loaned us by W. Henry Rice, we copy one of the performances of the above-named troupe. J. H. Budworth died in this city March 15, 1875. Master W. Lewis is known as now W. Henry Rice. George Raynor, whose real name was Rea, died in Brooklyn, L. I., April 2, 1864.

COURT-HOUSE, PENN YAN.
GENUINE AND TRIUMPHANT SUCCESS.
THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 24, 1860,
and positively the last night.
The celebrated, original and only
WOOD'S MINSTRELS.

From Wood's Marble Palace, 561 and 563, and formerly of 444 Broadway, New York, where they have been permanently located for ten years, accompanied by
WOOD'S QUARTET BRASS-BAND,
which will commence playing at the entrance of the Court-house by 7½ each evening.

PROGRAMME—PART I.

Grand Introductory Overture—new.....Wood's Minstrels
Opening Chorus—operatic.....Company
Clap Your Hands.....J. H. Budworth
Cottage by the Sea.....Mast. W. Lewis
Sailleur Boy.....W. S. Budworth
The Grave of Lily Dale.....G. Raynor
Hush-a-Bye, Baby.....J. H. Budworth
Finale—Medley.....Geo. Raynor and Company

PART II.

Solo Violin—De Berio's Variations on the Bass
String.....Prof. A. Nicholls
First and only night of
THE GRAND SOIREE MUSICALE.
A Burlesque on Mons. Jullien's Monster Concerts, arranged expressly for this company, introducing:
COUNT MORSE-INI, the celebrated harpist,
BARON SALMONFISH, Boehm Clarinet,
DUKE A. NICHOLLSINI, Violinist,
SIG. R. NICHOLLSBOTTESSINI, Bass Viola,
BASS DRUMMER, Mast. Frank Budworth.
Opening overture—"Norma".....By the orchestra
Solo—Viola—"Le Carnaval de Venise,"
Sig. R. Nichollsbotteessini
Second and last appearance of the young American prima-donna, **MASTER W. H. LEWIS,** who will appear in a grand scene from the opera of "Lucretia Borgia."
ANVIL CHORUS from "Il Trovatore," and **YANKEE DOODLE,** executed by the chorus and orchestra.
Musical Conductor.....Mons. Jemini Jullien Budwinkero
DANCE.....Mast. W. H. Lewis
BANJO SOLO.....J. H. Budworth
STAGE-STRUCK HEROES.
Bill Johnson, J. H. Budworth, Man Friday, W. S. Budworth
SOLO—Boehm Clarinet.....M. J. Solomons
The performance to conclude with the musical farce entitled
THE DISAPPOINTED LOVERS.
Miss Fannie Bloomer.....Mast. W. H. Lewis
Jenkins Gerolomon Smallbones.....J. H. Budworth
Hon. Alfred Highflyer.....W. S. Budworth
Mr. John Contaritch.....Geo. Raynor
John Hyienfitter.....J. H. Collins
Other characters by the company.
Tickets, 25 cents. No half price. Doors open at 7½ o'clock, commencing at 8. Positively no free list.

It is unknown how minstrel band parts were divided among the melody instruments, the violin, flute, banjo, cornet, and clarinet, although some evidence suggests that the doubling of melodies while accompanying singing and/or dancing occurred at least some of the time. Howe's method supports the idea of instruments doubling or taking turns playing the melody. He directs both the flute and violin to play

the melody in over ten of the tunes printed in his method: “Bohemian Polka,” “Coal Black Rose,” and “Ole Bull and Dan Tucker,” to name a few (Example 3.5).¹⁹⁰

Buckley’s direction may indicate that the banjo and violin played melodies together with the band,¹⁹¹ or the reverse—that the violin sometimes joined the banjo in accompanying solo songs or dance acts. It is probable that the flute (or clarinet), violin, and banjo sometimes tripled melodies in live performances or alternated playing the melody in various verses.

¹⁹⁰ Elias Howe, *The Ethiopian Flute Instructor, Containing Full and Complete Instructions with All the Popular Negro Melodies of the Day, Including Those of the Christy Minstrels* (Boston: Howe, No. 1 Cornhill, 1848), 20, 28, 41.

¹⁹¹ NYPL, Performing Arts Library, Research Division, Music, Clippings file, subject: Minstrels, “Performing Minstrel Music Today: Sources, Techniques, and Ethics,” Paper written by James Kimball and Elizabeth Gamble, State University of New York, Geneseo, New York, 18 May 1983. James Buckley, *Buckley’s New Banjo Book* (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1860). Minstrel instrumental method books of this period usually included bits of instruction regarding instruments other than the main subject of the method.

Example 3.5, "Ole Bull and Dan Tucker," "Coal Black Rose," "Bohemian Polka"

OLE BULL AND DAN TUCKER.



FLUTE AND VIOLIN.

COAL BLACK ROSE.



FLUTE AND VIOLIN.

BOHEMIAN POLKA.



FLUTE AND VIOLIN.

Instrumental Soloists

Minstrel instrumental soloists performed on classical instruments such as cornet, violin, flute, clarinet, Irish harp, guitar, mandolin, and xylophone; on European and American popular instruments such as accordion, bellows, hornpipe, and concertina; and on the instruments of blackface minstrelsy—banjo, tambourine, and bones. Soloists demonstrated instrumental feats that were designed to impress audiences in the same way as classical concert soloists' virtuosic displays. Endmen performed first part instrumental solos in conjunction with their comedic roles as Tambo and Bones as well as in songs and group numbers.

By 1865 instrumental solos were almost always programmed in the olio, with a few exceptions of solos taking place during first part group numbers such as the opening overture and first part finale number. Violin, flute, cornet, and guitar were the most common legitimate instruments for solos in minstrelsy between 1865 and 1870 and were sometimes performed in whiteface.

Advertisements in the *Clipper* show that soloists and band members played multiple roles. Doubling on secondary instruments and in other capacities began as bands expanded to include popular and orchestral instruments,¹⁹² and doublers were important to a business that required a troupe to perform seven or eight shows per week. Minstrel instrumental virtuosos, like Neil Bryant, for example, who played olio solos on flute and cello in Bryants' band, were highly proficient players, although probably less so on their secondary instrument(s). During the winter of 1865 and the spring of 1866 (Figure 3.5, Bryants' Minstrels' Program, 25 February 1866), Neil Bryant performed the flute solo, "Flutina Fantasia," which appeared in

¹⁹² Bean, 142-45.

Figure 3.5, Bryants' Minstrels' Program, 25 February 1866

BRYANTS' MINSTRELS.

PROGRAMME—PART FIRST.

Introductory Overture.....Bryants' Minstrels
Opening Chorus, Martha.....Company
Darling Little Sophie.....Mr. Rollin Howard
Fare You Well, Yeller Gals.....Mr. Dave Reed
Beautiful Daisey.....Mr. W. P. Grier
Comic Ditty.....Mr. Dan Bryant
Come Home, Father.....Mr. C. Henry
Finale—City Life.....Company

PART SECOND.—BRYANTS' VARIETIES.

Blacksmith's Jubilee!

Introducing ANVIL CHORUS, "Il Trovatore,".....BRASS BAND.
POLLY ANN, Eccentric Song and Dance.....DAVE REED

CRUELTY TO JOHNNY,

Rollin Howard and Dan Bryant.

Flutina Fantasia.....Neil Bryant

CHALLENGE DANCE,

Dave Reed and Dan Bryant.

THE FOUR GRACES!

Seymour, Grier, Emmett and Little Mac.

DAN BRYANT.....as.....THE STUMP ORATOR

McGoffin's Shin-Dig!

By the Four Spaniards.

ROLLIN HOWARD.....as.....NORMA

Ici on Parle Français!

JOCKO, the Monkey.....LITTLE MAC

Mr. Garlick.....N. Seymour | Mons. French.....Dan Bryant

WOODEN SHOE DANCE.....Hogan and Pendergast

THE HAND-A-LONE BROTHERS,

In their Wonderful Gymnastic Exercises, Posturing, &c.

PLANTATION JIG.....Master Ryan

After which, the amusing Sketch by Chas. White, Esq.,

U. S. MAIL!

Ism Green, the U. S. Mail.....Mr. Dave Reed | Fanny Black, a Coquette.....Mr. Rollin Howard
seems Brown, Policy Dealer.....Mr. N. Seymour | Serenaders, &c.....Company

Concluding with

Who Struck Billy Patterson!

Introducing the whole Company in their Festival Display.

Bryants' programs as far back as 1859.¹⁹³ The content of this solo is unknown.¹⁹⁴ If needed, troupe members could fill in for each other or join the band if an extra instrument was required for a specific act. Also, the ability to play more than one instrument or to perform in song, dance, comedy, and acting roles increased a performer's chances of being hired. H. W. Walsh, a former instrumentalist with Cotton and Murphy's Minstrels, advertised his availability for employment with a minstrel company as a double bass performer, a violoncello soloist, and a second violinist.¹⁹⁵ Another advertisement for minstrels and brass band players read: "Wanted—two E-flat sopranos, one B-flat soprano, two E-flat altos, two B-flat tenors, one E-flat tuba, a bass and snare drummer. The above must include a wench and two clog dancers, with comic and vocal talent. All first class."¹⁹⁶

Critics reported and troupes advertised very little information beyond the names of soloists and that their performances occurred. However, an unusually detailed advertisement for Wood's Minstrels while on tour in May 1860 (Figure 3.4, page 191) describes Adolph Nichols's, violin soloist, and M. J. Solomons's [or Soloman], clarinet soloist, different roles with the California Minstrels.¹⁹⁷ Nichols gave a violin solo entitled, "De Beriot's Variations on the Bass String,"¹⁹⁸ and he and his brother played

¹⁹³ Wittke, 150, 157.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 27 (30 September 1865): 199.

¹⁹⁶ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 21 (2 September 1865): 168. The soprano instruments refer to soprano saxhorns or cornets, the altos refer to saxhorns, and the tenors indicate tenor horns.

¹⁹⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 2 September 1866, 7. The California Minstrels performed at 720 Broadway.

¹⁹⁸ Boris Schwarz: "Charles-August de Bériot," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed [6 May 2004]), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>. Charles-August de Bériot (1802-70) was a Belgian violin virtuoso and composer. He pioneered the Franco-Belgian school of violin technique, which was influenced by Paganini and included the use of techniques such as harmonics, left hand pizzicato, ricochet, and scordatura. His concerti and shorter pieces were very popular during his lifetime. "De Bériot's Variations

roles in the burlesque on Jullien's Monster Concerts entitled, "The Grand Soirée Musicale": "Duke A. Nichollssini," violinist (Nichols) and "Signor R. Nichollsbottessini," (probably his brother) on bass. While playing this character, Nichols performed the solo, "Le Carnival de Venice," on bass, which was a burlesque on the bass virtuoso Bottessini's famous performances of Paganini's "Carnival of Venice."¹⁹⁹ The other characters in this Jullien burlesque were "Count Morse-ini, the celebrated harpist," "Baron Salmonfish" (M. J. Solomons) on the Boehm clarinet, and "Base Drummer," performed by Frank Budworth. This "orchestra" also performed the overture to *Norma* at the beginning of the burlesque. Like F. Buckley's violin solos from ten years earlier, these minstrel instrumental virtuosos probably copied the deportment and musical styles of the well-known European soloists Bottessini and De Beriot through the blackface minstrel song and tune repertoire.²⁰⁰ These examples suggest that it was common practice for instrumental virtuosos to take part in any of the wide variety of acts performed in minstrel shows of this period, in addition to the opening chorus, first part finale, and afterpiece. Certain instrumental virtuosos, however, who attained a high level of fame, such as James Garatagui, did not perform in other acts during a show. Neither Bryants' nor Wood's advertisements in 1865-66 or Budworth's or Kelly and Leon's in 1866-67 ever mentioned Garatagui's participation in any act or ensemble other than the band or his cornet solo.

Like Wood's and Bryants' during the previous season, minstrel troupes during this season presented up to three instrumental soloists on different instruments per show,

on the Bass String" probably indicates that this piece was composed for the g string. Nichols may have composed or arranged it in honor of or in reference to a piece written by de Bériot.

¹⁹⁹ Lawrence, vol. 2, "Reverberations," 35. See note 197 on page 64 regarding Bottessini.

²⁰⁰ Mahar, 342.

although one or two were more common. Kelly and Leon's troupe, which led New York minstrelsy in the incorporation of operatic elements in their shows, presented Garatagui (cornet), Hoffman (violin), and W. S. Budworth (banjo) together during April 1867.²⁰¹ Violinist John B. Donniker was the most prominent of the San Franciscan's soloists during 1866-67, although they usually featured two or more virtuosi in their shows.

Before the 1866-67 season instrumental soloists often remained with a minstrel company for several years. Beginning in this season virtuosi moved between troupes more often, staying with companies only for periods of a few months up to an entire season. James Garatagui, cornettist, for example, was the most advertised instrumental virtuoso of the late 1860s and had performed with Bryants' for most of their nine seasons at Mechanics' Hall (1857 through spring 1866). After Bryants' returned to New York and disbanded at the end of July 1866, Garatagui began running notices in the *Clipper* advertising his availability and desire to join a troupe.²⁰² Budworth's Minstrels, who had taken over the Fifth Avenue Opera House from George Christy, immediately hired him, and he performed with them from mid August²⁰³ through October.²⁰⁴ Garatagui then joined Kelly and Leon's Minstrels (720 Broadway) on 12 November²⁰⁵ and remained with them through the end of the following spring.²⁰⁶ His activities during the summer and fall 1867 and early spring 1868 are unknown. Garatagui reappeared with Bryants' at

²⁰¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 1 (13 April 1867): 8.

²⁰² "Theatrical Record: Negro Minstrelsy," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 16 (28 July 1866): 126.

²⁰³ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 20 August 1866.

²⁰⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 25 (29 September 1866): 199.

²⁰⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 31 (10 November 1866): 246.

²⁰⁶ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 1 (13 April 1867): 8.

the opening of their new hall on Fourteenth Street on 11 May 1868²⁰⁷ and performed with them through the fall of 1869.²⁰⁸

The *Clipper* called John B. Donniker one of the best and most experienced violinists in minstrelsy.²⁰⁹ The titles of his performances with the San Francisco Minstrels, when given, were advertised as either “Donniker’s Solo” or “Donniker’s Dream,”²¹⁰ and the *Herald* critic described Donniker’s performances as a “violin solo with variations.”²¹¹ Donniker and other violin virtuosi, such as Frederic Hoffman, who came from a classical background and also performed solos with Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels during the spring,²¹² were billed as violin, not fiddle, soloists. It may be speculated that Donniker’s and Hoffman’s violin solos included elements from legitimate genres, including medleys, which contemporary publications indicate were highly popular.

In addition to performing violin solos, Donniker composed and arranged instrumental and vocal music for his and other troupes. He arranged the opening instrumental overture for the San Francisco Minstrels’ show on 22 June 1867 (Figure 3.1, page 174) and composed “Long John Polka” (Example 3.6, excerpt), an instrumental piece, for [George] Christy’s Minstrels (published 1860). Donniker probably composed this three-part sectional piece for a small ensemble (a minstrel band), and either he or Charles C. Smith arranged it for piano. Although piano reductions do not always reflect the orchestral version, they at least provide us with an idea of the composer’s style.

²⁰⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 6 (16 May 1868): 47.

²⁰⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 24 (18 September 1869): 191.

²⁰⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 41 (20 January 1866): 326.

²¹⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 43 (3 February 1866): 339.

²¹¹ “Amusements: San Francisco Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 31 October 1866, 7.

²¹² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 1 (13 April 1867): 8.

Example 3.6, “Long John
Polka,” excerpt

LONG JOHN
POLKA.

Composed by J. B. DONINKER. Arranged by CHAS. C. SMITH.

Patented according to Act of Congress, A.D. 1920 by H. M. HAZARD, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of Illinois.

Donniker and guitarist, N. W. Gould, the oldest virtuosi who were still working in New York during the late 1860s, were two of the few instrumental specialists who performed solos on more than one instrument. Donniker performed solos on the melophone, in addition to violin,²¹³ and Gould doubled on the concertina and melophone.

In addition to Donniker,²¹⁴ the San Francisco Minstrels presented three other instrumental soloists during 1866 and 1867: E. Haslem²¹⁵ on the Boehm flute and Joseph Bailey²¹⁶ and J. H. Williams (Figure 3.1, page 174) on cornet. Haslem joined the San Franciscans after Wood's Minstrels closed early in January 1866. Haslem first appeared with the troupe on 1 January 1866 and probably continued to perform with them, although he was not mentioned again that year in their ads. Haslem's, and probably Neil Bryants,' Boehm flute was the modern orchestral flute (metal, transverse) that was developed and standardized around 1850 by Theobald Boehm (1794-1881) of Munich. The first part solos that Haslem performed for the San Francisco Minstrels may have been similar to the piccolo obligato that he played in the troupe's first part finale number, "Nightingale Polka" (Example 3.7, Figure 3.6, San Francisco Minstrels' Program, late 1860s).

²¹³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 26 February 1866, 7. The identity of the instrument known during the nineteenth century as the melophone is unclear. At this time, both a concertina and a type of guitar were referred to by this name. Giulio Regondi (1822-1872), a famous guitarist who lived in England from 1831 until his death, played both of these instruments. Buckley's Serenaders may have heard him perform on both melophones during their tour of England and may have brought the instrument(s) back with them on their return to America. Since concertina solos were clearly advertised by minstrel troupes in New York, it seems likely that notices of solos on melophone were probably references to the guitar-type instrument. Also, the fact that string players (both guitar and violin) were the performers of this instrument further supports the idea that the melophone played in minstrel shows was the guitar-type instrument. Douglas Rogers, "Giulio Regondi: Guitarist, Concertinist, or Melophonist?, Part III," *Guitar Review* 97 (Spring 1994), 11-17. Melophone information courtesy of Sarah Meredith (banjobear2003@yahoo.com).

²¹⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 23 (15 September 1866): 182.

²¹⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 1 January 1866, 7.

²¹⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 6 (19 May 1866): 46.

Example 3.7,
"Nightingale Polka"

NIGHTINGALE POLKA.

C. KINKEL.

Copyright, 1879, by W. F. SHAW.
1734-3

ANGELS OF DAWN VALSE. By Pierre Latour. Price 60 cents.

Example 3.7 continued

The musical score is for a piece titled "GRANT'S PRESENTATION GRAND MARCH" by Pierre Latour. It is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The score is written for piano and bass. The first system shows a melodic line in the treble and a supporting bass line. The second system includes a "loco" marking. The third system has a piano (*p*) marking. The fourth and fifth systems feature more complex melodic patterns with slurs and accents. The sixth system concludes with a final chord. The score is numbered 1734-3.

Rightingale Polka.

1734-3

GRANT'S PRESENTATION GRAND MARCH. By Pierre Latour. Price 30 cents.

Example 3.7 continued

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "HAPPY HEARTS. Morceau de Salon. By G. Kinkel. Price 50 cents." The score is written for piano and voice. It consists of six systems of music. The piano part is written in the lower staff of each system, and the vocal part is in the upper staff. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (mf, pp, p). The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The vocal part is more melodic, with some trills and grace notes. The score concludes with a double bar line and the text "D. C. al Fine." Below the score, there is a line of text: "1734-3" and "HAPPY HEARTS. Morceau de Salon. By G. Kinkel. Price 50 cents."

Although the piccolo part is not seen in the piano arrangement, it may be speculated that Haslem performed something similar to the top line in the piano arrangement, which resembles bird calls and sounds. The highest voice of the arrangement is well within flute range, but in combination with its fast-moving combinations of eighths and sixteenth notes (duple and triple), jaunty dotted rhythms, trills, and grace notes, which are

common in much writing for flute, it would have required the talents of a proficient flutist. This dance piece is simple harmonically, with octaves and three-note chords in the left hand. The melody of the opening section is characterized by wide leaps, short phrases of step-wise motion, and triadic outlines. Its left-hand chordal accompaniment, which repeats simple eighth- and sixteenth-note patterns, is idiomatic to a spare orchestration and is easily transferred to the piano. The solos that Haslem played in these songs were based on popular genres, not in the style of a concerto. It is not known whether his featured solos in the olio, which were not related to songs, were classical or popular in nature.

Figure 3.6, San Francisco Minstrels' Program, late 1860s

San Francisco Minstrels
OPERA HOUSE.
 BROADWAY COR. 29th St., OPPOSITE STURTEVANT & GILBERT HOTELS.

THE INIMITABLE AND FAR-FAMED

BIRCH, WAMBOLD AND BACKUS.

First appearance of
Mr. Frank Cushman,
 In his Great Character, **THE AGED DARKEY.**

The Trouble begins at 8. Street Cars may be ordered at 10 o'clock.
MORAL: "GO EARLY."
 Police Regulation—Carriages taking up Parties must form at the Battery facing Broadway and 39th St.

PARLOR ENTERTAINMENT---"Go!"

Furniture, by.....Pottier, Stymus & Co
 Chandelier, &c., by.....Mitchell, Vance & Co

PART FIRST.

OVERTURE....(Arranged by W. S. Mullaly),
 SAN FRANCISCO MINSTRELS

BASS SONG, "Jack's Yarn,".....Mr. H. W. FRILLMAN
 BALLAD, "Baby Feet,".....Mr. W. RAYMOND
 COMIC DITTY, "Mary's Quadruped,".....Mr. CHARLEY BACKUS
 BALLAD, "Seeing Nelly Home,".....Mr. D. S. WAMBOLD
 COMIC SONG, "Billy's Request,".....Mr. BILLY BIRCH
 BALLAD, "Home by the Sea,".....Mr. J. G. RUSSELL
 FINALE, "Rui Indigo," introducing Xylophone Solo, "Whoa,
 Emma," "They all do it," "Nightingale Polka," "Wine,
 Wife and Song," and "Walking for Dat Cake," composed
 by E. Harrigan, Esq., arranged by W. S. Mullaly,
 SAN FRANCISCO MINSTRELS

PART SECOND.

MR. FRANK CUSHMAN,
 In his Old Negro Specialties.

Gov. Ryman on the Labor Question

"MARRIAGE BELLS."
 By the Inimitable Grotesque Song and Dance Artists,
 JOHNSON AND POWERS.

JOHN BUTTS.

JOHN BUTTS.....MR. ADD RYMAN
 IKE STARBOTTLE.....MR. GEO. THATCHER

THE GREAT RICARDO
 Will sing, "OUT ON A LARK."

The whole to conclude with the Screaming Piece of

SCHOOL!

PROFESSOR.....Mr. ADD RYMAN
 DUNCE.....Mr. CHARLES BACKUS
 DIFFY GILL.....Mr. G. POWERS
 LALLY SHUSTER.....MR. W. MULLALY
 SIM DIPSEY.....Mr. G. GIBBONS
 BOLLIVAR.....MR. W. RAYMOND
 WADDY.....Mr. BILLY BIRCH
 KILLY.....MR. J. RUSSELL
 DUMPY.....Mr. H. W. FRILLMAN
 PUFFY.....Mr. C. STEVENS

Joseph Bailey's first appearance with the San Francisco Minstrels on 19 May 1866 was billed as "Joseph Bailey in his 'Magic Cornet Solo.'"²¹⁷ As usual, he performed during the olio section of the program, which also featured Charley Backus as Mazeppa with Foxy, his live mule, and Dan Bryant in a gymnastic hurdle act,²¹⁸ in their burlesque of Adah Issacs Menken's *Mazeppa* entitled, "Mazeppa a la Menken." Both Bailey and Donniker returned to this troupe for the opening of the regular fall 1866 season. Based on the San Francisco Minstrels' program from 22 June 1867 (figure 3.1, page 174), J. H. Williams played cornet solos with the troupe for the last two weeks of the season. His activities with minstrel troupes outside of this period are unknown.

Bailey, Williams, and Garatagui probably played three-piston-valve B-flat or E-flat cornets, although their instruments could have been rotary-valve, due to the popularity of these cornets in Germany, Austria, Italy, and America during the mid- to late-nineteenth century. New York's theater orchestras, which were slightly larger than minstrel bands, also included a cornet. For example, Howard Glover composed the song, "The Bridal Morn," for Miss Fannie Stockton with cornet obligato in the musical drama, *The White Fawn*,²¹⁹ which was given at Niblo's Garden in 1868 and was a popular subject of minstrel and variety show burlesques. This strophic song (published 1868) provides a rare example of a vocal piece from a musical drama that was published with an original orchestral part intact. This version of "Bridal Morn" is arranged for voice, piano, and cornet and is subtitled "Rondo à la valse with cornet obligato" (Example 3.8, excerpt).

²¹⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 6 (19 May 1866): 47.

²¹⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 5 (12 May 1866): 38.

²¹⁹ *The Black Crook* was reworked into *The White Fawn*, the drama that followed *The Black Crook* at Niblo's.

Example 3.8, "The Bridal Morn," excerpt

THE BRIDAL MORN.

RONDA A LA VALSE.

HOWARD GLOVER.

Cornet in A

The musical score is written for a Cornet in A and piano accompaniment. It is in 3/4 time and consists of four systems of music. The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand and chords in the right hand. The cornet part has melodic lines with some grace notes. Performance markings include "dolce" and "cres.".

0071

Example 3.8 continued

4

What joy now fills this breast How shines life's sun on me

sempre marcato il basso.

In love su - preme - ly blest..... His bride at length to be

dolce.

I could sing like gay - est birds Such rap - ture thrills my soul

It flows too fast for words..... De - fy - ing all con - troul

6871

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a vocal and piano piece. It consists of five systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The first system includes the instruction 'sempre marcato il basso.' below the piano part. The second system includes the instruction 'dolce.' above the vocal line. The third system includes the instruction 'A' above the vocal line. The fourth system includes the instruction 'A' above the vocal line. The fifth system includes the instruction 'A' above the vocal line. The score is numbered 6871 at the bottom left.

The cornet part is composed in a lyric vocal style rather than the flamboyant style of a virtuosic solo piece. The cornet introduces the melody in a lengthy introduction and is limited to a narrower pitch range than the voice. The voice and cornet alternate playing the melody and perform together in a duet in different sections of the song.

Troupes usually billed Garatagui's performances simply as a "cornet solo," but occasionally he was given the mysterious title of "Champion Magic Cornet Soloist" or "echo cornettist,"²²⁰ or his performance was entitled the "Magic Echo" solo.²²¹ The San Franciscans also advertised Joseph Bailey's performance in May 1866 with the same designation, "Magic Cornet Solo." These performances may have been played on the Echo cornet: a cornet with a special muting key that was popular during the nineteenth century.²²²

The guitar was quite popular with audiences at this time and was considered to be a suitable instrument for respectable society. Unlike the violin, which was popularly associated with brothels and the devil, the guitar was an acceptable instrument for women to play. A critic for the *Clipper* wrote that "the guitar is an instrument which every lady and cavalier should be able to play, and to play it well is an accomplishment in refined society."²²³ Kelly and Leon called their guitar soloist, Don Pedro Dorrego, a "gentleman" as seen in figure 3.7 (date unknown). Songs with guitar accompaniment were popular in both the minstrel and legitimate realms.

²²⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 39 (6 January 1866): 310.

²²¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 12 (30 June 1866): 95.

²²² The Echo cornet had an extra valve (piston or rotary) that, when depressed by the left hand thumb, directed the airstream away from its normal pathway out of the bell and through a cone-shaped box with a small hole in it that was attached to the instrument. This created a muted, covered sound that players used to produce echo phrases or as a novelty effect by pressing and releasing the echo valve rapidly to create a pulsating sound. *The Cornet Compendium*, (Accessed [10 April 2004]), <<http://www.angelfire.com/music2/thecornetcompendium>>.

²²³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 20 (25 August 1866): 158.

Figure 3.7, Kelly and Leon's Minstrels' Program, late 1860s

LINA EDWIN'S THEATRE.

720 BROADWAY.

Kelly & Leon's Minstrels

KELLY & LEON, - - - Proprietors.

EDWIN KELLY Business Manager	COOL WHITE Stage Manager
FREDERICK ZAULIG Leader of Orchestra	JAS. COLLIS Machinist
H. W. WALLACE Scenic Artist	CHAS. E. PRATT Pianist
E. C. WRIGHT Agent and Treasurer.	

THIS EVENING will be presented for the first time in the City of New York, the GREAT SENSATIONAL CAMP MEETING SCENE, entitled

Carry the News to Mary,

The production of which throughout the entire country has created a FURORE UNPRECEDENTED IN THE ANNALS OF MINSTRELSY.

PART FIRST--DRAWING ROOM ENTERTAINMENT.

Grand Overture.....	Prof. ZAULIG and ORCHESTRA
Softly Falls the Silvery Moonbeams.....	Mr. H. NICHOLS
Zu Lauterbach.....	Mr. DAVE WILSON
Good Bye Sweetheart.....	Mr. EDWIN KELLY
Oh My Love's Gone.....	(His first appearance.) Mr. BILLY RICE
Meet Me at Twilight.....	Mr. T. L'ESTRANGE
Grand Finale.	

"Carry the News to Mary."

Messrs. Billy Rice, Dave Wilson, Cool White, and Company.

PART SECOND--GRAND CARNIVAL OF FUN.

PAR EXCELLENCE, { - THE ONLY LEON.
Opera (in the Bowery,) &c.,

THE GREAT MUSICAL WONDER.

DON PEDRO DORREGO,

THE GREATEST GUITARIST IN THE WORLD. The artistic execution and skill displayed by this gentleman in his performance on the Guitar never fails to elicit the most UNBOUNDED ENTHUSIASM.

MEDLEY CLOG, EXCELSIOR, - - - - - By the Clever Artist. Mr. H. T. MUDGE.
(His first appearance here.)

After which the laughing sketch entitled

TIME TRIES ALL.

BOBBY BREAKALL.....	Mr. BILLY RICE	Mr. DOUBTALL (First appearance here)	COOL WHITE
Mr. MENDALL.....	Mr. J. K. CAMPBELL	CHARLES BATAILL	Mr. J. B. CARTER

Double Song and Dance, Flora Anna Bell, - - - Devere and Nelson.
(Their first appearance here.)

BANJO MANIPULATIONS, - - (His first appearance here.) J. K. CAMPBELL.

To conclude with the laughable musical extravaganza, entitled

TWICE MARRIED.

CARLOTTA, A little costumer.....			
SIGNORINA MONTEZ, A Spanish Ballerina.....			THE ONLY LEON.
Mlle. VICTORINE LEPAGE, A French Prima Donna.....			Mr. EDWIN KELLY
UNCLE JACK, A Singing Master.....			Mr. DAVE WILSON
UNCLE HORACE, A Ballet Master.....			Mr. COOL WHITE
Mr. VIVIAN WHITE.....			

Other characters by Moore, L'Estrange, Corriston, Carter, Nichols, &c.

The Planes used in the entertainment are from the manufactory of CARPENTERS & SEAS.
IN ACTIVE PREPARATION.

THE BELLES OF THE KITCHEN.

Several other Novelties are in preparation and will shortly be produced.

JOHN POLHEMUS, PRINTER, 102 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

Guitar soloists expressed themselves through a wide variety of acts. Both guitarists and banjoists accompanied themselves and others in songs and performed solo works, and pictorial evidence suggests that guitar was played in minstrel bands (Figure 3.3, page 186). Guitar songs were often arrangements of songs that had already been arranged for voice and piano. In 1854 Foster arranged several of his songs, such as “Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair” and “Massa’s in the Cold Ground” for voice and guitar.²²⁴ Thomas Bishop arranged “Wait for the Wagon” for voice and guitar, which Christy’s Minstrels performed in 1865 at one of their old song nights, along with “Little Dale,” “Rosa Lee,” “Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair,” “Bob Ridley,” and “Uncle Ned.”²²⁵

By the late 1860s one of New York’s most popular guitarists, N. W. Gould, had been performing in minstrel shows in the city for almost twenty years. The *Clipper* called him one of the best guitarists in America.²²⁶ Unlike the advertisements for most solos that were given by instrumental virtuosi, titles or descriptions of the content of his solos were sometimes given in advertisements. While performing with Bryants’, for example, he accompanied himself in the song, “The Wearing of the Green.”²²⁷ Irish skits, melodramas, and songs were wildly popular in New York at this time, and Gould capitalized on that fervor with his performance of this Irish tune. During his time with

²²⁴ Stephen C. Foster, “Foster’s Melodies arranged for the Guitar, No. 26, written, composed, and arranged by Stephen C. Foster,” *American Memory Collections*, (Accessed [26 September 2004]), <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?mussm:13:./temp/~ammem_rVzY>.

²²⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 4 January 1865.

²²⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 51 (31 March 1866): 406.

²²⁷ “City Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 11 December 1865.

Christy's, Gould's first-part self-accompanied songs such as "Meet Me in the Lane"²²⁸ and "Only Waiting"²²⁹ also became very popular.

Despite cutting down the number of traditional minstrel acts in order to make way for the incorporation of variety numbers during the late 1850s and 1860s, minstrelsy maintained its blackface credibility by retaining the essential elements of its identity—the tambourine, bones, and banjo. These instruments remained important to the minstrel show sound, especially during the first parts of shows. Between 1865 and 1870 the tambourine and bones were used in their traditional capacities by endmen to accompany their jokes and banter with middlemen. Well-known endmen pairs who had worked together for a long period of time sometimes performed double acts together in the olio as well. These instruments, along with the banjo, probably joined the band in the accompaniment of first-part songs and throughout the show.

Charley Backus and Billy Birch were the endmen team for the San Francisco Minstrels during the late 1860s. They were bones and tambourine soloists in their own right, although their performances on these instruments were limited to the first part. As two of the headliners of a troupe, their versatility and excellence as instrumentalists, comedians, dancers, singers, and actors attracted crowds.

Featured olio solos on the tambourine and bones, which were common olio acts during the 1840s and 1850s, had decreased in popularity by the 1860s. The only olio bones and tambourine solos that are confirmed in programs between fall 1865 and spring 1870 were performed by Willie Guy and Bob Smith. Guy gave a bones solo and performed a song and dance with Kelly and Leon's Minstrels beginning on the week of

²²⁸ "Amusements: Christy's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 19 March 1866.

²²⁹ "Amusements: George Christy's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 26 March 1866.

29 October 1866.²³⁰ Bob Smith performed with Hart and Kerns' combination company at the Eighth Avenue Opera House (34th Street and Eighth Avenue) during August 1867.²³¹ This company gave variety shows with minstrel acts but did not include a minstrel first part or endmen. Smith played his tambourine solo with other variety acts but did not play the role of Tambo. These virtuosi received the same level of billing as banjo and legitimate instrumental soloists. Their names and instruments were usually listed in advertisements, but very few descriptions of their acts were given. Tambourine and bones soloists who were not endmen, played and sang in the first part group numbers, including the opening overture and chorus, as well as the finale. They frequently sang solo songs in the first part, performed in skits and dances in the olio, and played roles in afterpiece burlesques.

Banjo soloists appeared in every minstrel troupe and most variety companies in New York between 1865 and 1870. The banjo was the most popular of the minstrel instruments for solo performance during this period. In addition to the usual banjo songs, solos, duets, and trios, and accompaniment of other minstrels in song and dance, banjoists participated in song, dance, comedy acts, group numbers, and played characters in burlesque afterpieces. Titles of banjo songs and solos were given frequently in programs during the 1850s but are seen rarely between 1865 and 1870. Both minstrel troupes and variety troupes with minstrel corps included banjo because it was aurally and visually associated with blackface more than any other instrument, and it linked blackface of the 1860s to its roots.

²³⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 31 (10 November 1866): 246.

²³¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

The addition of equal-tempered instruments and three- or four-part harmony undermined the folk nature of the tunes of early minstrelsy that were originally played on fretless banjos. With this change the banjo went from a folk to a legitimate instrument. George Swaine Buckley, Thomas Briggs, James Unsworth, the Dobson Brothers, Frank B. Converse, John H. Sivori, Charley Pettengill, Johnny Allen, William S. Budworth, G. W. Clark, and J. K. Buckley were some of the important minstrel banjoists during the second half of the 1860s. They were well-rounded performers in the tradition of blackface minstrelsy. In Wood's program for 9 March 1865 (Figure 3.8), Converse accompanied Frank Brower in "Happy Uncle Tom" and gave a "Banjo Obligato, with Imitations of the Chimes of the Trinity Church Bells." He also played the role of Cumb Coal, an oil speculator, in Wood's afterpiece, "Petroleumania." Sivori played second violin in Griffin and Christy's band, in addition to his banjo solo.²³² Pettengill was a bones endman and banjoist who performed in his own troupes, as well as at variety halls such as Butler's American Theatre, where, like Unsworth, stump speeches were another of his specialties.²³³ Allen, who was Kelly and Leon's Tambo endman, with George Christy on Bones during the fall of 1866,²³⁴ performed song and dance and olio banjo solos.

Minstrel banjoists taught in order to earn money, to popularize their instrument, to promote themselves, to cultivate an audience of amateurs, and most importantly, to pass on their craft to the next generation. They advertised in the major periodicals for minstrel notices of the time, the *Herald* and the *Clipper*, which generated students and mail-order business. Converse and Sivori were important banjo teachers. They taught in shared

²³² Ibid. Griffin and Christy's Minstrels performed at 23rd Street and Broadway during the 1867-68 season.

²³³ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 30 August 1867, p. 7.

²³⁴ "Amusements: Kelly and Leon's Minstrels," *New York Herald*, 30 October 1866, 7.

Figure 3.8, Wood's Minstrels' Program, 9 March 1865

WOOD'S MINSTREL HALL,
514 BROADWAY, opposite the St. Nicholas Hotel, 514.

Henry Wood.....Proprietor, &c.
 Carl White.....Stage Manager.
 F. R. Mollenhauer.....Leader.

WOOD'S MINSTRELS
 (Organized in 1861.)

PROGRAMME—PART FIRST.
 Grand National Anthem, Composed by F. R. Mollenhauer expressly for Wood's Minstrels.
 Opening Chorus.....Wood's Minstrels.
 The Broadway Bells.....Carl White.
 The Prisoner's Hope.....C. Henry.
 The Gipsy Duet.....J. W. Brown.
 Lily Bell.....C. Henry.
 The Peace Commissioners.....R. S. Parry.
 Grand Finale.....Wood's Minstrels.

PART SECOND—VARIETIES.
HAPPY UNCLE TOM!
 Frank Brewer, accompanied on the Banjo by Frank Converse.

DOUBLE CLOG DANCE,
 By Masters Sheridan and Mack.
 Called.....G. Henry.

BANJO OBLIGATO,
 With Imitations of the Chimes of the Trinity Church Bells, Frank Converse.

DEAR MOTHER I'VE COME HOME TO EAT,
 S. S. Parry.

DOUBLE SONG AND DANCE
 Masters Sheridan and Mack.
 Overture, "Petroleummania Pot Pourri" arranged by F. R. Mollenhauer.....Orchestra.

To conclude with the New Local Burlesque, entitled
PETROLEUMANIA
OR OIL ON THE BRAIN,
 Written expressly for Wood's Minstrels by CHARLES GATLER, Esq., author
 of "Connie Soogah," "Our American Cousin at Home," &c., &c.
 New Society.....Gaspard Mackler.

Characters represented in the Burlesque:
 Pete Trollen, the Democ King of the Oil Regions.....Frank Brewer.
 Obnoxious Timp, a Duncy that's struck it, a Millionaire, formerly a Book Black.....Carl White.
 Chas. H. West, a heavy dealer in stocks.....R. S. Parry.
 Job S. Turkey, an unfortunate speculator, "bought over his margin".....J. W. Brown.
 Rich. Conwell.....C. Henry.
 Chas. Coal.....Oil speculation.....F. Converse.
 Mariposa.....H. Schmitt.
 Johannes Javert, Pete's favorite Imp, and Superintendent of the Oil Works in the Lower Regions.....G. G. Lockwood.
 The Red Spirit.....Petroleum Imp, with Demon Dance.....Master Sheridan.
 The Green Monster.....Bulls and Bears by the Entire Company.....Master Mack.

SCENE FIRST—WILLIAM STREET—MERCHANTS' EXCHANGE.
"How do you now?"
SCENE SECOND—A CAVE—PETE'S ANTE-CHAMBER.
SCENE THIRD—SWAMP ANGEL OREVE.
SCENE LAST—PETROLIA.

LOST ARTICLES.
 All articles of Jewelry, Clothing, Money, &c., found in the Hall will be delivered to the owner by making application for the same at the Box Office.

Doors open at a Quarter to 7. Performance to commence at a Quarter to 8 o'clock.

to Family Circle.....30 cents.
 BEATS HUNDRED WITHOUT EXTRA CHARGE.
 A appearance since his return from California of
M. LEWIS
 a banjo player and a system of music.

offices at 476 ½ Broadway, next to Mechanics' Hall, and their advertisements in the *Clipper* offered banjo lessons and method books: "Banjo with or without a master—

Large and easy book containing 100 tunes (explained). Mailed \$1. Teaching season to commence August 30th [1865]. Converse and Sivori, 476 ½ Broadway.”²³⁵

Converse was so well respected by the musical community in New York that a presentation committee, which was comprised of William Dressler, Thomas Baker, George W. Morgan, J. R. Thomas, Charles G. Pond, A. Sedgwick, Louis Schreiber, Edward Mollenhauer, and Henry Tucker, presented him with a large gold medal inscribed with the words, “Presented to Frank B. Converse, the Master Banjoist of the World, New York, July 28, 1866,” one week before he and his wife sailed for Europe for a year of touring. The day before he sailed he was also given a six-inch-long solid gold banjo with working keys, strings, and nuts, as well as a full-size rosewood banjo, elaborately finished, by J. K. Buckley, one of his students.²³⁶

After Converse departed, Sivori took over their offices. He performed banjo solos with Budworth’s Minstrels in 1866,²³⁷ with Griffin and Christy’s in 1867,²³⁸ and with Bryants’ Minstrels in 1865 and 1869.²³⁹ He changed the ad for his teaching services to, “Banjo taught, banjo made easy. The only correct method. Anybody can learn. Great self teaching banjo book mailed \$1. Banjos made to order and sent to any part of the country. Twenty years experience in teaching. Eight years a member of Bryants’ Minstrels. Hours from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. John Sivori, successor to Frank B. Converse, 476 ½ Broadway.”²⁴⁰

²³⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 21 (2 September 1865): 168.

²³⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 19 (18 August 1866): 150.

²³⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 20 August 1866, 7.

²³⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

²³⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 23 (16 September 1865): 184; “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 24 (18 September 1869): 191.

²⁴⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 30 (4 November 1865): 240; “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 8 November 1868.

Banjo teachers and makers sought out potential students all over the country, not just in New York. John Bogan taught banjo and Ethiopian dancing at 131 East Houston Street. He also built banjos and sold them with prices starting at \$7 and up. Banjos could be sent “to any part of the country on receipt of the money.” Bogan would send three written banjo or jig dancing lessons to any part of the country for \$1.²⁴¹ The *Clipper* reported that “*Buckley’s Champion Method* may be comparatively easily learned by following the tuition of J. K. Buckley, who also supplies a complete set of tunes with all the necessary explanations to those residing out of town.”²⁴² One could obtain this book, as well as professional banjos, priced from \$15 to \$80, via mail or at 578 Hudson St., New York, New York.²⁴³

Contemporary banjo methods that were written and sold by banjo virtuosi indicate that touch, tone, clarity, and accuracy were the four most important aspects of banjo playing during the late 1860s. *Buckley’s Champion Method* (1860) and Frank B. Converse’s *New and Complete Method for the Banjo* (1865) provide examples of the common style of method books that included a collection of minstrel song melodies and general instructions for playing the instrument but did not include the song texts (Example 3.9).

²⁴¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 21 (2 September 1865): 168; “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 8 November 1868.

²⁴² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 23 (15 September 1866): 182.

²⁴³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 40 (11 January 1868): 319.

Example 3.9, “Essence of Old Virginny,” “Root Hog or Die”



Like the minstrel violin and flute methods of the time, another banjo method, *Phil Rice's Correct Method for the Banjo* (1858), gives instructions for fingerings, describes the techniques required to play the instrument, and includes some of the most popular minstrel song melodies that a professional minstrel banjoist would have been required to play. Rice's method goes into more detail than Converse's by providing step-by-step instructions for the fingerings and striking technique of each note in the melody.²⁴⁴

Example 3.10 shows Rice's direction for the tune, "Jump into de Wagon."

²⁴⁴ NYPL, Performing Arts Library, Research Division, Music, Clippings file, subject: Minstrels, "Performing Minstrel Music Today: Sources, Techniques, and Ethics," Paper written by James Kimball and

Example 3.10, "Jump into de Wagon"

PHIL RICE'S BANJO INSTRUCTOR. 89

JUMP INTO DE WAGON.

Open strings, give a strike, bring first finger and thumb down on first and third strings, touch first string, * touch second string with thumb, first with first finger, then make a triplet by touching thumb string, first string with first fin-

ger, second string with thumb, * then first finger down on second string, touch second string with thumb, first string open with first finger, fingers up, touch the second and first with thumb and first finger, second finger on third string, touch third with thumb. * Repeat the same.

Same as above until you come to the second star, then give a strike, bring fingers back to second fret, second finger move the little finger down to the ninth fret, G#, half strike finger down, give a half strike, * raise fingers, strike; the rest twice, put second finger on seventh fret, F#, little finger up, * as before.

3 I'd radder hab a young gal wid her heart and hand,
 Dan to hab an old one wid her house and land,
 Ebry Sunday mornin, when she'd be by my side,
 We'd jump in to de wagon and den we'd take a ride.
 Jump into de wagon,
 Harness up de gray mule,
 And all take a ride.

Rice's description of the execution of this melody on a five-string banjo follows: "Open strings, give a strike, bring first finger and thumb down on first and third strings, touch first string, touch second string with thumb, first with first finger, then make a triplet by

touching thumb string, first string with first finger, second string with thumb; put first finger down on second string, touch second string with thumb, first string open with first finger, fingers up, touch the second and first with thumb and first finger, second finger on third string, touch third with thumb. Repeat the same.”²⁴⁵ By providing the song’s text along with the melody, Rice indicates that the banjoist would sing the song and accompany himself, or at the very least sing the chorus with other members of the troupe while accompanying.

Variety troupes with minstrel corps did not present soloists on orchestral instruments, but they did present soloists on the traditional instruments of minstrelsy, particularly banjo. The range of performance opportunities for a minstrel corps banjoist at a variety hall was usually limited to solos and songs and the occasional burlesque skit or comedy number. George Winship received a double encore for the banjo solo and song that he performed at Charley White’s, whose show featured minstrelsy and “the ladies of the ballet” in October 1866.²⁴⁶ Lew (L. C.) Brimmer, one of the great minstrel banjoists during this period, also performed with both minstrel and variety troupes. He played with the San Francisco Minstrels during fall 1866 and spring 1867, as well as during the next season.²⁴⁷ The *Clipper* called him one of the “best banjo players in burnt cork,” although the critic found great fault with his singing during his time at Pastor’s in 1866.²⁴⁸ Like Frank Converse, Brimmer gave an imitation of the Trinity Church chimes on banjo.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ James Kimball and Elizabeth Gamble; Phil Rice, *Phil Rice’s Correct Method for the Banjo* (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1858). NYPL, Performing Arts Library, Research Division, Music, Clippings file, subject: Minstrels.

²⁴⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 24 (22 September 1866): 190.

²⁴⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 25 (26 September 1868): 198.

²⁴⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 4 (5 May 1866): 30.

²⁴⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 25 (26 September 1868): 198.

Novelty Instrumental Solos

Troupes occasionally presented multi-instrument novelty acts during the first or second sections of their shows, in which one person played several different instruments. The instruments included in these acts were those of minstrelsy—tambourine, bones, and banjo—as well as the band and orchestral instruments played by instrumental virtuosi. Campbell’s Minstrels’ program dated 29 December 1864 (Figure 1.3, pages 75-76) lists Lewis Myer’s solo on six instruments (specific instruments not listed). [George] Christy’s Minstrels presented the “violintrumpetharmoniccanwhistlecombrous solo” on 30 April 1866 along with J. E. Green’s “Mocking Bird Song” and other musical acts in the first part after the opening overture. Christy’s Minstrels called this musical part of their show a “burlesque monster concert.”²⁵⁰ Buckley’s Serenaders’ program from 3 September 1869 (location of performance unknown) lists G. Swaine Buckley’s featured olio act entitled “Musical Moments” (Figure 3.9). The program states that Buckley performed on twelve different instruments, but only eleven are listed: violin, cornet, banjo, concertina, bones, Chinese fiddle, melophone, xylophone, guitar, flageolet, and piccolo.

²⁵⁰ “George Christy’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 30 April 1866, 5. This act is a reference to Louis Jullien’s monster concerts.

Figure 3.9,
Buckley's
Serenaders'
Program, 3
September
1869

PROGRAMME.

PART FIRST.

Overture.....Buckley's Serenaders
 Operatic Chorus.....Company
 Sweet Polly Primrose (new).....G. Swaine Buckley
 When the Corn is Waving (new).....J. H. Murphy
 Rosa Jane (new).....Jake Budd
 The Day when you'll Forget Me, composed by J. R. Thomas, (new).....J. Waterman
 If you love me, do say yes (new).....G. Swaine Buckley

QUICKSTEP..... BRASS BAND.

PART SECOND.

G. SWAINE BUCKLEY
 In his GREAT, NEW AND ORIGINAL ACT OF ALL ACTS, OF
MUSICAL MOMENTS!
 IN WHICH HE
Performs on 12 Different Instruments,
 Introducing SONGS and DANCES, and all the different features belonging to Minstrelsy.
 During the Act he plays upon the following Instruments:—
 Violin, Cornet, Banjo, Concertina, Bones, Chinese Fiddle, Melophone,
 Zyllophone, Guitar, Flageolet and Picolo.

HOGAN & HUGHES
 Late of Bryant's Minstrels, New York, in their specialty,
Song & Dance, - "The Colored Belle."

CHARLES HEYWOOD,
 The renowned Burlesque Impersonator, in his great act of
"LE JARDIN MABILLE!"

BASS SOLO.....O. P. SWEET

The End of the Season

Female singers and dancers re-entered New York minstrelsy at the end of the 1866-67 season for the first time since the end of the war in the same blackface acts as those performed by male minstrels. Lotta, a popular New York actress, sang the Negro dialect song “Oh dem Golden Slippers,” probably not the song composed by James A. Bland (1854-1919) of Sprague’s *Georgia Minstrels* (pub. 1879)²⁵¹ and sung by Ed Marble in the plays, *Muzette* and *Zip*. Naomi Porter, the only female member of Tony Pastor’s Ethiopian Corps, put on burnt cork and performed a burlesque of Joseph Jefferson’s *Rip Van Winkle*,²⁵² “The Black Rip Van Winkle,” with Johnny Wild, Billy Sheppard, and Willis Armstrong.²⁵³ She also performed an unidentified Ethiopian song and dance, which was praised by the *Clipper*, during the last week of the company’s 1866-67 season.²⁵⁴ The Worrell Sisters²⁵⁵ opened at the New York Theatre at the end of the regular season on 13 May.²⁵⁶ Their male and female cast performed evening-length burlesques on legitimate theater and opera, with the sisters in the lead female and male roles.²⁵⁷ They programmed old songs and dances from minstrelsy in their show in June 1867. In addition to their musical burlesque on *Faust*, composed by John F. Poole, the three sisters and company performed “The Nerves,” which was one of the San

²⁵¹ “Oh, Dem Golden Slippers” was a parody of a spiritual sung by the Fisk Jubilee Singers. “Music for the Nation,” <<http://memory.loc.gov>>.

²⁵² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 24 (22 September 1866): 190. *Rip Van Winkle* was performed at the Olympic Theatre.

²⁵³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 7 (25 May 1867): 54.

²⁵⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 12 (29 June 1867): 94.

²⁵⁵ During the previous summer, the Worrell Sisters perform musical extravaganzas such as “The Three Sisters” (composed and written by Mr. Ben Baker, stage manager of Wood’s Theatre) in New York, in which they sang, danced, played banjo, and clogged. It is unknown if they performed blackface acts during this period. “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 11 (23 June 1866): 86.

²⁵⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 4 (4 May 1867): 30.

²⁵⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 6 (18 May 1867): 46.

Franciscans' most popular acts of the previous season,²⁵⁸ and "Nicodemus Johnson" (Example 3.2, pages 176-77), which Johnny Allen had performed at Kelly and Leon's earlier in this season. Jennie Worrell accompanied these song and dances on banjo poorly, according to the *Clipper's* critic. Apparently, female banjoists were not a rarity at the time. An advertisement for J. K. Buckley's Champion Method in September 1866 included the line, "Ladies Taught."²⁵⁹ In "Faust" Jennie and Sophie wore breeches for their male roles of Faust and Mephistopheles, respectively, and Irene Worrell dressed handsomely as Rosenhelm. During the show Jennie also executed an excellent clog dance. Mr. Corrister, formerly of Wood's Minstrels, now performed with this troupe and appeared in the burlesque.²⁶⁰ The Worrell Sisters' season closed on 6 July. They commenced the fall 1867 season late in August after taking the summer off.²⁶¹

If the 1865-66 season was the beginning of change in New York minstrelsy, then the 1866-67 season was the first pronounced manifestation of those changes. Minstrels responded to middle-class desires for respectable family entertainment, novelty, and lavish, large-scale productions, which also began to change traditional managerial practices.

Aside from the extremely successful and long-running San Francisco and Kelly and Leon's Minstrels, short-lived troupes such as the California and Budworth's Minstrels took the place of established ones. More variety troupes with Ethiopian corps opened, which increased the competition faced by minstrels. Troupes often chose to tour rather than to rent or purchase a hall of their own, and the rate of turnover of individual

²⁵⁸ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 31(11 November 1865): 248.

²⁵⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 24 (22 September 1866): 192.

²⁶⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 11 (22 June 1867): 86.

²⁶¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 12 (29 June 1867): 94.

performers increased. These trends, which were put into motion by the close of the Civil War and the end of the money that it had generated for the city, continued through the next three theatrical seasons.

Chapter Four: 1867-1868

Minstrelsy continued to be characterized by the themes of local and contemporary subjects during this season. Although the repertoire of minstrel acts was comprised of the same acts that had been performed in previous years, burlesques of opera and contemporary legitimate theater (which included burlesque) were the most popular.

At the start of this season parodies of Offenbach's contemporary operas began to appear more frequently than the older operas of Verdi and Bellini, which had been popular for years. Burlesques also became much more complex and often included much music from the original sung by male minstrel prima donnas. For the first time troupes advertised original operettas modeled on Offenbach's operas that may not have been burlesques at all but original examples of light opera via the elements of minstrelsy.

Despite the changes that were taking place in minstrelsy during this season, many elements of shows remained the same: the basic three-part structure, the doubling roles of minstrels, and the types of acts performed. However, the emphasis became even more focused on elaborate and extravagant productions, and troupes began to change from stock companies to loosely organized troupes comprised of independent small performing groups. For example, Sharpley and Cotton's Minstrels worked with various groups such as the Buislay Family of acrobats and the New York Burlesque Company. Although combinations such as this were seen in previous seasons, troupes more frequently hired guest artists to perform with them for short periods of time. This resulted in a type of show that foreshadowed vaudeville of the late nineteenth century.

Troupe Activity

By the first week of June, the elite of New York had begun their annual departure to fashionable summering spots.¹ Since Griffin and Christy's,² the San Francisco Minstrels, Sharpley and Pastor's, and Kelly and Leon's Minstrels were either closed or touring in July and August 1867, Hooley's Minstrels of Brooklyn was the only minstrel troupe open in that city or in Manhattan during the summer.³ The Fourth of July was especially quiet because the fireworks display that the city put on for the holiday drew away audiences. The few theaters that remained open—the Old Bowery, the French Theatre, The Japanese gymnastic troupe at the Academy, Butler's American Theatre, Barnum's, and Banvard's—were poorly attended.

Butler's American Theatre (472 Broadway) opened on the evening of 8 June and remained open all summer with the same combination of variety and minstrelsy as that which had been given by Charley White's and Pastor's troupes during the previous season. Butler's troupe was comprised of pantomime, drama, comedy, ballet, popular songs (one of the features of the show) performed by Ada Tesman,⁴ the comic blackface songs of George Edeson, the banjo solos and ballads of George Coes,⁵ and afterpieces.⁶ The minstrel corps included George R. Edeson, Dick Sands, Charley Pettingill, Johnny Queen, Ned Stanley, and S. S. Purdy.⁷ The *Clipper* reported that despite the warm weather the troupe did well.⁸

¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 9 (8 June 1867): 70.

² Griffin and Christy's Minstrels closed their summer 1867 season on 29 June and went to Brooklyn, for at least a short period. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 13 (6 July 1867): 102.

³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 14 (13 July 1867): 110.

⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 16 (27 July 1867): 126.

⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 13 (6 July 1867): 102.

⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 9 (8 June 1867): 70.

⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 14 (13 July 1867): 110.

By 6 July Pastor's had closed in order to be refurbished.⁹ Three weeks later the Varieties Theatre opened (by 27 July) at 87 Mercer Street, between Spring and Prince Streets.¹⁰ The blackface acts that were performed at this hall were the only ones that were heard in New York during the last week of July and the first week of August.

The Worrell Sisters closed on 6 July at the New York Theatre and began a short summer season two days later. They continued to perform musical burlesques and drama, and although no blackface or variety acts were advertised, they were a typical part of their shows.¹¹ They performed the military drama, "The French Spy," and Schonberg's burlesque of "Arrah-Na-Pogue,"¹² which Wood's Minstrels had burlesqued in the fall of 1865. During the last two weeks of July, the troupe closed for vacation.¹³

As usual, halls were refurbished during the slow summer holidays.¹⁴ Troupes made their halls as comfortable and elegant as possible in order to appeal to fashionable audiences and especially ladies.¹⁵ The most interesting feature of Kelly and Leon's renovation was the addition of extra rows of gas lights in various colors, which increased illumination to the stage and hall.¹⁶ Griffin and Christy's added more seats to their hall, bringing the seating capacity to more than 1000,¹⁷ which was still considerably smaller than most of the legitimate variety halls. In order to improve visibility from all parts of the house, Hart and Kerns raised the seats of the Eighth Avenue Opera House so that they

⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 13 (6 July 1867): 102.

¹⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 16 (27 July 1867): 126.

¹¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 14 (13 July 1867): 110.

¹² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 13 (6 July 1867): 102.

¹³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 15 (20 July 1867): 118.

¹⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

¹⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

¹⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 14 (13 July 1867): 110.

¹⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

"Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 16 (27 July 1867): 126.

receded from the stage.¹⁸ Although minstrel troupes built new halls and expanded old ones, their halls generally remained smaller than variety theaters of this period. Bryants' new hall on Fourteenth Street in the Tammany Building sat 900,¹⁹ but the *Times* reported that this was too small to hold the number of patrons that attempted to buy tickets most evenings.²⁰

As was the custom, touring companies came to New York during the summer in order to hire performers for their troupes. Ned Davis' Minstrels and Brass Band, for example, organized in New York at the beginning of June and left for a tour of the West.²¹ This troupe did not perform in New York between 1865 and 1870.

Many minstrel and variety troupes opened for the fall season earlier than usual, at the end of July instead of at the end of August or early in September. The Georgia Minstrels opened for the fall at the Broadway Opera House at 600 Broadway on 20 July.²² Josh Hart and Frank Kerns leased the buildings lately vacated by Chase's Minstrels at the corner of Thirty-fourth Street and Eighth Avenue and opened on 20 July as a variety and minstrel hall.²³ They did not name their troupe but rather went by the name of the hall, which they called the Eighth Avenue Opera House.

Sharpley and Cotton's Minstrels reopened at the Fifth Avenue Opera House on 5 August²⁴ but closed soon thereafter on 24 August.²⁵ They moved to 514 Broadway, which Sharpley and Charley White leased and renamed the Theatre Comique.²⁶ The hall

¹⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

¹⁹ "Amusements" (Review), *New York Times*, 19 May 1868.

²⁰ "Amusements" (Review), *New York Times*, 15 June 1868.

²¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 9 (8 June 1867): 70.

²² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 16 (27 July 1867): 126.

²³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 15 (20 July 1867): 118.

²⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 15 (20 July 1867): 118.

²⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

²⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

had lately been occupied by Lingard but was formerly Wood's Minstrel Hall and then Wood's Theatre. Sharpley and Cotton's twenty-one member troupe opened there with Charley White and Lingard two days later on 26 August.²⁷ By the end of the first week of September, the *Clipper* reported that they were doing a healthy business.²⁸

By 13 July Griffin and Christy's Minstrels had leased Union Hall at the corner of Twenty-third Street and Broadway²⁹ and opened soon thereafter for the fall season on either 29 July³⁰ or 3 August with basically the same troupe as the one that had performed at the Fifth Avenue Opera House during the previous season.³¹ Griffin and Christy's had been the meeting place for the loyal league³² and had lately housed the Bunyan Tableaux. They refurbished their hall and expanded its seating capacity to more than 1000.³³

The San Francisco Minstrels opened on 12 August at their old hall at 585 Broadway,³⁴ which was located opposite to Niblo's Garden.³⁵ The Eighth Avenue Opera House³⁶ and Butler's were doing well during the middle of August. Butler's fairy pantomime, "Medina,"³⁷ was particularly popular at this time. The Georgia Minstrels closed and left on tour some time after the end of August. The last mention of the troupe

²⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

²⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

²⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 14 (13 July 1867): 110.

³⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142.

"Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

³¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

³² The "loyal league" is probably a reference to the Union League of New York, a society that George Templeton Strong and seven other men founded in New York during the Civil War in order to promote the Union and patriotism.

³³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 16 (27 July 1867): 126.

³⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

³⁵ "Amusements: the Minstrels and Varieties," *New York Herald*, 26 August 1867, 6.

³⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

³⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

for the season is in the 31 August 1867 *New York Clipper*.³⁸ Kelly and Leon's Minstrels opened to one of the largest audiences ever seen³⁹ at their hall at 720 Broadway on 29 July.⁴⁰

Blackface song and dance were also performed at concert saloons, but these performances were rarely advertised in newspapers or other New York periodicals. For example, Sam Cole, a song and dance performer, took a benefit at Roome and Brookfield's Varieties on Mercer Street on 5 September,⁴¹ and a troupe of African American minstrels was performing at Harry Hill's Varieties at 26 East Houston Street at the beginning of September: "Performing here nightly is a troupe of genuine sable Africans, whose masterly renderings of Negro melody, song, and sentiment are the well-earned theme of popular commendation. This troupe appears every evening in characteristic costumes."⁴² This troupe's name and performance practices are unknown.

The *Clipper* reported that business at Pastor's,⁴³ Griffin and Christy's,⁴⁴ the Eighth Avenue Opera House,⁴⁵ Butler's,⁴⁶ and the San Francisco Minstrels⁴⁷ picked up through August and was going well at the beginning of September. Dan Bryant spent the summer of 1867 at Wallack's Theatre performing in legitimate dramas,⁴⁸ closed there on

³⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

³⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142.

⁴⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 15 (20 July 1867): 118.

⁴¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

⁴² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

⁴³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

⁴⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

"Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

⁴⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

⁴⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

⁴⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

"Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

⁴⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 13 (6 July 1867): 102.

27 July, and left for California on 10 August.⁴⁹ His troupe did not appear until it opened at the end of the season on 18 May on Fourteenth Street in Tammany Hall.⁵⁰

During the season at least two other minstrel troupes performed in New York. Dick Sands' Minstrels opened on 14 December at the Bowery Theatre after touring the country.⁵¹ And, an unnamed troupe opened at 189 Broadway, near Pastor's on 30 December. Andy Leavitt, Johnny Wild, and H. W. Eagan were in the troupe.⁵² The lengths of these troupes' runs in New York are not known.

Most of the aspects of show production such as the schedule of performances remained the same during this season as in seasons past. All of the troupes performed Saturday matinees at around 2 p. m., and Pastor's was the only company to perform Wednesday matinees. New York troupes also performed holiday matinees on Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Shows began at 8 p. m., except for the San Franciscan's and Butler's, which began at 7:45 p.m. beginning in January. Most minstrel shows, such as the San Franciscan's, lasted for ninety minutes,⁵³ but the variety shows usually played for two hours. And the basic show format, including the roles of the endmen and the middleman, remained unchanged.

Troupes during this season were comprised of approximately twenty members each,⁵⁴ which was about the same number as companies in 1865. Toward the end of the spring 1868, Kelly and Leon's increased their number, advertising "thirty artists

⁴⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

⁵⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 6 (16 May 1868): 47.

⁵¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 36 (14 December 1867): 287.

⁵² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 39 (4 January 1868): 310.

⁵³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 23 (14 September 1867): 182.

⁵⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 49 (14 March 1868): 390. "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 103.

nightly,”⁵⁵ which made the company the largest minstrel troupe during this season. They also called themselves a “double company and orchestra.”⁵⁶ Bryants’ Minstrels opened in mid-May with a troupe of more than eighteen performers, although the total number is unknown.⁵⁷ Bryants’ orchestra was comprised of J. H. Ross, G. B. Ross, James Garatagui (cornet), G. H. Shott, Neil Bryant (cello), James Morrison, C. Trunkett, and Francis Bracht.⁵⁸ Most variety hall troupes were much larger than minstrel troupes. In November 1867 Butler’s American Theatre advertised a company of more than forty performers.⁵⁹

Minstrel and variety halls charged about the same prices for admission as they had during the previous year—between \$.25 and .75, with some half price admissions for Saturday matinees.⁶⁰ Griffin and Christy’s had reduced their prices to all parts of their house “in order to give all a chance to witness the performance of the master band of the world.”⁶¹ They charged \$.30 for general admission and \$.50 for reserved seats.⁶² Ticket prices rose during this season due to increasing hall rents⁶³ and the high production costs associated with the elaborate costumes, props, and stage sets used in extravagant afterpieces. When Bryants’ Minstrels opened at their new hall on Fourteenth Street on 18 May, their prices were somewhat higher than what minstrel and variety troupes had charged earlier in the season—\$.75 for the parquet, \$.50 for the dress circle, \$1 for

⁵⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 8 (30 May 1868): 63.

⁵⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 39 (4 January 1868): 311.

⁵⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 6 (16 May 1868): 47.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 33 (23 November 1867): 263.

⁶⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 9 (8 June 1867): 70. “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 26 August 1867, 3.

⁶¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

⁶² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

⁶³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 15 (20 July 1867): 118. Although the rental prices of the minstrel halls during this season are unknown, Sallie Hinckley leased the New York Theatre for six weeks during the summer of 1867 for \$600 per week.

reserved orchestra chairs, and \$5 and \$7 for private boxes (16 May 1868) show. Their prices were comparable to what the Richings English Opera Company, which was performing at the French Theatre, charged on the same evening—\$6 for four seats in a balcony box, \$1.25 for the parquet, \$1 for reserved admission and dress circle, and \$.50 for the family circle.⁶⁴ Tickets for the Elks benefit that took place at the Academy of Music on 6 June 1868, which included members of Kelly and Leon's, the San Francisco Minstrels, Sharpley and Cotton's, Tony Pastor's, and the company of the Theatre Comique, cost \$.50.⁶⁵

Blackface minstrelsy continued to attract a wide range of patrons. During January and February of 1866 the *Clipper* reported that theater audiences were a mix of all economic levels—rich, middle class, and poor—⁶⁶ and that the two extremes of New York life—Broadway and Five Points—mixed in theaters.⁶⁷ In September of 1867 Kelly and Leon's advertised a benefit for their treasurer in five different languages—English, Spanish, Italian, German, and French—which suggests that immigrants from different countries and ethnic backgrounds attended these English-language minstrel shows.⁶⁸ Though rare, this advertisement shows that minstrels targeted a wider audience than middle- and lower-class English-speakers. Also, Campbell's Minstrels advertised at least once in the German New York newspaper, the *Stadt Zeitung*.⁶⁹

The targeting of women and children, especially for matinees, was part of minstrelsy's continued desire for a respectable image. Minstrel advertisements and

⁶⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 6 (16 May 1868): 47.

⁶⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 71.

⁶⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 42 (27 January 1866): 334.

⁶⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 44 (10 February 1866): 350.

⁶⁸ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 25 (28 September 1867): 199.

⁶⁹ "Amusements," *New Yorker Staats Zeitung*, 26 June 1864.

reviews of shows assured their potential audience that their programs contained nothing offensive. On opening night on 5 August 1867 at the Fifth Avenue Opera House, the *Clipper* reported that Sharpley as Tambo was one of the “wittiest as well as most original performers in the business, and that his “quaint and original jokes” on local and contemporary subjects were not offensive.⁷⁰ The *Clipper* reported in November that the entertainment given by Sharpley, Cotton, and White’s Minstrels “is a style of entertainment that pleases all classes, ladies, gentlemen, young, and old,”⁷¹ and a month later the troupe advertised their show as “a chaste entertainment.”⁷² They called their hall, the Theatre Comique, “The Family Resort.”⁷³

Emerson, Allen, and Manning’s Minstrels⁷⁴ and the Georgia Minstrels⁷⁵ also advertised their shows, especially their matinees, for families and juveniles. The *Clipper* reported that the audiences of the Eighth Avenue Opera House were largely comprised of women,⁷⁶ especially the front seats, which were reserved for ladies.⁷⁷ The Eighth Avenue Opera House actually billed itself as “The Ladies Theatre,” and the *Clipper* reported that it filled a gap that has existed in uptown entertainment for a long time.⁷⁸

Kelly and Leon’s called themselves “The Wallack’s of Minstrelsy”⁷⁹ and advertised their great originality and lack of vulgarity, in addition to their fashionable

⁷⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

⁷¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 34 (30 November 1867): 270.

⁷² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 36 (14 December 1867): 287.

⁷³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 25 (28 September 1867): 199.

⁷⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 103.

⁷⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

⁷⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

⁷⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 155.

⁷⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

⁷⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 155. Wallack’s Theatre was the city’s leading hall for the production of legitimate drama.

audiences.⁸⁰ They also advertised that their “cool and elegant Palace of Original Minstrelsy continues to be the only popular resort of the ladies, who [were] nightly delighted with operatic burlesques and an elevated school of Ethiopian Art admitted by all unequalled.”⁸¹ Many of their ads were printed in interesting designs or as acrostics.⁸²

Minstrels made changes to performance styles in order to appeal to those who cared about the propriety of show material. For example, even though Johnny Allen was a favorite with the patrons of Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels, he was fired from the troupe during the first week of April 1867 for appearing drunk onstage two nights in a row. The critic for the *Clipper* wrote that this action might cause other minstrels to stay in line.⁸³ Despite this, Tony Pastor immediately hired Allen for his own company.⁸⁴

Except for Sharpley, Cotton, and White’s troupe, which closed on 4 January at the Theatre Comique and went on a tour of the country for one month,⁸⁵ most companies closed at the end of June 1868. William Horace Lingard’s farewell benefit at the Theatre Comique was heard at the end of May and was his last performance of his “Statue Song” and comic sketches.⁸⁶ Charley White closed the Theatre Comique on 27 June after its first season under his management.⁸⁷ Edwin Kelly returned to Kelly and Leon’s on 8 June after being absent since December.⁸⁸ The troupe concluded their second successful season in New York on Wednesday, 31 June with a benefit for Leon.⁸⁹ Tony Pastor

⁸⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 35 (7 December 1867): 279.

⁸¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

⁸² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 30 (2 November 1867): 239.

⁸³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 52 (6 April 1867): 414.

⁸⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 1 (13 April 1867): 6.

⁸⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 40 (11 January 1868): 318.

⁸⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 8 (30 May 1868): 63.

⁸⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 102.

⁸⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 10 (13 June 1868): 78.

⁸⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 12 (27 June 1868): 95.

closed on 27 June and took his variety troupe to Boston for a summer season.⁹⁰ Bobby Newcomb of the San Francisco Minstrels took one of the usual end-of-season benefits on 26 June,⁹¹ and the troupe closed on the following night. They then went on a short tour, including a short engagement at Selwyn's Boston Theatre.⁹² Bryants' Minstrels performed throughout the summer of 1868. Emerson and Allen's Minstrels took over Tony Pastor's Opera House on 29 June⁹³ and performed there for the month of July.⁹⁴

Description of Shows

The *Herald's* description of the San Francisco Minstrels' opening show for the fall of 1867 provides an example of a typical minstrel program during this season. The excerpt also describes the blackened faces of minstrels as the iconic symbol of comedy and fun, as well as the means for social and political satire for the period.

All medical authorities will agree in recommending a visit to a minstrel hall as a sure specific against the blues or other melancholic symptoms. The knights of the banjo and clog clothe their faces in mourning for the purpose of making their audience laugh, and their spirits [are] as buoyant as the cork, which they use. We shall not enter into a metaphysical analysis of the normal condition of the Ethiopian's heel or capacious mouth to explain the cause of merriment, which has its origin in either of these undesirable localities. Suffice it to say that the Ethiopian is the modern Momus and the black face is the recognized type of fun.

Since the time that Dan Emmett, Frank Brower, Billy Whitlock, and Richard

⁹⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 12 (27 June 1868): 94.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 103.

⁹⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 8 (30 May 1868): 62.

Pelham first introduced minstrelsy at the Chatham Street Theatre in 1843, that style of entertainment has become an institution in this country and has even spread to Europe. Everything in government, politics, amusements, or national customs comes within the sphere of those incorrigible burlesques, and the same black faces glisten with merriment, while they represent a prominent party leader, a premiere danseuse, a star tragedian, a Wall Street speculator, a Japanese top spinner, or a ruthless villain. The program of an evening with the minstrels means an hour or two of unrestrained laughter. First, twelve dark faces appear in songs, sandwiched between jokes and extravagant anecdotes by the end men, winding up with some boisterous scene in which all take part. A clog dance, a banjo solo, a burlesque, a scene from plantation life, and a host of other things of similar import make up the olio, or second part of the entertainment. Opposite Niblo's Garden the San Francisco Minstrels nightly dispense food for laughter to their numerous patrons. Backus and Birch are irresistible promoters of the 'risibles,' Wambold and Templeton are tenors who would be acquisitions to any concert hall, and Cooper and Fields perform wondrous evolutions on the clogs. 'Caste from Memory' and a laughable burlesque on the base ball match for the championship are their great card at present.⁹⁵

Like the San Francisco Minstrels, Griffin and Christy's troupe focused on musical acts in their shows. Griffin composed for the troupe and played cello in the first part, in addition to his role as interlocutor. Percival, tenor, George Leslie, tenor, W. Hodgkin, alto, and C. F. Shattuck, basso, were the troupe's lead singers. James Morrison lead the band, John Sivori played second violin in the band, and performed banjo solos, Fred

⁹⁵ "Amusements: The Minstrels and Varieties," *New York Herald*, 26 Aug 1867, 6.

Abbott performed female impersonations, and James Prendergast and Neil Rogers performed song and dance. The *Clipper* reported that unusually, all of the gags that were told in the first part were new, and the instrumental music and the quartet singing were good.⁹⁶

During this season minstrel troupes began to engage more guest artists and changed their performers more frequently than was seen before. While Sharpley and Cotton's Minstrels performed at the Fifth Avenue Opera House, they presented traditional minstrel shows by a stock company. After they moved to the Theatre Comique, the company developed a new kind of variety and minstrel company in which small autonomous groups joined together in the production of a show. Even though Sharpley and Cotton's called themselves a minstrel troupe, their show actually included as many elements of variety as it did blackface performance. They opened at the Theatre Comique with the Buislay family of gymnasts, the Caron family of gymnasts and pantomimists, an Ethiopian corps, and female singers and dancers such as Miss Eva Brent and Miss Ella La Rue, "the California sensation and only rival of Lotta in her banjo solos, clog dances, and wire ascensions." It is unknown if she "blackened up" for her banjo solos. The Ethiopian corps was comprised of Charley White, Ben Cotton, Sam Sharpley, and others.⁹⁷

The various groups that made up Sharpley and Cotton's company performed mostly on their own during the first and second parts and sometimes jointly in the afterpiece. For example, during the third week of August, Sharpley and Cotton's Minstrels gave a regular minstrel first part, which was followed by a series of acts in the

⁹⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142

"Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

⁹⁷ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

olio performed by Ella La Rue, Charley White, Eva Brent, Sharpley, and Ben Cotton.

The entertainment concluded with a burlesque performed by Garland's New York Burlesque Company, lately from Boston.⁹⁸ Although it is unknown if this is the first example of the vaudeville style of production that would become standard practice during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, this instance is surely one of the earliest. One of the main differences between this approach and that of the stock company is the lack of interaction taking place between these groups within a show. Whereas the members of a stock company worked together within all of the parts of a show, the various groups in this show only performed together in the large finale number.⁹⁹ Beginning on 23 March, White changed the show at the Theatre Comique¹⁰⁰ by engaging Lingard, the legitimate burlesque comedian and singer, along with a regular variety company and a minstrel corps that was comprised of Andy Leavitt, Lew Brimmer, Tommy Ryan, Charley White, and Josh Hart.¹⁰¹

A more typical example of the addition of featured variety acts within a minstrel show is seen at Griffin and Christy's during the summer of 1867. One of the troupe's chief attractions during June was the variety performer, Harry Burchard, a ventriloquist and imitator. The audience was "quite amused by his imitations of a hissing glass of soda water, opening a bottle of porter, a frog, a mosquito, a snapping dog, a bee, the different tools used by a carpenter, a baby crying, and a fight between a cat and a dog."¹⁰²

⁹⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

⁹⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166. "The Bear and the Sentinel."

¹⁰⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 52 (4 April 1868): 414.

¹⁰¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 4 (2 May 1868): 31.

¹⁰² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 11 (22 June 1867): 86.

Variety troupes with minstrelsy were very popular and “always well patronized,”¹⁰³ according to the *New York Herald*, because “they united minstrelsy with a thousand other attractions with uncorked faces.”¹⁰⁴ Pastor’s and Butler’s programs provide the best examples from this season of the traditional combination of variety and minstrelsy, which had been performed since the late 1850s. Pastor’s approach, which interspersed blackface acts among the variety acts of the olio, remained basically the same from the time of his opening in 1865 through this season. Tony Pastor himself was well known for singing the newest songs from London,¹⁰⁵ and his troupe performed ballet, Ethiopian acts, burlesque skits, and features, such as the local drama, “The Female Sharpshooters,” which had “great [special] effects, splendid scenery, and a grand march and drill by twenty young ladies.”¹⁰⁶ Other acts from the variety genres that Pastor presented included the panorama, “A Tour Around the World,”¹⁰⁷ Johnny Pierce in Ethiopian comedy, magic acts, a drama, “Bunker Hill,” and Prof. Logrenia’s canary birds, cats, and white mice.¹⁰⁸

Butler took the other approach to variety with minstrelsy that had been seen in previous seasons, and combined a regular minstrel first part with an olio of minstrelsy, variety acts, and an afterpiece, which was most likely performed in whiteface. Features of Butler’s show during the middle of August of 1867, in addition to the fairy pantomime, “Medina,”¹⁰⁹ included “singing, dancing, and niggerisms”¹¹⁰ and new acts

¹⁰³ “Charley White, Ben Cotton, and Sam Sharpley’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 26 August 1867.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

¹⁰⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 23 August 1867, 3.

¹⁰⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142.

¹⁰⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174. There are two notices.

¹⁰⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

¹¹⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142.

every week.¹¹¹ During the first week of September 1867, their regular minstrel first part was followed by Tim Hayes in clog dancing and Carrie Austin, Zo uave drillist.¹¹² Butler's troupe included male and female actors and dancers in drama, ballet, Negro minstrelsy and often ended with ballets such as "Les Bohemians."¹¹³

Butler's and Pastor's shows were so similar that during the first week of July two of the same popular local songs and dances were heard at both halls, although probably in different versions. Dick Carroll performed "My Father Sold Charcoal" and "The Bowery Dancing Master" at Pastor's, while Johnny Queen performed "My Father Sould [sic] Charcoal" and "The Broadway Dancing Master" at Butler's. The "Dancing Masters" on Bowery and Broadway refer to the respective locations of these halls. Pastor's hall was located on 201 Bowery and Butler's was on Broadway.

The company at the Eighth Avenue Opera House (Thirty-fourth Street and Eighth Avenue) focused more on Ethiopian acts than the other variety shows with minstrelsy but was comprised of both men and women. This was also the only troupe to advertise a change of program on both Mondays and Thursdays instead of the traditional weekly changes on Mondays.¹¹⁴ This show did not include endmen and a middleman, but the large Ethiopian corps was comprised of nine members. At the beginning of August 1867, Laura Le Claire sang Irish songs and danced jigs, Miss Viro Farrand also sang and danced jigs, and David Braham led the orchestra. Frank Kerns and Dick Ralph gave "George the Charmer" with a big shoe accompaniment, George Warren performed a good banjo solo and sang, Bob Smith gave one of the rare olio tambourine solos of the

¹¹¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

¹¹² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

¹¹³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7. ***

¹¹⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 155.

late 1860s, and Josh Hart sang and performed comedy. Boniface, Gus West, and George Clammetz also performed Ethiopianisms. The women in the troupe, including three featured dancers, were all solo performers. They presented twenty-five acts during their show, and “for the especial benefit of ladies and children,” matinees were given on Saturday afternoons. Tim Hayes joined the troupe for the following week (second week of August) in clogging.¹¹⁵

Although the range of acts presented at Roome and Brookfield’s Varieties on Mercer Street is unknown, blackface song and dance made up part of their show. On Thursday evening 5 September 1867, Sam Cole, a song and dance performer, took a benefit at this hall.¹¹⁶

Types of Acts

Stump speeches were performed by all of the minstrel troupes and by some of the variety companies. Billy Birch of the San Francisco Minstrels gave his traditionally-titled stump speech “I Am Here.” The *Clipper* described his act as “a sermon not after the style of Henry Ward Beecher.”¹¹⁷ One of Charley Pettingill’s stump orations at Butler’s was called “A Fowl Proceeding.”¹¹⁸

During this season, instrumental virtuosi appeared less frequently than in previous years. The banjo was the most popular solo instrument, although violin, cornet, tambourine, and bones solos were still performed. Most of the banjoists that performed during this season were experienced New York players, who had performed in the city

¹¹⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

¹¹⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

¹¹⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 36 (14 December 1867): 287. “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 33 (23 November 1867): 262.

¹¹⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 51 (28 March 1868): 407-08.

for many years. James H. Wambold,¹¹⁹ George Coes,¹²⁰ and Joe M. Mortimer,¹²¹ Lew Brimmer,¹²² Nelse Seymour,¹²³ Harry Stanwood,¹²⁴ and James Unsworth¹²⁵ were a few of the most prominent.

The four Dobson Brothers—Charles, Frank, George C., and Henry—were minstrel performers, banjo virtuosos, and teachers who performed in New York between 1865 and 1870. In a *Herald* advertisement, they described themselves as “old established teachers” and invited prospective students to call at their rooms at 280 Bowery and examine their new patent banjo.¹²⁶ Charles, “King of the Banjo,” was the most famous of the brothers.¹²⁷ Although banjo championships took place infrequently during the late 1860s, Charles took part in one that was held by the San Francisco Minstrels during their show on 13 April.¹²⁸ In addition to the San Francisco Minstrels,¹²⁹ Frank, George, and Charles also performed with Sharpley and Cotton’s Minstrels.¹³⁰ George filled in for Charles during the second week of November 1867 with Sharpley and Cotton’s after his hand was damaged in a shooting incident. The *Clipper* critic described George C. as “a

¹¹⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 48 (7 March 1868): 382.

¹²⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 47 (29 February 1868): 375.

¹²¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150. Mortimer performed at Butler’s American Theatre (Mechanics’ Hall).

¹²² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 6 (16 May 1868): 47. “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 52 (4 April 1868): 414. Lew Brimmer performed with the San Francisco Minstrels and at the Theatre Comique.

¹²³ Nelse Seymour performed with Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels during this season.

¹²⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 25 (28 September 1867): 198.

“Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 30 (2 November 1867): 239. *New York Herald*, 19 September 1867 and 9 December 1867. Stanwood performed with Kelly and Leon’s and Griffin and Christy’s Minstrels during this season.

¹²⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 8 (30 May 1868): 62. Unsworth performed with Bryants’ Minstrels during this season.

¹²⁶ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 28 September 1868.

¹²⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 30 (2 November 1867): 238..

¹²⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 1 (11 April 1868): 6.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 30 (2 November 1867): 238. Theatre Comique, 514 Broadway. “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 31 (9 November 1867): 246. “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 32 (16 November 1867): 254.

great player . . . with an easy and graceful touch . . . , pure in tone in both the high and low registers”¹³¹ and compared his sound favorably to that of a guitar. George C. played a variety of popular airs in whiteface at this performance with “remarkable execution and ran his fingers all over the banjo with great accuracy.”¹³² Frank Dobson, who also called himself the “Banjo King,” performed banjo solos at the Theatre Comique in November 1867.¹³³ Henry Dobson also built banjos of his own patented design that he embellished with silver and sold for \$60. He presented Nelse Seymour with one of his instruments at a benefit that was given for him by Bryants’ Minstrels in February 1869.¹³⁴

Horace (or Howard) Weston (1825-90) was a free black dancer and banjoist from Connecticut who had begun playing banjo at the age of thirty in 1855, when the instrument began to grow in popularity. He had great professional success at a time when black minstrel banjoists were a rarity. In 1867 he toured England with the Georgia Colored Minstrels. P. T. Barnum hired him when he returned from this tour, and he later toured Europe and the U. S. with other troupes.¹³⁵

J. B. Donniker¹³⁶ and Sam Price¹³⁷ performed violin solos with the San Francisco Minstrels and Kelly and Leon’s, respectively. James Blamphin, Irish harpist, performed with Kelly and Leon’s in pieces such as “The Harp Thro’ Tara’s Hall.”¹³⁸ James

¹³¹ “Theatrical Record: Negro Minstrelsy,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 32 (17 November 1866): 255. Dobson’s performance took place at the City Museum Theatre, Philadelphia on 9 November 1866.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 31 (9 November 1867): 247.

¹³⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 46 (20 February 1869): 366.

¹³⁵ Winter, 57.

¹³⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 39 (4 January 1868): 310.

¹³⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 155.

¹³⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 5 (9 May 1868): 38.

Garatagui performed cornet solos with Bryants' Minstrels from the time of their opening in mid-May.¹³⁹

Female instrumentalists continued to be seen in variety shows. Mlle. Louise, the Lady Drummer, performed drum solos at Butler's American Theatre,¹⁴⁰ and Ella La Rue performed banjo solos with Sharpley and Cotton's Minstrels.¹⁴¹ La Rue's performances with Sharpley and Cotton's may be the first appearance of a female banjoist in a male minstrel troupe, although this company was as much, if not more, variety than minstrelsy, despite its name. La Rue also clogged and performed "wire ascensions."¹⁴²

Acts that were constructed around panoramas were popular at both straight minstrel shows and variety shows with minstrelsy. Tony Pastor revived his successful panorama, "Tour Around the World."¹⁴³ This season may be the first in which minstrels performed individual songs with panoramic backgrounds. Kelly and Leon gave one such skit, which they called a descriptive song, "Man the Life Boat," and enjoyed great success for several weeks during the fall of 1867. The *Clipper* reported that the scene's "dioramic effects and illustrations"¹⁴⁴ were "produced with care" and included the incidents of a ship at sea, a storm, a shipwreck, a lifeboat, and a rescue.¹⁴⁵ According to the *Clipper*, both the mechanical portion and the singing of this first-part finale were well done.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 6 (16 May 1868): 47.

¹⁴⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 41 (18 January 1868): 327.

¹⁴¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

¹⁴² "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

¹⁴³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142.

¹⁴⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

¹⁴⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 36 (14 December 1867): 286.

¹⁴⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

Pantomime remained popular, especially at variety halls. Butler's fairy pantomime, "Medina," had special mechanical effects and a transformation scene and was produced with original scenery.¹⁴⁷

Tableaux vivant, or living pictures, continued to be popular and, like panorama, were used in conjunction with songs and skits. In the production of tableaux, actors who dressed in the appropriate costumes and makeup posed together in artistic groupings in order to depict a painting or scenes from a historical or dramatic subject. Pastor's gave the drama "Bunker Hill" in a series of tableaux.¹⁴⁸

Acrobatic and/or gymnastic acts that were not burlesques of legitimate gymnastic troupes and feats of strength almost invariably took place at variety halls. At Sharpley, Cotton, and White's, the Buislays performed their most famous act, "The Niagara Leap."¹⁴⁹ Miss S. E. Swift performed classical "Indian Club Exercises"¹⁵⁰ at Pastor's. The Indian Clubs were weighted bats that were used as strengthening tools at gymnasiums, especially by boxers.

Magic and animal acts were seen occasionally between 1865 and spring 1867, but they became popular for the first time during this season. The San Francisco Minstrels gave "The Great London Illusion, How is it Done?,"¹⁵¹ and Pastor's gave the Ethiopian burlesque "Magic Made Easy."¹⁵² Butler's presented Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Blanchard with their troupe of performing dogs in a Scottish drama, "The Felon's Doom, or the Dog of the Mountain,"¹⁵³ and the Eighth Avenue Opera House had a troupe of performing

¹⁴⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

¹⁴⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

¹⁴⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 23 (14 September 1867): 182.

¹⁵⁰ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 24 August 1867, 3.

¹⁵¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 36 (14 December 1867): 287.

¹⁵² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 43 (15 February 1868): 359.

¹⁵³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 1 (11 April 1868): 7.

dogs and monkeys.¹⁵⁴ While at the Theatre Comique, Sharpley, Cotton, and White's Minstrels presented the White Elephant of Siam for the first time in New York and a "genuine African gorilla."¹⁵⁵

Although walkarounds were almost never advertised during the 1866-67 season, Butler's troupe performed them during the summer of 1867. The *Clipper* reported that George Coes [of Butler's variety company] "gave several performances [during each show], including a banjo solo, a comic song, a ballad, he played violin, was good in single and double acts, and [was] warm in a walkaround."¹⁵⁶ Only two walkarounds, which ended their respective shows, were advertised by title during the season. Bryants' Minstrels performed Emmett's walkaround, "The Wigwam," on their opening night on 18 May 1868 at their new hall in the Tammany Building next to the Academy of Music on Fourteenth Street. Emmett's inspiration for the title of the walkaround came from the names of the offices and rituals of the Tammany Society, which were derived from pseudo-Native American titles of authority and names of tribes. Bryants' performed "The Wigwam" and other walkarounds at least through October of that year.¹⁵⁷

Minstrels continued to recycle old acts, as well as to appropriate acts from other troupes and passed them off as their own. The *Clipper* reported negatively that, at the opening of the fall of 1867, Kelly and Leon's were performing old gags from past seasons and gags from other troupes, and that Nelse Seymour was telling jokes during the last week of August that he had told with Bryants' during the 1865-66 season.¹⁵⁸ At the beginning of the season, the San Francisco Minstrels' show also included many old

¹⁵⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 31 (9 November 1867): 246.

¹⁵⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 31 (9 November 1867): 247.

¹⁵⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 15 (20 July 1867): 118.

¹⁵⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 26 (3 October 1868): 206.

¹⁵⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

numbers, upon which the critics frowned. They performed five new songs in the first part, which were encored, but almost no new acts appeared in their olio; the old acts included “Fat and Greasy” and “Imitations of Actors.” The *Clipper* warned that they needed to watch that they did not bore the public with old acts.¹⁵⁹ However, in the next issue the *Clipper* reported that “very old acts sometimes revived prove as attractive as new ones.”¹⁶⁰ It seems that the attraction of an old act grew with the length of time that it had not been performed. A piece from the past couple of seasons would be tiresome, but one from many years ago would be a happy revival.

Other examples of the recycling of acts during this season include Kelly and Leon’s performance of “The Black Statue”¹⁶¹ and “Old Time Rocks;”¹⁶² the San Francisco Minstrels’ performances of “Gambrinus Opera of Lager Beer”¹⁶³ and “The Great Shadow Pantomime;”¹⁶⁴ Little Mac and Frank Kerns’ performances of “The Nerves” at the Eighth Avenue Opera House;¹⁶⁵ and Tony Pastor’s revival of the panorama, “Tour Around the World.”¹⁶⁶

The performance of very old minstrel acts was not common during this season, but it did occur. Butler’s company and Ethiopian corps (at Mechanics’ Hall) performed Thomas D. Rice’s Ethiopian opera, “Bone Squash Diavolo,” with new scenery, dresses, and appointments.¹⁶⁷

¹⁵⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

¹⁶⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

¹⁶¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 41 (18 January 1868): 327.

¹⁶² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154-55.

¹⁶³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 27 (12 October 1867): 215.

¹⁶⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 30 (2 November 1867): 239.

¹⁶⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 31 (9 November 1867): 246.

¹⁶⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142.

¹⁶⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 40 (11 January 1868): 319.

There may have been more activity among black and female minstrels that did not appear in the ad sheets. Female performers of blackface minstrel acts performed the same acts as male minstrels and blackened their features at least some of the time. Lotta¹⁶⁸ began performing at Wallack's, a legitimate drama theater, on 29 July in Buckstone's three-act comedy, "Pet of the Petticoats," and the farce, "Family Jars."¹⁶⁹ In "Family Jars" Lotta performed a song and dance and banjo solos.¹⁷⁰ The *Clipper* reported that her banjo playing "equal[led] the majority of [male] minstrel performers who make banjo playing a specialty. Her singing of 'Mickey is Gone Away' was well done, and she dances a better jig than any other actress we ever saw." Her jig and song at this debut performance were encored four times each, and her banjo solo was also encored and thus repeated several times.¹⁷¹ Jig dancing and banjo playing were not normally performed on the "classic boards" at Wallack's, but these acts were nonetheless highly popular when performed by Lotta. On the evening of 27 August 1867 at Wallack's, she was called out six times for her jig and banjo performances.¹⁷² Ella La Rue also performed banjo solos, clog dances, and wire ascensions,¹⁷³ and a full band of Lady Minstrels joined Pastor's company beginning during the second week of November 1867 and continued for an unknown length of time.¹⁷⁴

The Georgia Minstrels, an African American troupe, performed in New York at the Broadway Opera House at 600 Broadway in January 1866¹⁷⁵ and between 20 July

¹⁶⁸ Lotta was this performer's one word stage name.

¹⁶⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 143.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. Lotta's New York debut was heard at Niblo's Saloon before the end of the Civil War in the farce "Jenny Lind" on 1 June 1864. In this farce she also performed jig dancing and banjo solos.

¹⁷¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142.

¹⁷² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

¹⁷³ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

¹⁷⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 31 (9 November 1867): 247.

¹⁷⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 13, no. 35 (16 December 1865): 287.

1867¹⁷⁶ and into the fall of 1867.¹⁷⁷ They called themselves “The Great Slave Troupe.”¹⁷⁸ The troupe is listed in the *Herald* with the other minstrel troupes that opened for the fall 1867 season in New York, but it is unknown when [and if] they closed. Ads and reviews disappear after August 1867.¹⁷⁹ A *Clipper* review was mixed in its appraisal of the troupe. The critic praised A. L. Smith’s essence dance, Smith and Benson’s song and dance duos, and the troupe’s instrumental musicians, especially Dick Little’s banjo solo and Len Johnson’s bones playing. However, the critic found the singing of both endman and the quartet to be poor and described the “gags [as] old and bungled.” C. B. Hicks’ ballad singing was particularly criticized as a “cross between a Calithumpian band and a child just learning to sing.”¹⁸⁰

Black and white minstrels performed the same acts and songs. Dick Little of the Original Georgia Minstrels sang “Sadie Ray,”¹⁸¹ the music of which was composed by J. Tannenbaum and the words by Samuel N. Mitchell. Tannenbaum was a white minstrel who performed with Christy’s Minstrels at the Fifth Avenue Opera House during the 1865-66 season¹⁸² and with Sharpley and Cotton’s Minstrels at the same hall during this season.¹⁸³ He also composed music for Christy’s and possibly led the troupe’s band.¹⁸⁴ The Georgia Minstrels also performed a song by Charley White, “The Old Home Ain’t What it Used to be.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 16 (27 July 1867): 126.

¹⁷⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

¹⁷⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 25 July 1867.

¹⁷⁹ The last ad for the Georgia Minstrels is printed in the 19 August 1867 *New York Herald*, 4.

¹⁸⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

¹⁸¹ Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection. “Sadie Ray,” Boston: J. Tannenbaum Publisher, 1870.

¹⁸² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 13, no. 33 (2 December 1865): 271-72.

¹⁸³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142.

¹⁸⁴ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 21 January 1866.

¹⁸⁵ Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection. “The Old Home Ain’t What it Used to Be.” Boston: White, Smith, and Company, 1872.

Irish skits and songs and Shakespeare burlesques, which had been quite popular in earlier seasons, were still performed by minstrel and variety troupes, but to a lesser degree than before. Most of the Irish acts that were seen were performed at variety halls along with minstrelsy. At the Eighth Avenue Opera House Cavanaugh's drama, "The Irish Informer," was performed by Josh Hart, Laura Le Claire, and Frank Kerns,¹⁸⁶ and G. P. Moore performed Irish characters and songs.¹⁸⁷ Butler's company performed "The Fenian's Dream" in March 1868.¹⁸⁸ S. S. Purdy, of Kelly and Leon's, performed Irish songs, funny sayings, and other acts in the olio.¹⁸⁹ When given at variety halls with minstrel corps, the Irish acts were not performed in blackface.

Pastor's hall was the site of most of the Shakespeare burlesques that occurred in the previous two seasons, but minstrel troupes, especially the San Francisco Minstrels, began performing them again during this season. San Francisco's skits included "Hamlet, the Dainty from Long Branch,"¹⁹⁰ "Shakespearean Readings from Midsummer Night's Dream,"¹⁹¹ and "Othello and Macbeth."¹⁹² Bryants' performed the burlesque skit "Much Ado About Nothing."¹⁹³

A few local acts appeared in minstrel shows week after week and for several seasons with the same titles but with varying content. These acts often had the titles of the hotels that were adjacent to minstrel theaters and were used as vehicles for satirizing the weekly politics and news. In 1866 Christy's Minstrels performed a local sketch called "Mysteries of the Fifth Avenue Hotel," in reference to the hotel by that name that

¹⁸⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

¹⁸⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 30 (2 November 1867): 238.

¹⁸⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 51 (28 March 1868): 406.

¹⁸⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 40 (11 January 1868): 318.

¹⁹⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 23 (14 September 1867): 182.

¹⁹¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 30 (2 November 1867): 239.

¹⁹² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 34 (30 November 1867): 271.

¹⁹³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 8 (30 May 1868): 63.

adjoined their hall.¹⁹⁴ The San Francisco Minstrels performed one such local skit, “Troubles at the Metropolitan Hotel,”¹⁹⁵ from the time of their opening season of 1865-66. Other local skits include San Franciscans’ “Coney Island Fishers,”¹⁹⁶ Pastor’s burlesque of the Academy of Music, “Academie D’ Afrique,”¹⁹⁷ and Kelly and Leon’s Christmas-time skit, “Santa Claus.”¹⁹⁸

Every year between the 1865-66 and 1869-70 seasons, most of the minstrel troupes performed a skit known as “New Year’s Calls” during the week before and after New Year’s Day.¹⁹⁹ Griffin and Christy’s performed G. W. H. Griffin’s version of “New Year’s Calls” in the weeks around New Year’s Day 1868. The characters in this five-scene comedy include Augustus Highflyer, a dead beat; Trueman, a mechanic; Peter Day, a simple boy, full of mischief; Mr. Planeweil, a carpenter; Mrs. Day, a widow; Lucinda Day, her daughter; a bootblack and his assistant, skaters, sliders, riders, etc..., all on [stage] in the last scene. The burlesque opens with a conversation in Negro dialect between Widow Day, her daughter, Lucinda, and her son, Peter, in their kitchen. Predictably, the comedy includes elements of romantic love and male rivalry expressed through physical humor and jokes, all set within a plot that centers on visiting friends, otherwise known as “making calls,” on New Year’s Day. These stock characters and stagings were probably adapted to the local happenings and important events from year to year. The second scene of the skit, “A Street,” follows:

Enter Augustus Highflyer, L.

¹⁹⁴ “Amusements,” *New York Herald* 18 June 1866, 5.

¹⁹⁵ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 25 August 1867, 3.

¹⁹⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 28 September 1867.

¹⁹⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 26 (5 October 1867): 207-08.

¹⁹⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 39 (4 January 1868): 311.

¹⁹⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 40 (11 January 1868): 318. Kelly and Leon’s did it when George Christy was with the troupe.

High—Let me see, where shall I make my first call this morning?

[Takes out journal and reads.]

Let me see—C. G. Gunther—t'won't do to call on him so early in the morning; he'll think I come after election money. John Giles, H. W. Beecher, Con. Orem, Patsey Marley, S. D. Kehoe, all gentlemen of the first water. Now if I could only borrow five cents to get my boots blacked, I think I could venture to call on Lucinda Day. I wish I could be lucky enough to marry her, for then I'd certainly be sure of my board for the rest of the winter; but then there's that dirty mechanic, Trueman, hovering around her all the time, and I do think she likes him, too. However, I know she can't stand my elegant appearance this morning. She must consent to be mine. Har comes that Trueman now!

Enter Trueman.

High—Ah! Good morning, Trueman!

Tru—Good morning, Orang Outang.

High—I say, Trueman, you are full of fun this morning. I suppose you are out making the usual calls on the ladies.

True—Well, sir, I intend making a few. I suppose your intentions are the same.

High—Yes, I expect to treat the dear ladies wid de sight of one of the noblest lords of creation, and perhaps send a dart or two from Cupid's bow into some of their hearts, but then they all fade away and sink into oblivion when I think of my dear future wife, Lucinda Day.

True—[Aside] The miserable wretch! I'd like to smother him in his own whiskers!

High—Trueman, can you tell me why modest mechanics like yourself are an echo?

True—No, sir.

High—Then, I'll tell you: it's because you never speak until you are spoken to.
Ha! Ha! Ha!

True—Can you tell me why that suit of clothes which you have on (which you have borrowed from some one) is like a menagerie?

High—Really, I can not.

True—Then I'll tell you why your suit of clothes is like a menagerie: because there is a monkey in it.

True knocks High's hat over his face and exit R.²⁰⁰

Troupes, including black and female, burlesqued whatever was the rage in New York and often parodied the same popular subjects at the same time. Examples from the 1867-68 season included burlesques of the Japanese acrobats, baseball, and Charles Dickens. The Japanese acrobat craze began in May 1867 with the arrival of the first of these troupes at the Academy and continued through the season.²⁰¹ All of the minstrel troupes and some of the variety companies performed burlesques on these groups such as Kelly and Leon's, "The Japs."²⁰²

Baseball was first played as early as 1839 at the Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey and continued to gain popularity throughout the country during the nineteenth century. By the 1860s the rules of the game had become standardized.²⁰³ Minstrels

²⁰⁰ G. W. H. Griffin, "New Year's Calls," New York: Happy Hours Company.

²⁰¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 9 (8 June 1867): 70.

²⁰² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 26 (5 October 1867): 206.

²⁰³ "Play Ball!," *Country Living*, October 2004, 43-46.

burlesqued the game via a variety of blackface minstrel forms. Wood's Minstrels' defeat of Hooley's Minstrels in a baseball game during September 1865 became the subject of one of S. S. Purdy's best-received stump speeches in December of that year.²⁰⁴ He talked about making home runs, getting to third base, and how he caught a fly tip. The *Clipper* reported that in the audience were ball players who enjoyed it very much.²⁰⁵ During the 1867-68 season the San Francisco Minstrels,²⁰⁶ Hooley's Minstrels,²⁰⁷ Butler's, and Pastor's²⁰⁸ all gave burlesque baseball skits as afterpieces or olio works. San Francisco, Hooley's, and Butler's entitled their skits "Base Ball Match: Atlantics vs. Mutuals." The San Francisco Minstrels performed their baseball burlesque as an afterpiece: "The company appeared in the uniforms of the Atlantics and the Mutuals with a bat and a large India rubber ball. They knocked the ball all over the house, and the audience had to dodge the ball."²⁰⁹ The *Clipper* critic praised the troupe for presenting new and pleasing gags.²¹⁰ Butler's advertised that their version of this skit, which was performed by Pettingill, Campbell, Bobby Newcomb, Parkhurst, Collins, Mortimer, and Stewart at a matinee, lasted thirty minutes.²¹¹

Burlesques on Charles Dickens, who was in New York performing readings from his works, took many different forms, including tableaux vivant, musical burlesque skits, and character imitations. The San Francisco Minstrels performed "Living Photographs of Charles Dickens,"²¹² for which they reworked their long-running tableaux vivant act,

²⁰⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 26 (7 October 1865): 206.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

²⁰⁷ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 26 August 1867.

²⁰⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 27 (12 October 1867): 214.

²⁰⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 31 August 1867, 3.

²¹² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 2 (18 April 1868): 15.

“Living Photographs,” with the Dickens theme. During the second week of December, the troupe performed another Dickens burlesque, “The Dickens to Pay, or Little Nell,” with Birch and Backus.²¹³ Minstrels also performed comedic impersonations of famous people with some local and/or contemporary connection to New York or national politics, legitimate theater and opera, as well as stereotyped stock characters of the Germans and the Irish. Backus, of the San Francisco Minstrels, performed “Imitations of Charles Dickens and other Men of Note” in January 1868.²¹⁴ Backus also continued to perform his traditional “Imitations of Actors” throughout the season.²¹⁵ Butler’s gave the burlesque skit “The Arrival of Charley Dickens, or English Gold vs. American Notes” with his entire troupe.²¹⁶

Imitation acts were performed by both minstrel and variety troupes. Mr. J. A. Travers performed an impersonation of General Fisher at Tony Pastor’s.²¹⁷ At the Eighth Avenue Opera House (Johnny) Thompson gave his act, “Ole Bull,” assisted by Frank Kerns, Josh Hart, Cavanaugh, Bloodgood, and Andrews.²¹⁸ Butler’s troupe performed a burlesque, “The Ristori Medley,” of the famous Italian opera soprano Adelaide Ristori (1822-1906).²¹⁹ Leon, of Kelly and Leon’s, performed a burlesque imitation act “Leon a

²¹³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 37 (21 December 1867): 289.

²¹⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 40 (11 January 1868): 319. “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 42 (24 January 1868): 334.

²¹⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

²¹⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 41 (18 January 1868): 327.

²¹⁷ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 24 August 1867, 3. Fisher was a Civil War general.

²¹⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 25 (28 September 1867): 199. Ole Bull (1810-80) was a famous violin virtuoso who had performed in New York since the 1850s and had been the subject of minstrel burlesques since that time.

²¹⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 25 (28 September 1867): 198.

la Bonfanti and a la Moriacchi”²²⁰ of Bonfanti, one of the premiere danseuses in Niblo’s *The Black Crook*,²²¹ and Morlacchi, the lead ballet dancer at Banvard’s Opera House.²²²

German and Irish (non-black) stereotypes, celebrities, legitimate actors, and opera singers were also subjects of minstrel burlesque and stereotyping. Actors who specialized in German stereotypes were, like Joseph Emmitt, billed as “Dutch Nigger[s],”²²³ or like D. L. Morris, called “Dutch actor[s].”²²⁴ The San Francisco Minstrels performed the act, “Italian Opera with German Accent,”²²⁵ as well as a German-referenced burlesque of Offenbach’s *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* (1867), “The Grand Dutch Cheese Opera.”²²⁶ James Emmitt performed “Dat Deitch Gal Vat Vinked of Me” and a burlesque Dutch version of “Yaller Gal Who Winked at Me,” with Bryants’ Minstrels.²²⁷ The troupe at the Eighth Avenue Opera House gave their new drama “The Patriot’s Daughter, or a Dutchman in Mexico” during the last week of November.²²⁸ Sam Glenn was the Dutch comedian at Sharpley, Cotton, and White’s Minstrels at the Theatre Comique.²²⁹ Sharpley, Cotton, and White’s gave a sketch by Charley White, “The German.”²³⁰ At Butler’s J. H. Budworth performed his act called “Cousin Schneider,”²³¹ in which he sang the popular songs, “Father, Come Home,” “Pat

²²⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 36 (14 December 1867): 287.

²²¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 14, no. 50 (23 March 1867): 398.

²²² “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 25 November 1868.

²²³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 102.

²²⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 52 (4 April 1868): 414.

²²⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 22 August 1867, 7.

²²⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 37 (21 December 1867): 295.

²²⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 103.

²²⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 33 (23 November 1867): 264.

²²⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 36 (14 December 1867): 286.

²³⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 39 (4 January 1868): 310.

²³¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 24 (21 September 1867): 190.

Malloy,” “Meet Me in the Lane,” and “Champagne Charley,”²³² probably with a comedic German accent.

Johnny Allen was one of the most famous minstrel performers of Dutch characters and songs. The song and dance “Have You Seen Louisa?” (words by Johnny Allen and music by R. Frank Cardella, published 1871, Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection), serves as an example of this genre of minstrel characterization. The song’s multi-verse, solo and chorus format, repetitive and simple chordal piano accompaniment, step-wise vocal line, and instrumental sections for dance displays at the beginning and end of each verse are typical of song and dances in minstrelsy during this period. What makes the song “Dutch” is its use of German dialect. The first verse reads as follows: “I *luff a deicher* gal, Louisa is her name..., She told me *dot* she *luff* me, *Und* away from me she ran, I didn’t know where to find her, Have you seen her here? Her nose has got a Grecian bent, *Und* she wears her own blonde hair” (my italics). The sixteen bar chorus and verse are typical of songs from this period, but a sixteen-bar introduction is less common than shorter introductions at this time. The two-part form of the song (A A¹) is also less common in strophic songs from this period than a verse and chorus with completely different melodies.

Germans were also minstrel patrons. An advertisement in the *Clipper* for the German Volks Garten in January 1861 shows that Ethiopian songs and burlesques that minstrels performed were done at this theater:

“Theatrical Record,” *New York Clipper* 8, no. 39 (12 Jan 1861): 310.
 45 Bowery
 Palace Hall Concert Saloon
 The cheapest and best conducted place of amusement in the city
 No female waiters

²³² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 52 (4 April 1868): 411, 415.

grand burlesque, newly arranged, "*The Sons of Malta*"
 comic scene, "*The Three Hunters*"
 first appearance of Mr. McGuire, the comic singer
 first appearance of Miss Louise, the Charming Danseuse
 first week of a grand new ballet, expressly arranged by Sig. C. Constantin
 and executed by Miss Rosalia, Miss Walton, Miss Louise, and Sig. C.
 Constantin
 First week of new pantomime, "the Loving Fisherman," with ballet and
 tableaux
 Singing, solos and duets
 Dancing
Ethiopian songs
 Balancing
 Admission is \$.06
 Grand fancy ball on 10 Jan 1861, tickets \$1, no free list

William Horace Lingard, a famous female impersonator on the legitimate stage,
 was another popular subject of burlesque during this season.²³³ Minstrels turned
 Lingard's "lady songs" (female impersonations) into blackface wench burlesque
 impersonation acts. Sheppard and Kerns, members of Pastor's minstrel corps in May
 1868, "got up" a burlesque sketch in cork of Lingard's "changes," which was a female
 impersonation act that he performed at the Theatre Comique during the same period.²³⁴
 In the act Kerns and Sheppard sang six of Lingard's songs, such as "Butter Beer" and
 "Captain Jinks"²³⁵ (Example 4.1).

Lingard's "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines" is a four-verse comedic character
 song composed with simple harmonies and in sextuple meter. The text of the song is told
 through the first person of Capt. Jinks, who relates information about his life, including
 how he feeds his horse and sports with the ladies. This piano arrangement (by T.
 Maclagan) has a simple accompaniment in two, three, and four parts. The most

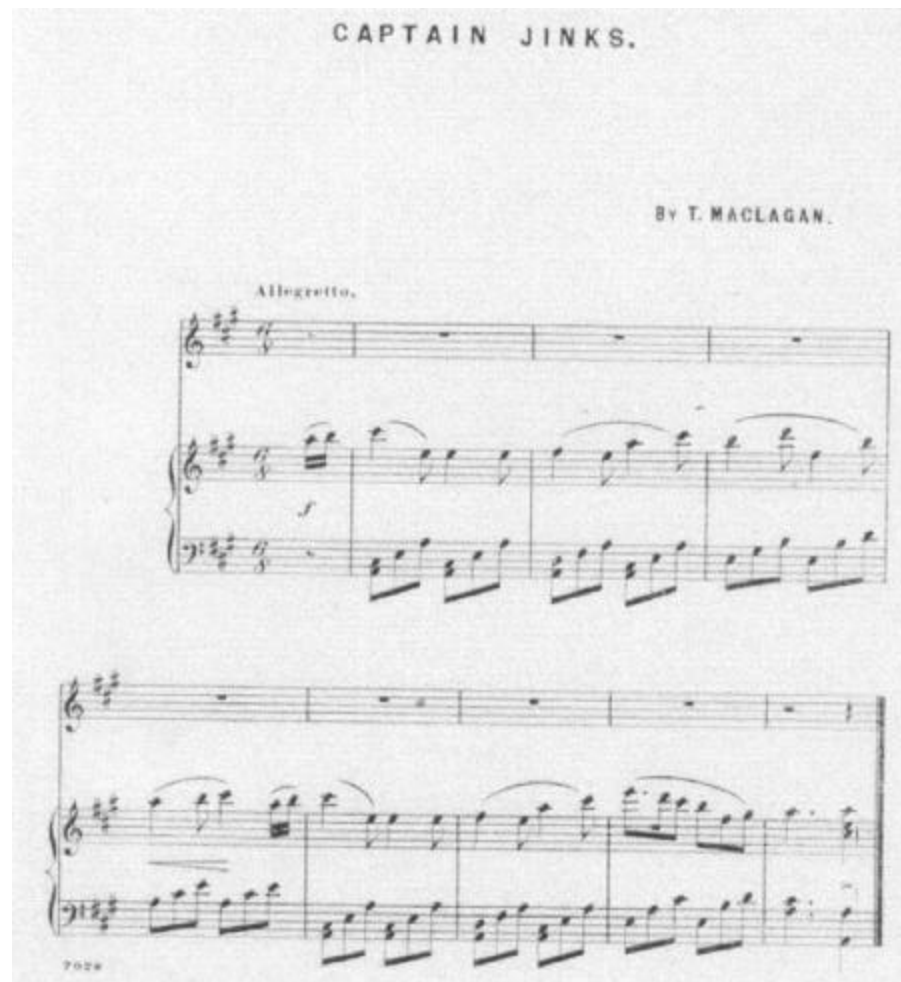
²³³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 7 (23 May 1868): 54. Theatre Comique, 514 Broadway.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 6 (16 May 1868): 46.

interesting elements of this song is its combination of spoken and sung lines and the use of the same melody for the verse and the chorus, which is unusual for this period when the chorus and verse melodies were often unrelated.

Example 4.1, “Captain Jinks”



Example 4.1 continued

I am Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines, I of - ten live be - yond my means, I
 sport young la - dies in their teens, To cut a swell in the ar - my, I
 teach the la - dies how to dance, how to dance, how to dance, I
 teach the la - dies how to dance, For I'm their pet in the ar - my.

p
Spoken: Ho! halloo!
colla voce.

7028

Example 4.1 continued

CHORUS. 5

The musical score for the chorus is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. The first system contains the first two lines of the chorus, with the lyrics: "I'm Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines, I give my horse good corn and beans, Of course its quite be-yond my means, Tho' a Cap-tain in the ar-my." The second system contains the next two lines of the chorus, with the lyrics: "I'm Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines, I give my horse good corn and beans, Of course its quite be-yond my means, Tho' a Cap-tain in the ar-my." The third system contains the next two lines of the chorus, with the lyrics: "I'm Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines, I give my horse good corn and beans, Of course its quite be-yond my means, Tho' a Cap-tain in the ar-my." The fourth system contains the final two lines of the chorus, with the lyrics: "I'm Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines, I give my horse good corn and beans, Of course its quite be-yond my means, Tho' a Cap-tain in the ar-my." The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note rhythm in the right hand and a more complex, syncopated rhythm in the left hand.

Verse: 2

I joined my corps when twenty-one,
 Of course I thought it capital fun,
 When the enemy came then off I run,
 I wasn't cut out for the army.
 When I left home, mama, she cried,
 Mama, she cried, mama, she cried,
 When I left home, mama, she cried, 'He ain't cut out for the army.'
 Spoken: No, she thought I was too young, but then, I said, ah! Mama,
 Chorus: I'm Captain Jinks, etc...

Unsworth and Dan Bryant's blackface parody, "The Great Lingard Burlesque,"²³⁶ was comprised of the same six songs as Kerns and Sheppard's burlesque. Other Lingard burlesques during this season were performed by Bobby Newcomb of the San Francisco Minstrels²³⁷ and Josh Hart of the Theatre Comique. The *Clipper* reported that Hart was better at copying Lingard's walk and singing style than most.²³⁸

Song and Dance

Song and dance and musical burlesques on local and contemporary subjects, as well as legitimate theater and opera made up the majority of acts in minstrel shows during this season. These acts both reflected and satirized prevailing attitudes and values and show that minstrelsy and variety continued to grow closer together. The relevance of these acts to the lives of their audience continued to win popularity for minstrelsy.

Singing and dancing, which was traditionally the bread and butter of blackface minstrelsy, was important in both old and new forms, which included the singing of comic songs and ballads (without dance), the dancing of jigs, clog, eccentric, and fancy dances (without singing), and acts that combined comic song and dance.

Comic songs and ballads without dance were usually performed by one vocalist, and every troupe had either a vocal quartet or a quintet comprised of solo singers. The Virginia Minstrels had followed a particular formula in their performance of songs, which persisted throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. One member of the troupe was chosen to be the soloist for a particular song and performed the first, or lead, part of

²³⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 102.

²³⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 4 (2 May 1868): 31.

²³⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 11 (20 June 1868): 86.

the tune, while the others in the group joined him or her in the unison refrains.²³⁹ This simple strophic song form with alternating solo and unison chorus sections may be seen in ballads, comic songs, and song and dances such as walkarounds. It was a flexible form that worked well for the semi-improvisatory minstrel show structure because performers could easily follow the standard form of a song and just change the text or modify the tune to suit the requirements of an act.

Every minstrel or variety hall company during this period had its star balladist(s), who was usually a tenor, and less frequently a basso. Fred Williams, tenor, sang with Kelly and Leon's in August 1867,²⁴⁰ and J. W. Hilton, basso, performed the song, "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," with the troupe in April 1868.²⁴¹ The most highly prized balladist of this period was one with a "sweet tenor voice," as the *Clipper* described Mr. Percival of Griffin and Christy's Minstrels.²⁴² Minstrel balladists usually sang one or two solo songs per show and sang in the troupe's vocal quartet or quintet as well. David S. Wambold, Fowler, Templeton, and Scott made up the vocal quartet at the San Francisco Minstrels.²⁴³

The San Francisco Minstrels presented up to three balladists in one show. David S. Wambold was their most famous tenor, but other vocalists such as W. P. Grier and C. Templeton sang with the troupe, as well. For their show during the last week of August 1867, Wambold sang the ballad "Minnie Lee" during the first part. In the olio Grier sang "Loved Ones Come to Me Tonight," and Templeton sang "Twinkling Stars."²⁴⁴ The

²³⁹ Bean, 37.

²⁴⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

²⁴¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 1 (11 April 1868): 6.

²⁴² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

²⁴³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 12 (27 June 1868): 95.

²⁴⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

Herald wrote that “Wambold and Templeton [balladists for the San Francisco Minstrels] are tenors who would be acquisitions to any concert hall.”²⁴⁵

Both male and female balladists performed at variety halls, and sometimes they performed several songs during a single show. Vivian (a male performer) sang the following songs in a single show at Butler’s American Theatre: “The Broken-Hearted Shepherd,” “Sweet Jersey,” “The Man on the Flying Trapeze,” “Doctor Bollas,” and “Pretty Jemima.”²⁴⁶ Alice Siedler sang ballads at Butler’s.²⁴⁷

Although the middleman (interlocutor) had no specific instruments associated with his position, he was usually one of the best solo singers in the troupe and sang basso or baritone in the quartet and sometimes played an instrument in the band. For example, an advertisement placed by an unnamed minstrel troupe in the *Clipper* sought a middleman who could play banjo and sing in the troupe’s quartet.²⁴⁸ Sharpley and Cotton’s middleman, M. T. Skiff, also sang in their vocal quintet, and Griffin, the interlocutor of Griffin and Christy’s, composed songs for the troupe and played cello in the first part.²⁴⁹

Minstrel instrumentalists, especially violinists, often composed instrumental and vocal music for their troupes. For example, William H. Brockway, violinist for Kelly and Leon’s during February 1868, composed the song “Good Bye Old Home,” which was performed by one of the troupe’s vocalists, George Guy.²⁵⁰ John B. Donniker, who was the musical director of the San Francisco Minstrels during this season, composed songs

²⁴⁵ “San Francisco Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 26 August 1867.

²⁴⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 46 (22 February 1868): 367.

²⁴⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 48 (7 March 1868): 382.

²⁴⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 43 (1 February 1868): 343.

²⁴⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 18 (10 August 1867): 142. “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 17 (3 August 1867): 134.

²⁵⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 45 (15 February 1868): 358.

for both minstrel and legitimate theater companies that typically were in strophic form and were written for solo voice, chorus, and instrumental ensemble. The melodies of his vocal music are less angular and tend to move in a gentler up and down step-wise motion with some delineation of triads and leaps. Simple chords moving in repeated rhythmic patterns make up the piano accompaniments. The original accompaniments were probably developed for minstrel or theater instrumental ensembles and were published in piano arrangements.²⁵¹

The subjects of Donniker's ballads range from hairstyles and courtship to friendship, ethics, and local subjects. While performing violin solos with the San Francisco Minstrels, he composed the ballad, "Chimes of Bells,"²⁵² for the troupe's star tenor balladist, David S. Wambold. Wambold sang the song, the subject of which was lower New York's Trinity Church's bells, in the first part of the show at the end of April 1868.²⁵³ Other songs for which Donniker both composed the music and wrote the text include "God Bless the Little Children," "Farewell, Mother!, or It Breaks My Heart to Leave," "Lost and Saved," "O! Kathleen Return to Kildare!," "There's Magic in a Kiss," and "Will You Love Me the Same?"

Donniker also collaborated with lyricists or set existing text to music. He set words written by Mrs. M. A. Ridder for his song "Don't Go In," which deals with the dangers of brothels to the character of young men. In the case of his song, "Have Charity," (Example 4.2, published 1869) he used poetry by F. S. Smith that had appeared in the *New York Weekly*. The function of these ballads may have gone beyond mere

²⁵¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 45 (16 February 1867): 358.

²⁵² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 4 (2 May 1868): 30. "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 4 (2 May 1868): 31.

²⁵³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 4 (2 May 1868): 31.

moralizing to the status of early public service messages that were aimed at slowing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and decreasing the rates of petty crime.

Donniker composed “Have Charity” for J. Brandisi of Bryants’ Minstrels. The text of this four-verse ballad with four-voice (SATB) chorus demonstrates the disjuncture between the haves and the have-nots in New York society. It describes the plight of a homeless woman who is forced to steal and commit sins in order to survive on the city streets. The song appeals to those with means, the audience, in particular, to give money or any other type of aid to the homeless in New York. The accompaniment uses harmony in a more interesting way than most songs from this period, but rhythmically it displays the typical simple style. The melody appears in the eight-bar instrumental introduction, and the four concluding instrumental bars end the piece powerfully with rolled chords, pedal, and a forte to piano diminuendo. Donniker also worked with Bobby Newcomb, setting lyrics of the latter to music. Two examples of their partnership include “The Blonde that Never Dyes,” sung by Miss Eliza Weathersby (published 1870) and “Silver Plated Men” (published 1872).

Example 4.2, "Have Charity"

Respectfully dedicated to the
CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY.

HAVE CHARITY.

SONG & CHORUS

As sung by J. Brandisi of Bryant's Minstrels

Words from
New York Weekly

Music by
J. B. DONNIKER

Author of "Speak a kind word, or say nothing at all," &c.

3

New York, JNO. L. PETERS. | St. Louis, J. L. PETERS & CO.

Cinc., J. J. Dobmeyer & Co. Boston, White, Smith & Peirce. New Orleans, Louis Grunewald. Galveston, T. Eggen.

Entered according to Act of Congress in 1882 by J. L. Peters in the Clerk's Office of the Dist. Court of S. D.

Example 4.2 continued

HAVE CHARITY.

As sung by J. BRANDISI, of Bryant's Minstrels.

Poetry by *F. S. SMITH*.

Music by J. B. DONNIKER.

Andante con espressione.

PIANO.

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marcato.

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11

20

1. Through this great and busy city	Toils a homeless lit - tle one -	Not a
2. But the rich and gay pass by her,	Full of van - i - ty and pride,	And a
3. She <u>does</u> steal, but who can blame her?	Hunger puns her vi - tals gnaw -	None en -
4. Con - sors full of world wide schooling,	Cease to con - fure and de - plore,	When the

* 8877-3

Entered according to Act of Congress A.D. 1888 by J. L. Peiers in the Clerk's Office of the District Ct of New Jersey.

Example 4.2 continued

1

1. friend to soothe or pi-ty- Not a bed to lie up-on. Ragged,
 2. pil-lance they de-ny her, As she wan-ders by their side Then a
 3. deav-or to re-claim her, And she vi-o-lates the law Then the
 4. girl trans-gress'd man's ruling She o-bey'd none of na-ture's laws. Take her

cresc *p* *rit* *mf* *p a tempo.*

cresc. *p* *cresc* *mf* *cresc.*

1. dir-ty, bruised and bleeding- Subject still to kick and curse, Schooled in
 2. sul-len mood comes o'er her- Reckless she of woe or weal- Death from
 3. pam-pered child of fashion Who re-fused to give re-lief, Cries with
 4. place, feel her temp-tation Starved, un-housed: no suc-cor nigh- And though

p *mf*

cresc. *ff* *dim* *p* *rit* *cresc*

1. sin and sad-ly needing Aid from Chris-tian tongue and purse.
 2. hun-ger is be-fore her- She must ei-ther starve or steal.
 3. well af-fec-ted passion, "Out up-on the lit-tle thief!"
 4. sure of re-pro-bation, Ye would steal ere ye would die.

cresc *dim* *p* *rit* *mf* *p*

Example 4.2 continued

CHORUS.

SOPRANO: Not a friend, not a friend, Not a single friend is nigh, Driven

ALTO: not a friend not a friend, Not a single friend is nigh, Driven

TENOR: not a friend not a friend, Not a single friend is nigh, Driven

BASS: not a friend not a friend, Not a single friend is nigh, Driven

PIANO: (Piano accompaniment)

from her home and kindred, She must beg, or else must die.

from her home and kindred, She must beg, or else must die.

Have Ch.

5877.3

During this period vocalists from the opera and legitimate realms also performed as minstrels, although it was not common. Sharpley, Cotton, and White's advertised Henry Richards as a buffa vocalist,²⁵⁴ and Alfred Prince, buffo singer from Sweden.²⁵⁵ S.

²⁵⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 35 (7 December 1867): 278.

²⁵⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 24 (21 September 1867): 190.

C. Campbell and Dan Bryant were the two most successful in the legitimate and minstrel realms.

Jigs, clogs, and other types of dances without singing were performed in minstrel and variety shows by single dancers, as well as by groups of two, three, and four.²⁵⁶

Smith and Stacey gave double dances at Butler's American Theatre,²⁵⁷ Cooper and Fields gave double clog dances with the San Francisco Minstrels,²⁵⁸ Kelly and Leon's minstrels presented a "clog quartet,"²⁵⁹ and Sam Collyer and his two sons performed triple clog dances and were a feature of the show at the Eighth Avenue Opera House.²⁶⁰

Jigs and clogs have in common the sound produced by the shoes tapping on the floor during the dance, which imitate the percussive hits of the bones and banjo.²⁶¹

Minstrels during the late 1860s copied Master Juba's and T. D. Rice's jig style, which blended the upward movement of the Irish jig with the flat-footed, gliding, dragging, pedal motion, and shuffling steps associated with African American dance. Eccentric dancing, such as Rice's, also included grotesque arm and shoulder movements, speed, freak diversions, low comedy, and displays of endurance.²⁶² Famous solo minstrel dancers, such as Master Barney, Butler's juggler, sometimes performed in whiteface.²⁶³

Minstrels approached the traditional dances of their genre in inventive ways.

Delehan and Hengler performed double clog dances and song and dance with Kelly and

²⁵⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 14, no. 35 (8 December 1866): 273.

²⁵⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 48 (7 March 1868): 382.

²⁵⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 42 (24 January 1868): 334.

²⁵⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 40 (11 January 1868): 319.

²⁶⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

²⁶¹ Lynne Fauley Emery, *Black Dance Today: from 1619 to Present* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Book Company, 1972), 190.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 190, 344.

²⁶³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 15 (20 July 1867): 118.

Leon's Minstrels.²⁶⁴ The *Clipper* reported that the bottoms of their shoes were made of rope and therefore produced very little noise, and that "they [had] introduced a new style of dancing to slow and very piano [soft dynamic] music, which from its originality takes with the audience."²⁶⁵ Billy Newcomb was the first minstrel to perform the Essence dance in a fast tempo, which may have been the first popular dance from the African American vernacular for professionals. Newcomb's "The Essence of Old Virginia" came from the shuffle and led to the early soft shoe style, of which Dan Bryant was the leading performer, having perfected it in the late 1850s. Bryant's soft shoe was the original slow tempo minstrel dance with movement of heels and toes without changes of leg position, so that a gliding motion was made across the floor. He also added shuffling and dragging movements to the dance.²⁶⁶

Song and dance acts usually were performed by individuals or duos in blackface. These traditional minstrel acts combined comic songs with the clog, jig, and eccentric dancing. Billy Sheppard, for example, performed the song and dance "Nicodemus Johnson" (Example 3.2, pages 176-77) at Tony Pastor's.²⁶⁷

Song and dance wench acts such as "Nellie the Bello," "Kitty from Cork," and "Yaller Gal," which were performed by men dressed in drag, were also popular. The eccentric style of traditional minstrel wench acts such as these was in opposition to the new elegant male prima donnas and their impersonations of female opera singers and characters. During the first week of May 1868 at Pastor's, Billy Sheppard performed a

²⁶⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

²⁶⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

²⁶⁶ Emery, 193-94.

²⁶⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

grotesque version of “Nellie the Bello,” which was written by Eddie Fox.²⁶⁸ Sheppard also performed “as the lovely damsel who sings” Lingard’s “On the Beach at Long Branch.”²⁶⁹ Other female impersonation acts included comic skits like Leon’s “Active Girl,” in which the *Clipper* called his “makeup . . . as a lady was one of the best ever seen—few people could tell he was really a man.”²⁷⁰ Bobby Newcomb, of the San Francisco Minstrels, performed an original song and dance burlesque on Leon’s “Active Girl,” entitled “I Feel So Happy,” in which he played “The Active Boy.”²⁷¹

In addition to portraying female, especially opera, characters with style and grace, Francis Leon, minstrel prima donna of Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels, also performed wench song and dances, such as the Irish themed “Kitty from Cork,” for his performance of which the *Clipper* praised his makeup and style as quite funny,²⁷² and “Salmagundi Johnson,”²⁷³ in which he sang new words to the tune of “Nicodemus Johnson.” Another wench act performed by Leon was his “Mrs. Baalam,” in which he portrayed Lucy Stone and lead a huge prop mule with two boys inside, who by their antics, created considerable amusement. Leon [then] mounted a stool and gave a dissertation on the times (a stump speech), which created considerable laughter.²⁷⁴ Charley Gardner of the San Francisco Minstrels was encored for his performance of the Dutch wench song and dance, “Yaller Gal Dat Winked at Me.”²⁷⁵ Neither Butler’s American Theatre nor the Eighth Avenue Opera House troupes gave wench acts during this season.

²⁶⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 4 (2 May 1868): 30.

²⁶⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 6 (16 May 1868): 46.

²⁷⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

²⁷¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 31 (9 November 1867): 247.

²⁷² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

²⁷³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 45 (15 February 1868): 358.

²⁷⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 36 (14 December 1867): 286.

²⁷⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

Musical Burlesque Afterpieces

The production of large-scale theatrical spectacles in New York was not new in the late 1860s. In 1840 Thomas Hamblin, manager of the Bowery Theatre, one of the most popular halls for early blackface musical acts of the 1830s, produced the drama, *The Pirate's Signal*. In this piece, the stage was removed and replaced with a large tank of water, and a fully rigged ship sailed from stage rear to the footlights with "actors declaiming on deck."²⁷⁶ His next spectacle was an equestrian production, *The Battle of Waterloo*, in which fifty horses, 200 supernumeraries, and cannons were used in the performances.²⁷⁷ Now, minstrel troupes were applying this principle to musical burlesque afterpieces.

Afterpiece burlesques were musical whether the original was an opera or a legitimate drama with incidental music. Kelly and Leon's burlesque "Negro sketch," "The Victim," was titled after the original. J. H. Budworth sang several songs in this piece, including "Father, Come Home," "Pat Malloy," "Meet Me in the Lane," and "Champagne Charlie."²⁷⁸ As was the practice, Budworth took his specialty Dutch act, "Cousin Schneider," with him when he moved to Butler's American Theatre four months later in April 1868.²⁷⁹ These burlesques ran for periods of one to several consecutive weeks, depending on their popularity.

Burlesque skits and afterpieces continued to appear while the pieces that inspired them were produced at legitimate theaters. *Nobody's Daughter* was running at the New

²⁷⁶ Burrows, 642.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 42 (24 January 1868): 334.

²⁷⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 52 (4 April 1868): 411, 415.

York Theatre during August 1867²⁸⁰ when Josh Hart's burlesque, "Somebody's Daughter" (an afterpiece), was being performed by the company at the Eighth Avenue Opera House.²⁸¹ Augustin Daly's *Under the Gaslight* was performed for the first time during this season on the evening of 12 August 1867 at the New York Theatre at 728 Broadway²⁸² by the Worrell Sisters.²⁸³ Within the next two weeks, the troupes at Butler's American Theatre and the Eighth Avenue Opera House were both producing burlesques of the drama. The Theatre Comique's company and the San Francisco Minstrels performed burlesques of the drama later in the season.

Burlesques of the same drama varied in length, style, and cast size. Butler's "Under the Skylight" was performed by Pettingill, Campbell, and Stewart,²⁸⁴ and the Eighth Avenue's troupe performed the Negro burlesque, "Under the Lamp Post."²⁸⁵ Charley White and Josh Hart of the Theatre Comique (during Lingard's engagement) performed a thirty-minute burlesque afterpiece of it called "Under the Gas Lamp."²⁸⁶ At the end of the month, they changed the title of the burlesque to "Under the Lamp Post,"²⁸⁷ and it continued to run during the summer.²⁸⁸ Because renamed pieces may or may not have been new burlesque versions, it is unknown if this retitled piece was a new version or the same as the first production. The San Francisco Minstrels' burlesque of the piece,

²⁸⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

²⁸¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

²⁸² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

"Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 20 (24 August 1867): 154.

²⁸³ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 25 August 1867, 3. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 22 (7 September 1867): 174.

²⁸⁴ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 30 August 1867, 7.

²⁸⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 25 (28 September 1867): 198.

²⁸⁶ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 4 (2 May 1868): 31.

²⁸⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 8 (30 May 1868): 63.

²⁸⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 12 (27 June 1868): 94.

“Under the Kerosene Lamp, Introducing the Sorrell Sisters,”²⁸⁹ was both a burlesque of the original, as well as a burlesque of the Worrell Sisters. White and Hart’s and the San Francisco Minstrels’ burlesques were large-scale afterpieces performed in blackface by their entire troupes.

Led by Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels, New York’s troupes began to produce more and more extravagant operatic burlesques. Each troupe had its “prima donna,” who played the female roles in these burlesques. Francis Leon and Rollin Howard of Kelly and Leon’s, Rice of the San Franciscans, and Eugene of Bryants’ were famous minstrel female impersonators. “The Only Leon” performed the prima donna role in the fairy scenes of the burlesque “Cinder Leon,”²⁹⁰ and Rollin Howard took Leon’s place after he was shot and unable to perform.²⁹¹ Eugene²⁹² performed the prima donna role in his and James Unsworth’s opera burlesque, “Lucrezia Borgia,” based on Donizetti’s opera of the same name, at Bryants’ new hall in the Tammany Building.²⁹³

Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels were the leading troupe in terms of the number of opera burlesques that they produced and in the extravagance of their productions. The troupe’s burlesque of Verdi’s *Il trovatore*, which was entitled, “Kill Trovatore,” ran during August at the opening of this season.²⁹⁴ Nearly the entire cast performed in this and their other operatic afterpieces,²⁹⁵ in which Leon and Kelly, the troupe’s headliners, usually performed the two main roles. Leon played the Duchess Leonora, and Kelly

²⁸⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 45 (15 February 1868): 358.

“Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 48 (7 March 1868): 382.

²⁹⁰ “Amusements: Advertisement Page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 4 (4 May 1867): 31.

²⁹¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 37 (21 December 1867): 294.

²⁹² Eugene was Bryants’ Minstrels’ prima donna since their opening at Tammany Hall. “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 7 (23 May 1868): 54.

²⁹³ “Amusements: Advertisement Page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 24 (19 September 1868): 191.

²⁹⁴ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 25 August 1867, 3.

²⁹⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

performed the role of Manrico Trovatore, Esq.²⁹⁶ Leon sang the principal arias from Verdi's opera in this burlesque,²⁹⁷ and the piece included the "Terrific Monk Scene,"²⁹⁸ which was probably a take-off on the execution scene, where Manrico waits in the palace tower and monks chant in the background. Butler's American Theatre also produced a burlesque on *Il trovatore*, to which they gave the same title as the original, with the main roles performed by J. W. Barrett (in his debut at Butler's) and Julia Marlon.²⁹⁹

Minstrel burlesques of operas usually combined some of the original instrumental and vocal music with music composed expressly for the burlesque, as well as popular songs. In some cases the instrumental music of the original was set with comical words. Kelly and Leon's advertised that Leon's burlesque of Offenbach's *La Grand-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, "The Grand Dutch S," included "the delightful music of Offenbach,"³⁰⁰ such as a take-off on "Le Sabre de mon père" entitled, "The Cheese Knife of My Pa."³⁰¹ Kelly and Leon's advertised new dresses and sets and listed the following scenes in the burlesque: "Reception in Costume by her Court," "Under the Calcium,"³⁰² "The Can Can," "Le Sabre," the "Great Railroad Express Train in Motion," and the finale "Great Steamboat Collision and Explosion."³⁰³ By the middle of March, they advertised that 50,000 people had attended this burlesque,³⁰⁴ which they performed for the 100th consecutive night on 4 May.³⁰⁵ (Its last week began on 1 June.³⁰⁶) The "Railroad

²⁹⁶ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 30 August 1867, 7.

²⁹⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 21 (31 August 1867): 166.

²⁹⁸ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 28 August 1867, 7.

²⁹⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 31 (9 November 1867): 246.

³⁰⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 1 (11 April 1868): 7.

³⁰¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 45 (15 February 1868): 358.

³⁰² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 50 (21 March 1868): 399.

³⁰³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 46 (22 February 1868): 367.

³⁰⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 50 (21 March 1868): 399.

³⁰⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 4 (2 May 1868): 31.

³⁰⁶ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 71.

Express Scene” became so popular that the San Francisco Minstrels added a version of it to their show by the end of February.³⁰⁷

Offenbach’s operas, which were wildly popular in New York during this season, became a favorite subject of burlesque by minstrel troupes, even in indirect ways. In addition to Kelly and Leon’s burlesques, such as “La!-Bell-L. N.,”³⁰⁸ the San Francisco Minstrels performed burlesques of Offenbach: “The Buffer’s Opera from the City of Offenbach or Under a Penny Dip”³⁰⁹ and “The Dutch Cheese Opera by Offenbach,”³¹⁰ which was another burlesque of Offenbach’s *La Grand-Duchesse*.

Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels was the first troupe to perform light opera as an afterpiece, although it is unknown whether they performed it in blackface or whiteface. They performed Florimond Ronger Hervé’s (1825-1892) four-act operetta, *Le petit Faust*, which was entitled, “Faust,” (or “Le Petit Faust: Opera Bouffe de Hervé”—arranged by Fred. W. Zaulig) in November.³¹¹ Kelly played the role of Mephistopheles,³¹² and Leon the role of Marguerite.³¹³ The music in this burlesque included dances and other instrumental pieces, as well as songs based on the opera that were written in English, French, and German: the “Grand Fanfare Militaire” and a “Serenade;” Leon’s “Flower Song” (or “The Flower of Purity”), the “Gold Song,”³¹⁴ the “Jewel Song,”³¹⁵ and the “Air de Margherite: Liebe, Liebe, Freundin” (Sweet Love, Dearest Friend); the “Air de Faust: J’ai beau me fuetter” (O! What is it that Ails Me?); a quadrille, a polka, a potpourri

³⁰⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 47 (29 February 1868): 374.

³⁰⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 71.

³⁰⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Herald*, 5 October 1867.

³¹⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 28 (19 October 1867): 222.

³¹¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 31 (9 November 1867): 247.

³¹² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 34 (30 November 1867): 271.

³¹³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 32 (16 November 1867): 255-56.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 34 (30 November 1867): 271.

brilliant; and the “Ronde de Mephisto: Je suis Mephisto” (I am Mephisto)” (Example 4.3).

Example 4.3,
“Rondeau de
Mephisto”

RONDEAU DE MEPHISTO:

Allegro.

I am Me - phis - to, I
Je suis Mé - phis - to, —

come from be - low To en - cour - age young men in all sorts of sin, A
- vi - teur fi - dèle De l'ange dé - chu qu'on nom - me Na - tur.

odd ones, some times, com - mit hor - rid crimes. And then how I laugh wh
hoix com - me lui la ra - ce mor - telle..... Et fais en pe - tit

Example 4.3 continued

The musical score is for a song in 3/8 time, featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in French and English. The score is divided into four systems, each with a vocal staff and a piano accompaniment staff. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes, providing a simple harmonic support for the vocal melody. The lyrics are as follows:

1 take them in 1 am Me - phis - to; I come from he-
qu'il fait en grand. Je laisse à Sa - tan, pour prouver sa

- low To en - cour - age young men in all sorts of sin. And
hai - - ne, Le fer te, poi son, la guerre et le sang. Je

old ones, some - times, com - mit hor - rid crimes. And then how I laugh when
gar - de pour moi la sot-tise hu - maine, Con-vaincu qu'un sot vaut

rall.
 I take them in.
bien un méchant.

rall.

“I am Mephisto” is a simple one-verse, forty-measure comedic song performed by Kelly (as Mephisto) that describes his attempts to lure men into deals and the commission of sins. The song is composed in triple meter, has a rather unimaginative and plain melody in whole, quarter, and eighth notes, has no chorus, and has a piano

accompaniment that alternates left-hand downbeat and right-hand second and third beat chords. The text of the song was given in both French and English. Apparently, the piece was well received because a *Clipper* critic wrote the following about it: “About last week’s program, the operatic attempts of these minstrels are better than most of the serious opera singers in New York.”³¹⁶

Troupes also performed musical burlesques that combined story lines and music from different legitimate sources. For example, Pastor’s company performed John F. Poole’s burlesque on *Jack Sheppard*, “John Sheppard and Joseph Blueskin,” which the *Clipper* reported contained much of the music from *La Grand-Duchesse*.³¹⁷ This burlesque combined the story of the famous English criminal, Jack Sheppard, who was executed in Tyburn in 1724, with music extracted from Offenbach’s opera.³¹⁸

Variety halls with minstrel corps presented large-scale opera burlesques for the first time during this season, although they appeared less frequently than burlesques of legitimate drama and were probably performed in whiteface. A few examples include J. C. Stewart’s performance of his operatic extravaganza entitled, “The Bill Poster’s Dream,” at Butler’s American Theatre in February 1868,³¹⁹ and Tony Pastor’s production of John F. Poole’s musical burlesques “Wm Du Tell”³²⁰ and “Blue Beard in the Bowery.”³²¹ Variety halls during this season also occasionally produced original “operatic” burlesques, such as the Eighth Avenue Opera House’s “The Nymph of the

³¹⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 33 (23 November 1867): 262.

³¹⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 70.

³¹⁸ “Jack Sheppard,” Jack Sheppard: From the Complete Newgate Calender, (Accessed [20 February 2005]), <<http://www.English.upenn.edu/~jlynch/Courses/95c/Texts/Sheppard.html>>.

³¹⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 46 (22 February 1868): 367.

³²⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 19 (17 August 1867): 150.

³²¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 1 (11 April 1868): 7.

Caribbean Sea,” which it termed an “original burletta,” in which Crissie Carnavan sang the lead role.³²²

The 1867-68 season was a turning point in minstrel history. The distinction between blackface minstrelsy and variety had become or was becoming more blurred than ever before. Kelly and Leon’s performance of Herve’s *Faust* was the first example of a blackface troupe performing a large-scale legitimate musical work as an afterpiece. Their performances also represent the fading of the line separating blackface and legitimate performance. Although the other New York troupes did incorporate elements of legitimate productions in their operatic and musical afterpieces, they did not cross this line during the late 1860s. Performances of light opera by a minstrel troupe were not heard again in New York until Kelly and Leon’s returned during the 1869-70 season. Minstrels responded to the public demands for elegance and the novelty of the new, but the thin black veil worn and the dialects sometimes spoken by its performers made the shows more risqué than legitimate comedy and burlesque.

³²² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 15, no. 24 (21 September 1867): 190.

Chapter Five: 1868-1869

As tensions between working-class blacks and whites increased toward the end of the 1860s over admittance to unions, voting rights, and decent housing,¹ minstrels fought to find a place for blackface performance in New York. The Bowery and Broadway still attracted a diverse crowd but improved transportation options opened up the city and its environs to audiences.² The public and family audiences, in particular, demanded clean and extravagant productions, which minstrels sought to supply. Troupes varied their show formats to an unprecedented extent with different combinations of old acts, such as Rice's "Bone Squash Diavolo," and new acts, such as stunts, "fancy" dances, large-scale musical panoramas and tableaux vivant, and original light opera.

An article in the *New York Herald* about the fall 1868 season predicted that it "promises to be the best ever in New York. Greater variety and more theaters and better performances than ever before. Claptrap and side shows have given way to intellect, science, and liberality. Over twenty theaters are going full blast."³ However, between the summer of 1868 and the spring of 1869, only five minstrel and three variety companies with minstrel acts performed in New York: Emerson, Allen, and Manning's Minstrels; the San Francisco Minstrels; Kelly and Leon's Minstrels; Bryants' Minstrels; the Georgia Minstrels; and Pastor's; Fattie Stewart's; and the Theatre Comique. Minstrel performance practices in the first parts and olios of shows remained much the same, but a new level of complexity and extravagance characterized afterpiece burlesques.

¹ Burrows and Wallace, 992-93.

² Ibid., 994-95.

³ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 20 August 1868.

Tony Pastor closed his variety company on 27 June with both a matinee and an evening benefit performance for himself.⁴ Emerson, Allen, and Manning's Minstrels took over his hall for July, which was their first appearance in New York,⁵ and performed minstrel shows with Johnny Allen as Tambo, Billy Emerson as Bones, and Dick Parker in banjo solos.⁶ They probably closed during the last week of the month,⁷ and Pastor's regular variety troupe returned to 201 Bowery on 3 August with Johnny Thompson, Frank Kerns, George W. Thompson, Billy Sheppard, and Billy Emmett in the Ethiopian corps.⁸

The *Times* reported that both Bryants' and the San Francisco Minstrels were doing well in mid-June 1868.⁹ But Bryants' was the only minstrel troupe to perform throughout the summer without interruption. In mid-August the *Herald* reported that "Bryants' Minstrels, having the field of 'cork opera' to themselves, are doing an immense business." They performed the usual number of songs and dances, as well as the burlesque, "Ill-True-Bad-Doer," and the Ethiopian sketch, "Blue Barber."¹⁰

Minstrel companies opened their renovated theaters late in August and early September. Kelly and Leon's hall "was divided into orchestra chairs, dress circle, balcony chairs, gallery, and four private boxes, all richly decorated."¹¹ Several large windows were added to improve circulation and a crystal prismatic illuminator (costing \$15,000), containing 2,200 variegated prisms was hung in the entrance."¹² Lingard

⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 102.

⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 103.

⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 15 (18 July 1868): 118.

⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 16 (25 July 1868): 127.

⁸ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 1 August 1868.

⁹ "Amusements," *New York Times*, 15 June 1868.

¹⁰ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 18 August 1868, 5.

¹¹ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 20 August 1868, 4. Kelly and Leon's opened on 24 August 1868.

¹² *Ibid.*

opened at the Theatre Comique for the fall season late in August without minstrelsy. The *New York Herald* reported that “the performances are to be conducted after the style of a vaudeville and varieties theater, and every kind of Negro minstrelsy upon the stage dispensed with.”¹³ Susan Galton’s English Opera company also performed there with Lingard from October through the beginning of December.¹⁴ Although Charley White had taken over management of the Theatre Comique by 30 November,¹⁵ the only Negro minstrelsy that appeared at the hall during this season was heard at White’s benefit on 1 December. In this performance White appeared in an Ethiopian sketch with other minstrels after “being off the boards” for eight months.¹⁶ Early in the morning on 4 December 1868, the hall was severely damaged by fire, and the theatre closed for the rest of the season.

Fattie Stewart, a well-known minstrel, and his Great Variety Entertainment appeared in blackface and variety acts at the Alhambra Theatre (616 Broadway) every evening and for Saturday matinees beginning on 12 November 1868. Admission to the hall was \$.25, and reserved seats were \$.50.¹⁷ The repertoire of the troupe is unknown. The New Hibernian Minstrels appeared at the New Apollo Hall at Broadway and Twenty-Eighth Street beginning on 22 December. The personnel and repertoire of the troupe are unknown.¹⁸

Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels closed at 720 Broadway at the end of the second week of January 1869. The troupe then began a three-month tour of the U. S. and sailed for

¹³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 20 (22 August 1868): 158.

¹⁴ “Theatre Comique,” *New York Herald*, 5 October 1868, 7.

¹⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 35 (5 December 1868): 278.

¹⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 35 (5 December 1868): 278.

¹⁷ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 12 November 1868.

¹⁸ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 15 December 1868.

London early in April.¹⁹ In London they performed such Offenbach burlesques as “The Grand Dutch S,” “La Bell L. N.,” “Barber Blu,” and “Gin-nevieve.”²⁰

Intermittent advertising makes it difficult to determine the activities of the Georgia Minstrels in New York. The troupe reappeared in advertisements in February 1869 at Dodworth Hall (located on Broadway, opposite Eleventh Street), but it gave its last performance at that hall on 6 February.²¹ There were no advertisements in either the *Herald*, the *Times*, or the *Clipper* until the middle of June 1869, but these indicate that they had been performing in New York all season, and most likely during the final weeks at the Empire Rink on Third Avenue. The exact date of the end of their season is unknown, but the Georgia Minstrels left for Europe after closing in mid-June 1869 for the summer.²²

At the end of January 1869, Bryants’ Minstrels were preparing to move uptown to their new hall above Twenty-seventh Street,²³ although they never made the move. Neil Bryant returned to the troupe after an absence of three years on 6 February.²⁴ The *Clipper* reported that Bryants’ business at the end of February was poor²⁵ but that it picked up by mid-April.²⁶ Bryants’ closed for two weeks on 24 April because their lease was due to expire on 1 May,²⁷ and went on a short tour while the particulars of a new lease were negotiated.²⁸ They reopened their hall on Fourteenth Street with reduced prices on 15 May 1869 with Dave Reed and several new performers, songs, acts, and

¹⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 40 (9 January 1869): 318.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 44 (6 February 1869): 350.

²² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 11 (19 June 1869): 86.

²³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 42 (23 January 1869): 334.

²⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 44 (6 February 1869): 350.

²⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 47 (27 February 1869): 374.

²⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 2 (17 April 1869): 14.

²⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 46 (20 February 1869): 366.

²⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 4 (1 May 1869): 30.

ballads.²⁹ The *Clipper* reported that their opening night was well attended, in part due to the drop in admission prices, and reminded the critic of the old days at Mechanics' Hall. The entertainment was "varied and pleasing," the troupe's orchestra played very well, and Dave Reed and the troupe were well received.³⁰ A critic for the *Clipper* called their show "good and cheap entertainment."³¹

The remaining minstrel companies and Pastor's closed for the summer in the middle or at the end of June. Bryants' troupe, except for Unsworth and Eugene, who went to Canada for a month-long vacation after the closing performance on 26 June,³² left New York on a summer tour.³³ The San Francisco Minstrels closed for the season on 12 June,³⁴ and Pastor's final show was heard on 26 June. All of the shows during Pastor's last week were benefits for his performers, including the last performance of the season, which was a benefit for himself.³⁵

In addition to being performed at actual minstrel and variety halls, minstrelsy also was performed within legitimate dramas. In one such example, *The Lottery of Life*, which was in its seventh week at Wallack's on Monday night, 20 July 1868, featured a "a minstrel band of real nigs and pretty waiter girls" in the drama.³⁶

Minstrel and variety companies began their shows at either 7:45 p. m. or 8 p. m. The San Francisco Minstrels' opening show ran from 8 p. m. to 10 p. m.,³⁷ which was thirty minutes longer than the length of their shows during the previous season. An ad

²⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 6 (15 May 1869): 46.

³⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 7 (22 May 1869): 54.

³¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 8 (29 May 1869): 62.

³² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 12 (26 June 1869): 95.

³³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 16 (24 July 1869): 126.

³⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 11 (19 June 1869): 86.

³⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 12 (26 June 1869): 95.

³⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 16 (25 July 1868): 126.

³⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 22 (5 September 1868): 174.

for Kelly and Leon's stated that their shows began at 8 p. m., and culminated at 10 p. m.; carriages could be ordered for 11 p. m.³⁸ This indicates that their shows this season were also considerably longer than those during the previous season. However, Kelly and Leon's shortened their show by an hour three weeks after their opening because patrons complained that it ended too late.³⁹

Most minstrel and all variety troupes gave matinees on Saturday and some gave them on Wednesdays, as well, beginning at some time between 1 and 2:30 p. m. All troupes gave matinee and evening performances on such major holidays as Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Admission prices fluctuated more during this season than they had in previous years. At the beginning of February, Bryants' Minstrels were charging \$.50 for the gallery, \$.75 for the parquet, and \$1 for orchestra seats.⁴⁰ The *Clipper* editor commented that high minstrel show prices were the reason for waning audiences throughout late 1868 and 1869⁴¹ and advocated a reduction of minstrel hall prices in order to allow them to compete with legitimate theaters, some of which were lowering their ticket costs already.⁴² Bryant's, who had introduced price hikes a year earlier, followed by Wood's Museum, were the first to respond to sparse audiences with reductions.⁴³ After closing their season on 24 April and going on a two-week tour of Baltimore and Washington, Bryants' Minstrels reopened at their hall on 10 May with reduced prices.⁴⁴ They dispensed with the reserved orchestra seats and changed their tickets to first-come-first-

³⁸ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 21 (29 August 1868): 167.

³⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 24 (19 September 1868): 190.

⁴⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 43 (30 January 1869): 343.

⁴¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 7 (22 May 1869): 54.

⁴² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 4 (1 May 1869): 30.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

serve seating at \$.50 and \$.25.⁴⁵ The *Clipper* editor was quick to praise these changes and to point out that instead of cutting entertainments to absorb price reductions, Bryants' had added Dave Reed and other first-class performers to their roster and Wood's Museum had produced a new pantomime.⁴⁶

Troupe size continued to increase during this season. Kelly and Leon's company was enlarged at the beginning of September to include twenty-nine performers in the first part of their shows and sixty in total, all of whom (aside from the orchestra) participated in the afterpiece burlesque.⁴⁷ The *Herald* reported that "This is their third season. New hall, new scenery, new costumes, augmented company, augmented chorus, augmented orchestra, augmented auxiliaries."⁴⁸ This troupe's size was more than double that of the typical minstrel companies up to this point. For the first part, they formed two rows on stage. The front row had seventeen minstrels: two endmen, thirteen chorus members, one interlocutor, and one balladist, and the back row had eleven musicians and one pianist.⁴⁹ By the middle of the season, Kelly and Leon's had increased its ranks again. The troupe advertised for the week beginning on 7 December 1868 "introducing 100 new artists, five with golden hair all their own."⁵⁰ Compared to Kelly and Leon's, San Francisco's first part had a small number of performers that season: ten minstrels in the first part, including the band, and one pianist,⁵¹ with approximately twenty members in total. For

⁴⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 7 (22 May 1869): 54.

⁴⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 4 (1 May 1869): 30.

⁴⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 22 (5 September 1868): 174. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 24 (19 September 1868): 190.

⁴⁸ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 23 August 1868.

⁴⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 23 (12 September 1868): 182.

⁵⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 35 (5 December 1868): 279.

⁵¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 23 (12 September 1868): 182.

their summer season, Emerson, Allen, and Manning's Minstrels had twenty-one "star performers."⁵²

Benefits, which were usually scheduled at the end of the season, were performed throughout the year. Bryants' benefit for Nelse Seymour on 11 February was heavily attended despite taking place three months before the end of their season. Henry Dobson presented him with one of his patented silver banjos worth \$60 on stage, and his intended gave him a large bouquet.⁵³ The volunteer company for this performance was comprised of Bryants' Minstrels, as well as members of other troupes.⁵⁴ A benefit for Neil Bryant took place at the Academy of Music on 22 April, for which Bryants' Minstrels closed their hall. In this performance, the troupe performed its regular minstrel first part,⁵⁵ and Dan Bryant appeared in Irish characters and was supported by a dramatic company.⁵⁶ Dan sang "Ould Paddy McCarthy" as Handy Andy and danced "The Rocky Road."⁵⁷ The performance was a success, with expenses under \$500 and receipts totaling \$3400.⁵⁸ The San Francisco Minstrels performed benefits at the end of the year with one for John Runnett, their treasurer, on 1 June and one for Bobby Newcomb on 8 June.⁵⁹

Minstrel audiences continued to be diverse economically and socially. On 8 June, John T. Hoffman, the governor of New York, sat in a private box at Bryants' and

⁵² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 103.

⁵³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 46 (20 February 1869): 366.

⁵⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 45 (13 February 1869): 358.

⁵⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 4 (1 May 1869): 30.

⁵⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 1 (10 April 1869): 6.

⁵⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 4 (1 May 1869): 30.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 10 (12 June 1869): 78.

according to the *Clipper*, enjoyed the performance.⁶⁰ The troupe also tried to attract families with advertisements that marketed them as “The Great Family Resort.”⁶¹

A respectable image remained essential to the survival of minstrelsy, and troupes hired performers and produced acts that reinforced their place in legitimate entertainment. The *Times* reported that the solo singing by members of Bryants’ Minstrels “could be envied by places of higher ambition”—legitimate halls and operas.⁶² The *Herald* praised Eugene’s burlesques, which “require nothing ancient, vulgar, or simple—no rags, or stuffed clubs—his jests make the cheeks dimple, are laughter-provoking, and refreshingly new.”⁶³ The *Herald* also reported that Bryants’ “extravaganzas and Negro sketches will be of a higher order than before”⁶⁴ during this season and that “the entertainments of [the San Francisco Minstrels] are especially commendable for their neatness of language, superior vocal merits, original flakes of wit, and intense comicality of eccentric acts.”⁶⁵

Show Format

Minstrel troupes continued to perform shows in the traditional three-part form and combined old and new acts in their programs, despite minstrelsy’s strengthening alliance with variety. Emerson, Allen, and Manning’s Minstrels described themselves as a “refined organization” of vocalists, musicians, comedians, dancers, and pantomimists.⁶⁶ Their programs included all of the regular acts of minstrelsy such as Tambo and Bones, song and dance, a vocal quartet, clog and jig dancing, and solo balladists, as well as

⁶⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 11 (19 June 1869): 86.

⁶¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 16 (25 July 1868): 127-28.

⁶² “Amusements,” *New York Times*, 10 August 1868.

⁶³ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 23 August 1868.

⁶⁴ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 20 August 1868, 4.

⁶⁵ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 29 August 1868.

⁶⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 14 (11 July 1868): 110.

female performers.⁶⁷ Johnny Allen's song and dance "Nicodemus Johnson," Billy Emerson's "Ticket to Leave," and their afterpiece "John Sheppard and Joseph Blueskin," were a few of their most popular acts during the summer.⁶⁸ This afterpiece burlesque combined the story from the drama *Joseph Blueskin* with music from Offenbach's *La Grande Duchesse*.⁶⁹

Kelly and Leon's Minstrels also continued to perform tripartite shows with regular first parts and olios, but they expanded the scale of minstrel productions and included some elements of variety. The *Times*, for example, reported at the beginning of the season that the preliminary entertainment to Kelly and Leon's afterpiece "Barber Blu" was good and varied.⁷⁰

In opposition to the more modern approach to blackface performance of Kelly and Leon's Minstrels, a *Clipper* critic praised the San Francisco Minstrels for returning to the roots of minstrelsy.⁷¹ As in previous seasons, their shows had a regular first part and olio of music, dance, skits, and comedy, and the troupe was comprised of specialists in every line of the minstrel business. Like Tony Pastor, they also performed some of the most popular songs and acts, such as "The Magic Phantom Cabinet" illusion, from London.⁷² A *Herald* critic reported the following about the San Francisco Minstrels' show:

The "orgies" that begin at eight o' clock and the "dissipation" that ceases at ten o' clock each evening at the hall of the San Francisco Minstrels seduce many to assist at them. The temptation is pardonable, however, and he who yields to it

⁶⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 71.

⁶⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 14 (11 July 1868): 110.

⁶⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 70.

⁷⁰ "Amusements," *New York Times*, 7 September 1868.

⁷¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 37 (19 December 1868): 294.

⁷² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 4 (1 May 1869): 31.

will be readily forgiven by any one who witnesses the comical grimaces of Birch and the funny contortions of Backus and listens to the musical voices of Wambold, Scott, and Templeton as they follow the program announced by Bernard. The “gags” and jokes were very good last evening and kept the audience steadily laughing. Wambold had to repeat his song in obedience to an encore, as did Birch for his comical version of “Not for Joe.”

In conjunction with their return to the roots of minstrelsy, the San Franciscans performed many old acts, skits, and afterpieces during this season. The revivals included imitation acts, such as a burlesque of the peculiarities and manner of the old maestro, Ole Bull,⁷³ the song and dance, “Fat and Greasy,”⁷⁴ Frank Bell’s “The Essence of Old Virginia,”⁷⁵ and skits such as “The Imperfect Cure,”⁷⁶ “Troubles at the Metropolitan Hotel,”⁷⁷ and “Macbeth,” “Hamlet,” “Booth,” “Richard,” and “Wallack,” which were performed in one evening as a “Shakespeare Festival.”⁷⁸ The most important of their afterpiece revivals was “Bone Squash Diabolo,” still one of T. D. Rice’s most popular Ethiopian operas from the 1830s,⁷⁹ which they performed with its original music and in much the same manner as Rice had decades earlier.⁸⁰ These revivals generally ran for shorter periods than new productions.

Bryants’ Minstrels also retained a three-part format and performed many old acts during this season. They advertised that their shows were comprised of “minstrelsy,

⁷³ “Amusements: San Francisco Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 5 November 1868, 7.

⁷⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 3 (24 April 1869): 23.

⁷⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 8 (29 May 1869): 62.

⁷⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 3 (24 April 1869): 23.

⁷⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 9 (5 June 1869): 11.

⁷⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 45 (13 February 1869): 359.

⁷⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 37 (19 December 1868): 294.

⁸⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 40 (9 January 1869): 319.

opera, and farce burlesque,”⁸¹ such as the parody of the Asian gymnastic troupes, “The Chinese Embassy, in their daring feats of knife, ladder, and top spinning”⁸² and Lingard’s character songs;⁸³ burlesques on contemporary news, such as the “Ku Klux Klan;”⁸⁴ Shakespeare burlesques, such as “Much Ado About Nothing;”⁸⁵ and burlesques of contemporary theater and older Italian operas, such as *Il trovatore* and *La Sonnambula*.

Bryants’ Minstrels’ opening night at their new hall in the Tammany Building on Fourteenth Street on 18 May attracted such a huge audience, that police were stationed at the entrances of the hall to control the crowds. Dan Bryant, Unsworth, and Eugene were the hits of the evening. The closing number, Dan Emmett’s walkaround, “The Wigwam,” had been and was performed by the entire company.⁸⁶ Bryants’ was the only troupe to perform walkarounds during this season, although the form experienced a minor resurgence in popularity during the following year. This traditional style of minstrel program, which combined old acts such as “Old Time Rocks,” clog dancing, banjo solos, a stump speech, Bryant’s “Essence,” and new skits, songs, an afterpiece, and a walkaround was typical of Bryants’ fare throughout this season.

During this season Bryants’ performed one of their oldest burlesque skits, “The Monster Concert Tin-Pan-Onion”⁸⁷ (Example 5.1), which was a parody of Jullien’s large orchestral concerts of the 1850s.⁸⁸ The cast of the piece was comprised of a conductor

⁸¹ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 24 August 1868.

⁸² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 71.

⁸³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 70.

⁸⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 71.

⁸⁵ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 8 (30 May 1868): 63.

⁸⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 8 (30 May 1868): 62.

⁸⁷ John F. Scott, ed., *Brudder Bones’ Book of Stump Speeches and Burlesque Orations, also Containing Humorous Lectures, Ethiopian Dialogues, Plantation Scenes, Negro Farces and Burlesques, Laughable Interludes, and Comic Recitations, Interspersed with Dutch, Irish, French, and Yankee Stories* (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, Publishers, 1868), 31-32.

⁸⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 25 (26 September 1868): 200.

wearing exaggerated evening clothes and an orchestra. The only props that were used besides the musicians' instruments were music stands, sheet music, a slack-strung drum, and two or three six- to eight-foot-long tin horns. The principal players in this mock orchestra played correctly and in tune, while the rest of the musicians purposely played

Example 5.1, "Tin-Pan-O-Ni-On"

TIN—PAN—O—NI—ON. 31

TIN—PAN—O—NI—ON.

As produced at Music Hall, New Haven, by "SAM SHARPLEY'S Ironclads,"
1863.

Characters.

HERE PASQUALLY.....Sam Sharpley.
MEMBERS OF ORCHESTRA, ETC.

*COSTUMES.—*HEER PASQUALLY.—*Exaggerated evening dress, monstrous frill, and preposterous tie of a napkin, large glass pin, etc.—Gloves, one yellow, the other pink or colored different—A baton for him—Hair dressed extravagantly—If possible, copy the general aspect of the leader of orchestra in vogue, and best known. INSTRUMENTALISTS.—Evening dress, same as usual in first part of a minstrel entertainment.*

*PROPERTIES.—*Music-stands—sheets of music—brass drums, mounted slightly, two or more very large tin horns, six or eight feet long, enlarging towards mouth where they are fifteen or twenty inches in diameter—the performers having these, being the baritone and the bass, sing through them.

*SCENE.—*Interior, or garden, being of no consequence—*PERFORMERS* are discovered standing at their music-stands instruments in hand, along flat, and each side—*c. front,* HERE PASQUALLY, his baton in his right hand, a large book of music before him—He salutes audience, and lifts baton, gives signal to proceed—All play, the leading instruments play properly, but the others, as trombone, etc., being slightly out of tune, the object being not to war the air, but to present ludicrous violations of harmony—Air for full band, as selected—During it, business of HEER PASQUALLY, at pleasure, of waving his baton frantically at tortuous passages, working both his arms, and tossing his head at the fortissimo movements, moving his open hands softly at the piano parts, going from one instrument to another, getting too near the big horn and affecting to be blown backwards by a blast from it, pantomiming (while a solo is being played) for the audience to particularly remark it, and intimating by beating his breast and pointing to himself, that the excellence is due all to him!—Further business of turning over two pages of his music-book and losing the place, consequently of beating the wrong time; confusion at believing the orchestra is wrong and he alone right—*FIRST INSTRUMENTALIST* makes a sign to HEER PASQUALLY that he (the HEER) is wrong—HEER PASQUALLY does not understand him at first—then goes to him and is set right—Hurries back to *c. front*, and begins beating time properly in accord—At the finale of opening piece HEER PASQUALLY assumes attitude of complacency and receives the applause all for himself—Introduces solos for the principal instruments, and a song for the gentleman who plays prima donna—HEER PASQUALLY executes a solo on a penny trumpet, or other ridiculous instrument—Final piece for full band—It is arranged as solo, full chorus played moderate at first, and then repeated, diminuendo to pianissimo, to culminate in a grand crash—But on the repetition, the instruments leave off one by one, the wind instruments taking precedence, and each performer goes off with his stand, etc., R or L.—The last to exit are the French horns (or violins, as the case may be), playing extremely piano as they go off—HEER PASQUALLY *c.*, sees nothing of this, and suddenly lifts both hands to give signal for crash—Gives signal—No sound—Cease playing ritornelle, R and L.—HEER PASQUALLY repeats signal, then looks aghast at the absence—Then runs off R or L.

32 BOOK OF STUMP SPEECHES.

out of tune and rhythm in parody of the real-life orchestras at some theaters. Although the music played during the performance of the skit was described as an “air for full band,” the titles of works or nature of this music is unknown. Within the skit each principal player performed a solo, and the troupe’s prima donna sang a song. The instrumental soloists and singers that performed during “Tin-Pan” were drawn from the troupe’s personnel and could have been changed easily. The comedy of the conductor was based on the gestures, mannerisms, mishaps, and arrogance of real conductors. For example, at one point the conductor turns too many pages of his score and loses his place in the music. He conducted the wrong beat pattern until the first violinist showed him where the orchestra was in the score. The skit ends like Haydn’s “Farewell” Symphony No. 45 in F-sharp minor (1772), in which the players, who stand throughout, leave the stage one by one as they diminuendo a repeated section of their music. The conductor, who is enthralled with his own excellence, only notices their absence when he cues a crash cymbal and no sound is produced. He concludes the skit by running off the stage mortified.

On 3 August Pastor’s opening night featured the headliners Johnny Thompson, a minstrel, Jennie Engel, a female vocalist, and Tony Pastor.⁸⁹ His company’s shows emphasized Dutch, Ethiopian, and Irish skits and dramas, such as “Jack Sheppard in Ireland,”⁹⁰ and baseball skits, such as “Base Ball, or the Champion Nine,”⁹¹ in which the great match game between the Female Base Ball Club and Tony Pastor’s Club was played by a full nine on each side for a Prize Bat.”⁹² “Negro sketches, songs, dances, and

⁸⁹ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 20 August 1868, 4.

⁹⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 20 (22 August 1868): 158.

⁹¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 22 (5 September 1868): 175.

⁹² “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 29 August 1868.

characteristic selections [were] still in high favor and rewarded with loud tokens of approbation. Not the least interesting portion of the bill of fare last evening was the excellent performance of the Coutellier Brothers, whose daring yet easy and graceful gymnastic feats evoked well-earned applause.”⁹³

One of the main differences between variety and minstrelsy during this period is that non-Ethiopian burlesque skits were performed in whiteface at Pastor’s but would have been performed in blackface at minstrel halls. And even though Pastor’s Ethiopian skits were usually performed in blackface, they sometimes included actors in whiteface, as well. For example, Pastor advertised “Johnny Thompson and Frank Kerns in a new feature of Ethiopian business called ‘National Notions,’ presented in white and black faces.”⁹⁴

Shows were paced fast, with very little time or “waits” between numbers. The *Clipper* reported the following about Pastor’s abundance of blackface and variety acts:

With a rapidity which only tact, judgment, and a true appreciation of the feelings of his many patrons, Tony Pastor manages to get through a programme every night which might reasonably be divided between half a dozen places of entertainment.⁹⁵

Child performers such as the ten-year-old Master Raphael de Solla, boy alto, were heard occasionally on the minstrel stage.⁹⁶ During his time with Bryants’ Minstrels, he sang “Then You’ll Remember Me” and “Fair Land of Poland”⁹⁷ from Balfe’s “Bohemian Girl.” De Solla is also the only crossover performer, in addition to Dan Bryant, identified

⁹³ “Amusements: Tony Pastor’s,” *New York Herald*, 5 November 1868, 7.

⁹⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 23 (12 September 1868): 183.

⁹⁵ “Amusements: Tony Pastor’s,” *New York Herald*, 5 November 1868, 7.

⁹⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 36 (12 December 1868): 286.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

during this season. At the end of December 1868, during his tenure with Bryants,' de Solla was a soloist along with Edward Mollenhauer (violin), Harry Sanderson (piano), and H. B. Lasserre at the first "Grand Sunday Concert" performed by the Mendelssohn Orchestral Union (conducted by Dodworth) at Irving Hall.⁹⁸

A few instrumental solos, such as Raynor's (of Kelly and Leon's) solo on the Japanese fiddle⁹⁹ and Garatagui's cornet solos with Bryants' Minstrels, were heard during this season. At Tony Pastor's a member of his troupe even performed a drum solo while swinging on the flying trapeze.¹⁰⁰ But banjoists were again the most popular of the instrumental soloists. J. Davies performed with Kelly and Leon's,¹⁰¹ Unsworth performed with Bryants',¹⁰² and Billy West performed with the San Francisco Minstrels.¹⁰³

Comic song and dance remained equally popular in both minstrelsy and variety. Frank Kerns performed song and dances at Pastor's,¹⁰⁴ and Hogan and Hughes of Bryants' Minstrels performed such acts as the standard "The Happiest Couple Out"¹⁰⁵ and the local double song and dance entitled, "The Belle of Fourteenth Street."¹⁰⁶ Kelly and Leon's featured traditional song and dance, as well as the Clark Brothers in a new type of song and dance style, which they termed a "sentimental song and dance." This duo also performed double clog dancing, and because they were so tall they were called

⁹⁸ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 23 December 1868.

⁹⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 31 (7 November 1868): 246.

¹⁰⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 44 (6 February 1869): 351.

¹⁰¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 26 (3 October 1868): 206.

¹⁰² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 24 (19 September 1868): 190.

¹⁰³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 36 (12 December 1868): 286.

¹⁰⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 40 (9 January 1869): 319.

¹⁰⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 24 (19 September 1868): 190.

¹⁰⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 102.

the “Giant Cloggers.”¹⁰⁷ Other solo dances included such acts as Dan Bryant’s “breakdown dance.”¹⁰⁸

Each troupe had its star tenors and basses, as well as a vocal quartet or quintet. William Dwyer, tenor balladist,¹⁰⁹ W. P. Grier, and Monroe Dempster sang lead with Bryants’¹¹⁰ and in the troupe’s quintet.¹¹¹

A variety of ethnic characterizations were seen in skits (sometimes within a single skit). Bryants’ performed “Shylock, the Merchant of Chatham Street,” in which Dan Bryant appeared as the Jew in Dutch and Unsworth “did up” the Duke in “true Irish.”¹¹² Johnny Thompson and Frank Kerns performed their Dutch, Irish, and African sketches at Pastor’s.¹¹³ In one such example Kerns performed burlesque imitations of James Taylor, the (white) London vocalist, in blackface, in which he sang “Yorkshire Farmer,” “Simple Simon,” and “The Broken-Hearted Lover.”¹¹⁴ Charley White also blacked-up for imitations of his favorite characters during June 1869.¹¹⁵ Other Negro sketches that were performed at Pastor’s include Thompson, Emmett, Kerns, and Connors in “Punchenello”¹¹⁶ and Thompson, Sheppard, and Kerns in “Life on the Mississippi.”¹¹⁷ Joseph Emmitt of Bryants’ was the most famous German character impersonator in New York during this season. He performed as the “Dutch Nigger”¹¹⁸ and was also called the

¹⁰⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 30 (31 October 1868): 238.

¹⁰⁸ “Amusements,” *New York Times*, 27 July 1868.

¹⁰⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 8 (29 May 1869): 62.

¹¹⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 51 (27 March 1869): 406.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 49 (13 March 1869): 390.

¹¹³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 24 (19 September 1868): 191.

¹¹⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 4 (1 May 1869): 30.

¹¹⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 12 (26 June 1869): 94.

¹¹⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 26 (3 October 1868): 206.

¹¹⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 26 (3 October 1868): 207.

¹¹⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 102.

“Great Western Deitchman.”¹¹⁹ He was a feature in Bryants’ burlesque entitled, “Dat Deitch Gal Vat Vinked of Me.”¹²⁰ Bryants’ also performed such ethnic pieces as the Scotch song entitled, “Annie O’ Banks O’ Dee.”¹²¹

Variety companies such as Pastor’s and the Theatre Comique, and minstrel troupes less frequently, featured stunt performers like Harry Gurr, the Man Fish. Gurr, “the amphibious wonder,” ate, drank, and smoked under water, “his astounding aquatic feats being performed in a mammoth glass tank of real water.”¹²²

Troupes retained afterpieces for several weeks at a time but changed first parts, olios, and personnel more often. The new additions to troupes often, but not always, replaced departing performers. For example, Talbot and Dick Ralph were the endmen for Kelly and Leon at the beginning of October.¹²³ On 26 October Davies and Campbell took over their positions.¹²⁴ And Raynor and Leslie had the ends by the middle of November.¹²⁵ At least once and sometimes twice a month, throughout this season, Pastor hired new performers. The *Herald* reported in a review of Pastor’s opening night that most of the stars of the variety and minstrel business would be appearing at that hall during the fall and winter.¹²⁶ During the fall of 1868, a number of performers appeared with Pastor’s company: Johnny Thompson and Frank Kerns opened the season,¹²⁷ Billy Emmett and Connors joined at the end of September,¹²⁸ Billy Sheppard joined at the

¹¹⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 16 (25 July 1868): 127.

¹²⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 103.

¹²¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 15 (18 July 1868): 118.

¹²² “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 18 November 1868.

¹²³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 26 (3 October 1868): 206.

¹²⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 30 (31 October 1868): 238.

¹²⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 32 (14 November 1868): 254.

¹²⁶ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 20 August 1868, 4.

¹²⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 23 (12 September 1868): 182.

¹²⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 26 (3 October 1868): 206.

beginning of October,¹²⁹ J. C. Campbell first appeared on 16 November,¹³⁰ and the Ethiopian star, Young Morrissey, joined on 23 November.¹³¹ Frank Kerns returned to the company on 28 November,¹³² and George Warren joined the company on 7 December.¹³³ Although the dates of first appearances of performers are generally given, departure dates are rarely available.

Burlesque afterpieces

Local and contemporary subjects continued to dominate the repertoire of burlesque afterpieces during this season, although older Italian operas were also popular burlesque subjects. Troupes kept afterpieces on the boards for several weeks at a time, while changing the first and second parts of their shows on a weekly basis.¹³⁴

The special effects used by minstrels became more realistic and complex. On 26 October Kelly and Davies of Kelly and Leon's Minstrels executed a quadruple sword combat and put soap in their mouths to create a frothing effect.¹³⁵

It was common for two or more burlesque skits and a longer afterpiece burlesque to appear in one show. For the week beginning on 7 December, for example, Kelly and Leon's performed the skits "Tame Cats," "The Harlequin Aurora" (pantomime), "Midsummer Night's Dream," "Du Chaillu's Scenes in Africa," and concluded with the

¹²⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 26 (3 October 1868): 207.

¹³⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 32 (14 November 1868): 255.

¹³¹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 33 (21 November 1868): 263.

¹³² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 34 (28 November 1868): 271.

¹³³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 35 (5 December 1868): 279.

¹³⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 41 (16 January 1869): 327.

¹³⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 30 (31 October 1868): 238.

afterpiece “Orphee” and its burlesque transformation scene.¹³⁶ During the next week they performed “Tame Cats” and “Barber Blu” on the same program.¹³⁷

Bryants’ performed many burlesques on contemporary legitimate theater: “Lancashire Lass,”¹³⁸ “Taming a Butterfly,”¹³⁹ “After Dark’s,”¹⁴⁰ “Jeemes the Port,”¹⁴¹ “The Ebony Blondes,”¹⁴² “Night School,”¹⁴³ in which Seymour played the teacher, and Unsworth played the Dunce,¹⁴⁴ “Who Died First?,”¹⁴⁵ “X. L. N. on the Weal, a la Lydia Thompson,” which was a burlesque of Lydia Thompson’s “Ixion, or the Man at the Wheel,”¹⁴⁶ and “Broome’s Lottery of Life, or the Policy Office of Existence,”¹⁴⁷ which was a burlesque of Wallack’s drama, *The Lottery of Life*, and interestingly included a scene with a minstrel band and pretty female waiters.¹⁴⁸

Minstrel troupes, and Pastor’s variety shows in particular, also performed original local comedies in burlesque style, such as Pastor’s “The City Messenger”¹⁴⁹ and Bryants’ “New York By Moonlight”¹⁵⁰ and “A Flask of Jersey Lightning,”¹⁵¹ which first appeared on 20 June¹⁵² and included such scenes as “the Great Boat Race between Hooty Do and De Basam,” “the Boiler Explosion,”¹⁵³ and “Life on a Mississippi Steamboat.”¹⁵⁴

¹³⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 35 (5 December 1868): 279.

¹³⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 24 (19 September 1868): 190.

¹³⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 32 (14 November 1868): 255.

¹³⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 33 (21 November 1868): 263.

¹⁴⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 45 (13 February 1869): 359.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 49 (13 March 1869): 391. It appeared through

“Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 10 (12 June 1869): 79.

¹⁴³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 51 (27 March 1869): 407.

¹⁴⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 52 (3 April 1869): 414.

¹⁴⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 11 (19 June 1869): 86.

¹⁴⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 27 (10 October 1868): 215.

¹⁴⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 11 (20 June 1868): 86.

¹⁴⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 16 (25 July 1868): 126.

¹⁴⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 40 (9 January 1869): 319.

¹⁵⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 10 (13 June 1868): 79.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 11 (20 June 1868): 87.

¹⁵³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 12 (27 June 1868): 95.

Kelly and Leon's performed Leon's "Grecian Bend" with new local illustrations (panorama)¹⁵⁵ and "Tame Cats," which opened with Leon as a sorceress and representatives of the *Herald*, *Times*, *Tribune*, *News*, *Police Gazette*, and *Brick Pomeroy* appearing in "garments of questionable style."¹⁵⁶ The scenes in "Tame Cats" included pantomime, a "Mac Beth" scene, "The Press," "The Sylphs," "The Witch Palace," "The Transformation," "The Flight of Doves," "The Talisman," and "The Incantation." The cast included 100 imported artists, five artists with "Golden Hair all their own," which referred to the contemporary blonde craze, and The Doctor.¹⁵⁷

Burlesques such as "Tame Cats" combined elements from all types of acts. Pastor's "New York Before and After Dark," which was a burlesque of Dion Boucicault's drama, *After Dark or London By Night*, running at Niblo's Garden, combined burlesque elements of contemporary drama with local New York subjects. The *Herald* reported that this drama, "though not remarkable for its literary ability, was nevertheless well received for the many well-directed hits it contained. Tony as 'Jim Nassau' was equal to the arduous and classical role and was well supported by the entire company."¹⁵⁸ Kelly and Leon's "Shadow Pantomime" included Leon, Chenet, and the company in "funny feats dressed in tarleton and doing a little dancing a la Black Crook." "Leon and Chenet do a pas de deus" [sic] and other members dance. It closed with a "flight to the flies on ropes by two of the fattest Dutchmen of the company."¹⁵⁹ This burlesque included music, shadow pantomime, ballet and eccentric dancing like that in

¹⁵⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 13 (4 July 1868): 102.

¹⁵⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 31 (7 November 1868): 247.

¹⁵⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 36 (12 December 1868): 286.

¹⁵⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 36 (12 December 1868): 287.

¹⁵⁸ "Amusements: Tony Pastor's," *New York Herald*, 5 November 1868, 7.

¹⁵⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 36 (12 December 1868): 286.

the *Black Crook*, and Scottish and German characterizations. The San Francisco Minstrels' "Unbleached Blondes," a burlesque of Lydia Thompson's troupe, concluded with the grand palace scene from Offenbach's *Barbe Bleue*.¹⁶⁰ Acrobatic and gymnastic feats were also burlesqued.

Troupes occasionally programmed two opera burlesques in one program, although it is unknown if both were the length of an afterpiece. During the middle of August, Bryants' Minstrels performed the usual amount of songs and dances as well as the burlesque, "Ill-True-Bad-Doer," and the Ethiopian sketch, "Blue Barber."¹⁶¹ Programming one long opera burlesque and two shorter non-opera skits in one show was more common. The *Herald* again wrote that during the week of 21 September, Bryants' "Lucrezia Borgia," "'Tin-pan-o-ni-on,' and 'The Exempt Shakers' continue to please audiences at this 'bijou.'"¹⁶²

Blonde fever in 1868-69 took the place of the previous season's Japanese fever. These burlesques were inspired by Lydia Thompson and her Blondes, who were performing at Wood's Museum and Metropolitan Theatre on the corner of Broadway and Thirtieth Street. Kelly and Leon's advertised for the week beginning on 7 December "introducing 100 new artists, five with golden hair all their own."¹⁶³ Alice Siedler started blonde fever at Tony Pastor's in mid-February,¹⁶⁴ and on 13 March Pastor sang "The English Blondes" and a Dutch song.¹⁶⁵ Later that month the troupe performed "Romeo and Juliet" and two blonde skits—"The Beautiful Blonde Who Died for Love" and "Six

¹⁶⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 5 (8 May 1869): 39.

¹⁶¹ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 18 August 1868, 5.

¹⁶² "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 21 September 1868, 4.

¹⁶³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 35 (5 December 1868): 279.

¹⁶⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 46 (20 February 1869): 366.

¹⁶⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 49 (13 March 1869): 391.

Native American Blondes.”¹⁶⁶ During the first week of March, the San Francisco Minstrels performed “‘The Siege of the Blondes, or ‘Tis Sweet for Our Country to Dye,’ with songs and dances performed by six healthy blondes and four l’ersian youths with tiny feet.”¹⁶⁷ At the same time, Bryants’ Minstrels performed the skit “Bryants’ Blondes.”¹⁶⁸

Pastor’s Ethiopian burlesques comprised the same elements and the same subjects as the minstrel companies. The *Herald* reported the following about one such blackface afterpiece, “Three Strings to One Beau”:

“Three Strings to One Beau” brought an irrepressible and mischievous nigger into conflict with his woolly-headed ‘patient’ and a broad brimmed Quaker and a fop dressed in rainbow chintz, and after knocking all their empty heads together he falls into a barrel of molasses, amid aching roars of laughter from the audience. Then follows a whole series of side dishes—dancing, solo songs, gymnastics, and so on, winding up with a solid porterhouse steak drama called ‘The Yankee Farmer,’ a singular combination, full of wise saws and modern instances and running over with a creamy flood of jokes.¹⁶⁹

The extravagant style of producing blackface burlesques of both contemporary and old operas widened the gap between the traditional blackface performance heard in first parts and olios and these afterpieces; these longer pieces represent minstrelsy’s conscious attempt to incorporate elements of legitimacy into their performances. Minstrels themselves recognized the difference between this style and traditional minstrel

¹⁶⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 51 (27 March 1869): 407.

¹⁶⁷ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 47 (27 February 1869): 375.

¹⁶⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 48 (6 March 1869): 383.

¹⁶⁹ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 19 November 1868, 7.

acts. The San Francisco Minstrels advertised that one of their afterpiece hits of the season, “Barber Brown, or the Pacific Sloper,” was an entirely original opera bouffe, produced in a “style of splendor never yet equalled on the minstrel stage.”¹⁷⁰ The burlesque cost between \$5,000 and \$6,000, which was more than the cost of all of the burlesques that they had put on the stage during the past three or four years¹⁷¹ and equaled nearly an entire month’s revenues.

The San Franciscans’ “Barber Brown” also serves as an example of an original burlesque opera that was not based on a pre-existent legitimate work. The *Herald* described the piece as a comic opera, or opera bouffe, and in one review went so far as to call it an English opera because “it [was] an original, light, and metrical composition,” which showed home life in ridiculous and humorous scenes. As an English comic opera, the critic continued, it “fills a gap in the musical scene of New York that has long been wanting. Although its characters are in blackface, ‘Barber Brown’ is really a legitimate amusement. Its success proves that it is an appropriate entertainment. The playing [instrumental music] is well done, and the ‘business’ is unusually funny under the management of Birch, Wambold, Bernard, and Backus.”¹⁷²

On 14 September the *Herald* reported that “Dan Bryant has begun a season of Italian opera at his hall in anticipation of the arrival of Mapleson and the Italian Opera next door at the Academy of Music. Bryants’ “La Somnambula” burlesque on Bellini’s *La Sonnambula* (1831) appeared on 2 November.¹⁷³ It was also called “La Somnambula, the Midnight Grecian Bender Who Walked in Her Sleep, or the Village Inn and the Count

¹⁷⁰ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 29 August 1868.

¹⁷¹ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 20 August 1868, 4.

¹⁷² “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 17 September 1868, 7.

¹⁷³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 30 (31 October 1868): 239-40.

Out.”¹⁷⁴ The *New York Times* reported that the music was a mélange with many original choruses and airs and great scenery and costumes, but that it was not as funny as their “Il Trovatore” burlesque.¹⁷⁵ It played for six weeks, ending on 13 December.¹⁷⁶

New York newspapers reported on the improvements made to minstrelsy with the addition of fancy costumes, scenery, and high-brow subjects to blackface burlesques. The following article from the *Herald* compared Bryants’ “La Sonnambula” burlesque to productions at legitimate theaters such as Wallack’s:

The great progress in burnt cork minstrelsy, which has manifested itself during the past few years, has almost completely revolutionized this particular line of popular amusement, and performances which at one time comprised merely a potpourri of absurd caricatures and grotesqueries presented without regard to stage mounting and claiming their chief attraction from the disgusting and sometimes offensive costumes composed of refuse clothing from all the rag shops of the city are now replaced by the most complete and costly stage paraphernalia, scenery, and appointments of the most lavish display. The last grand attraction at Bryants’ has actually eclipsed all former attempts to combine beauty, refinement, and enjoyment on the Ethiopian stage. The new operatic burlesque of “La Somnambula, the Midnight Grecian Bend-er who walked in Her Sleep,” is one of the finest extravaganzas presented for a long time before a New York public, and would be highly creditable as a spectacle to any of the city dramatic establishments. Eugene as Amina is admirable in point of makeup, and as an ebony beauty of no mean personal charms although she (or he) is a bogus belle.

¹⁷⁴ “Amusements,” *New York Times*, 2 November 1868.

¹⁷⁵ “Amusements,” *New York Times*, 3 November 1868.

¹⁷⁶ “Amusements,” *New York Times*, 5 December 1868.

In the matter of form and voice Eugene must unquestionably be classed as one of the finest burlesque prime donne on the stage, and puzzles many of his auditors as to whether he does or does not actually belong to the gentler sex. Unsworth's performance in whatever class of character he assumes is well known, and the reputation he first made in this country has been added to by the prestige of his great popularity and unequalled success in London during the seven years of his absence from us. His Alessio in the "Somnambula" is replete with his provincial wit, humor, and furnish effete encores and plaudits throughout the piece. The cast of characters in the burlesque is unique and appropriate, and the chorus is excellent in all its parts. The scenery, particularly the mountains of the Tyrol and the cataract scene, are among Wallack's finest productions, and is something new in minstrel representations. Dan Bryant's irrepressible talent is a household word, and the company as a unit may be considered as unexcelled by anything in its line of business.¹⁷⁷

Minstrel burlesques of operas generally combine the original characters' names and plot with local and comedic references. Bellini's original cast—Lisa, Alessio, Amina, Teresa, a Notary, Elvino, Count Rodolfo, and peasants—and story of Amina's innocent sleep-walking also appear in Bryants' "La Somnmabula," which Dan Bryant directed;¹⁷⁸ the program was published in the *Herald*:

Cast of characters, scenery, incidents:

Amina, the village beauty in her own opera, by Eugene (soprano)

Elvino, the "fine young man" of the village, by Dempster (tenor)

¹⁷⁷ "Amusements: Bryants' Minstrels—"La Somnambula,"" *New York Herald*, 5 November 1868, 7.

¹⁷⁸ "Amusements," *New York Herald*, 1 November 1868.

Alesso, the Niagara Leapist, by Unsworth (bass)

Notary, marriage contracts, etc, by Seymour (tenor)

Count Taffy Crackabobsterciawski by Warren White (bass)

Liza, Landlady of the Golden Fleece Inn, by Rockefeller (soprano)

Teresa, Mother of Amina, once considered, by Eph Horn (mezzo-soprano)

Black Fawn Peasant, by Hogan

An Ingenious Rustic, by Hughes

A simple-minded villager, by Grier

A guileless clodhopper, by Henry

Peasants, Villagers, Hurdy-gurdies

Scene First:

The Tyrolean Village of Too-rat-loo-rad

The Golden Fleece Inn

The Betrothal of Amina and Elvino, to the annoyance of Liza

Return of Count Crackabobsterciawski, the Ghost

Scene Second:

A lovely pass in Gowan

Who's this stranger

Horrible, Can it Be?

No—yes—it must be

Taffy

Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief

Scene Third:

Interior of the Golden Fleece Inn

The Count's Bedroom

Amina caught napping

Triumph of Liza

Am I guilty?

Who will care for mother now?

Scene Fourth:

The Haunted Mill

Amina acts high on the wheel, she crosses a great water fall

Terrific descent of Alessio

Amina awakes from her forty winks

Embraces Elvino

Everything is lovely and the bells will go ring for Amina.¹⁷⁹

The local, comedic, and minstrel elements that Bryants' added to or changed from the original in this burlesque include Eugene's male prima donna performance of Amina, the lead soprano role, in blackface; the change in name of Count Rodolfo to Count Taffy Crackabobsterciawski, possibly referring to Eastern European immigrants; the Macbeth reference to the Ghost; and the negative characterization of Taffy as a thieving Welshman. In their description of Alesso and "Amina's crossing of a water fall" in this synopsis of characters and scenes, Bryants' refers twice to the Buislay gymnastic family and their famous act, the Niagara Leap. Alesso's "Terrific Descent" referred to the Asian acrobat troupes, which were so popular in New York during the previous season. The

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

description of the “Black Fawn Peasant” is a reference to Niblo’s *The Black Crook* and *The White Fawn*.

Unlike Kelly and Leon’s and the San Francisco Minstrels, Bryants’ mostly burlesqued the older Italian operas of Donizetti, Bellini, and Verdi, rather than the works of Offenbach, which were such popular subjects with the other minstrel troupes. The *Herald* proclaimed that “‘Lucrezia Borgia,’ with Eugene, the rival of Titiens¹⁸⁰ [sic], the excruciatingly funny Unsworth, the prolonged Unsworth, and the unapproachable Dan in the cast,” was sure to be good.¹⁸¹ Like Francis Leon, Eugene was well-known for his legitimate dancing in opera burlesques. The *Times* praised Eugene for “improving the quality of the program with his artistic dancing.”¹⁸²

Bryants’ “original opera bouffe,”¹⁸³ “Lucrezia Borgia” or “Lucrezia Borgia, M. D., or La Grand Doctoresse,” a burlesque of Donizetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833), was performed intermittently throughout the season beginning in the first week of September by Unsworth, Eugene, Seymour, Horn, Dempster, Hogan, Hughes, and Grier.¹⁸⁴ A Bryants’ advertisement in the *Herald* indicates that the “beautiful scenery, costumes, and appointments” were built and/or constructed by a number of New York craftsmen. Mr. Williams painted the scenery, Mr. F. Flannery made the costumes, and Mr. F. Boniface constructed the machinery and properties. The piece had new scenes, songs, and dances,¹⁸⁵ including the opening scene, “Venice by Moonlight,” and the second scene, “Palace Interior,” and “superb costumes, appointments, and original music for the grand

¹⁸⁰ Therese Tietjens [or Tietiens] (1831-77) was a German soprano and a famous Lucrezia.

¹⁸¹ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 14 September 1868, 4.

¹⁸² “Amusements,” *New York Times*, 27 July 1868.

¹⁸³ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 13 September 1868.

¹⁸⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 27 (10 October 1868): 215. The piece was written and performed in London by Unsworth and Eugene. “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 15 September 1868, 7.

¹⁸⁵ “Amusements,” *New York Times*, 7 September 1868.

orchestra under the direction of J. H. Ross.”¹⁸⁶ “The burlesque abounds in telling hits, happy and inspiring songs, side-splitting situations, and elegant costumes and appointments.”¹⁸⁷

Like Bryants’ treatment of *La Sonnambula*, the cast names and plot of the original serve as a vehicle for comedic and local elements. The cast includes the four main characters of the original—Lucrezia Borgia, soprano; Gennaro, tenor; Orsini, mezzo-soprano; and Duke Alphonse, bass-baritone—and six altered character names—Gubretta, Rustigallo, Princess Rumbo, Johnnero Albani, Jackeno Romero, and Kito Bamsani:

“Lucrezia Borgia, a lady fond of administering poison to her particular friends,
played by Eugene

Gennaro, Captain in the Black Guards, plenty of courage but no tin, played by
Monroe Dempster

Orsini, a cavalier, lord of everybody’s wine, spinner of long yarns, friend of
Gennaro, played by Unsworth

Duke Alphonse, a green-eyed lobster, this wickedest man in Venice, played by
Nelse Seymour

Gubretta, a secret agent of Lucrezia, played by W. P. Grier

Rustigallo, bodyguard of the Duke, played by Hughes

Princess Rumbo, on four drinks a day, played by Horn

Johnnero Albani, Venetian, played by Charles Henry

Jackeno Romero, black and tan, played by J. Hogan

Kito Bamsani, senator, played by Dan Bryant

¹⁸⁶ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 20 September 1868.

¹⁸⁷ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 15 September 1868, 7.

The “synopsis of scenes, situations, events” of Bryants’ “Lucrezia” follows the general form and plot of the original opera, although greatly shortened. Donizetti’s *Lucrezia* consists of a prologue and two acts, and the burlesque is likewise in three scenes:

Scene one—grand view of Venice by Moonlight, The Plaza San Marco, The Grand Canal of Venice, The Palace of the Borgias, Grand Tableau

Scene two—Interior of the Palace, The Discovery, The Arrest, The Poison, The Window, The Escape

Scene three—The Grand Banqueting Hall in the Palace of the Borgias; The Betrayed; More Poison; Tis the Duchess, Lucrezia Borgia; Grand Revival and Glorious Denouement

Although the 6 June *Clipper* reported that Bryants’ had begun to rehearse a burlesque on a comic opera by Offenbach, the troupe did not perform any burlesques on Offenbach’s operas during this season until 12 December, when they resurrected their burlesque on *Geneviève de Brabant*, “The Gens D’ Arms a la Genevieve de Bryant”¹⁸⁸ from the previous season. This and their burlesque on *Orphée*, “Red Hot,” which they performed at the end of May, were the only Offenbach burlesques that they performed during this season.

Kelly and Leon mostly burlesqued the operas of Offenbach and advertised Leon as “the founder of a new school of minstrelsy” with his elegant and extravagant style of blackface opera burlesques.¹⁸⁹ An ad run by the troupe read, “This is the only house that

¹⁸⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 36 (12 December 1868): 287.

¹⁸⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 22 (5 September 1868): 175.

plays the burlesque of Jimmy Offenbach's *Barber Bleue*[sic]."¹⁹⁰ Theirs was the only troupe that performed burlesque afterpieces of Offenbach's operas exclusively during this season, including "Gin-Ne-Veve de Graw," which ran during the same period as Bryants' "Genevieve" burlesque;¹⁹¹ Leon's¹⁹² "Barbe Bleue,"¹⁹³ which they called by various names, including "Barber-Blu" and "Blue Beer'd";¹⁹⁴ "Orphee aux Enfers"; "The Grand Dutch S";¹⁹⁵ and "La Bell-L. N." According to the *Clipper*, "La Bell" was one of the best burlesques ever given by Kelly and Leon's and was definitely the better of the two Offenbach burlesques being performed in June 1868.¹⁹⁶

The *Herald* reported that Kelly and Leon's opening night attendance was good despite the bad weather, and that their program opened with the usual preliminary choruses, songs, and jokes, which were old but well-given; the show ended with "Barber Blu," which was the highlight of the night. The critic praised "Barber" as a burlesque "replete with humor and piquancy, and decidedly a clever production." "The favorite airs of the original are carefully preserved, [and] the libretto is extremely funny. As Bullyette [Boulotte] Leon was inimitable, and his representation of that damsel last night will add another to the many triumphs he has already achieved." Kelly played a very humorous

¹⁹⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 37 (19 December 1868): 295.

¹⁹¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 39 (2 January 1869): 310.

¹⁹² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 22 (5 September 1868): 174. Leon wrote "Barber Blu."

¹⁹³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 19 (15 August 1868): 150. Kelly and Leon's performed this afterpiece at their opening show on 24 August 1868, and it continued through the week of 12 October 1868. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 28 (17 October 1868): 222.

¹⁹⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 20 (22 August 1868): 159. "Amusements," *New York Times*, 7 September 1868. The *Times* wrote that "Barbe Blu" was good and would continue.

¹⁹⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 15, no. 44 (8 February 1868): 350. Kelly and Leon's "The Grand Dutch S" was performed beginning in February 1868. Its last week of performance was the first week of June 1868. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 9 (6 June 1868): 70. Kelly and Leon's began a revival of "The Grand Dutch S" on 26 October 1868. "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 29 (24 October 1868): 231. It continued during the first week of November. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 30 (31 October 1868): 238.

¹⁹⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 16, no. 11 (20 June 1868): 86.

Barber Blu, and the other actors and the orchestra were praiseworthy. Like their other productions, “Grand Dutch S” and “La Bell L. N.,” “Barber Blu” was expected to do well.¹⁹⁷

We can learn much from reviews of burlesques such as “Barber Blu,” about which the *Herald* reported during the middle of September 1868. The critic wrote that “Leon’s interpretation of French opera bouffe was well-received last night, and is having a successful run, although it shows signs of less preparation than Leon’s other burlesques.” Leon was very funny as Ballyette—a travesty of Irma’s “Boulotte,”¹⁹⁸ and Edwin Kelly was an “unimpeachable” Blue Beard in the piece’s five quick scenes. Leon’s costly and trend-setting wardrobe, which was called magnificent, rivaled that of any New York socialite. “The cozy hall and grouping of the actors in the culminating scene (polka) remind one of the *La Grande Duchesse* in the Theatre Francais.” Minstrels copied the sets and staging of the legitimate productions that inspired their burlesques. The piece went off very well for a first night, and the “rapid succession of incident and music” engrossed the audience. The final scene showed “the resurrected wives charging upon their would-be murderous spouse in a perfect Ku Klux Klan.”¹⁹⁹ We know that the piece was performed in English because the critic wrote that “the choruses need more rehearsal and a few ambiguities of the text, which you do not understand when you hear it in French, need to be fixed.”²⁰⁰

Troupes often performed different burlesque versions of the same legitimate pieces. Kelly and Leon’s burlesque “Orphee aux Enfers” took the place of “Barbe Blu”

¹⁹⁷ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 1 September 1868.

¹⁹⁸ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 8 December 1868. Mlle. Irma was a famous contemporary soprano who performed Offenbach’s operas in New York at Pike’s Opera House during this season.

¹⁹⁹ This is a reference to the post-war activities of the Klan and possibly to minstrel acts on this subject.

²⁰⁰ “Amusements,” *New York Herald*, 17 September 1868, 7.

on 19 October,²⁰¹ but they replaced this version of “Orphee” with a new local version of two weeks later on 2 November. This production, which the *Times* called sumptuous, used the music of Offenbach, with Leon in the role of Eurydice.²⁰² The *Times* also reported that the music was better and was more familiar to the audience than the text, and that Leon’s adaptation was as good as “The Grand Dutch S.”²⁰³ The *Clipper* reported that “Orphee” had magnificent costumes, scenic effects, and a finale transformation scene by Leon,²⁰⁴ the grandeur of which had never before been seen on the minstrel stage.²⁰⁵ “Orphee” ran through the Thanksgiving matinee on 26 November.²⁰⁶

The travesty of French opera bouffe in which Leon hit so happy a vein of amusement is still the feature at this establishment. The piece most recently brought out and now in the heyday of success is a burlesque of Offenbach’s *Orphee aux Enfers*, given with the same title. The general plot of the original is preserved, as well as its excellent little morceaux of music, while the mounting of the burlesque in the way of dress and costumes is certainly not inferior to the fashion at more pretentious places of entertainment. Leon is of course Eurydice, and a very saucy one. The concourse in Hades, whither Jupiter makes a visit, gives an opportunity for a number of excellent hits in the conundrums, which the celestials propound to each other. The transformation scene showing the gradual return skyward of Jupiter and the other deities is one of real beauty and has not been surpassed in more famous spectacular performances. For fifteen minutes to

²⁰¹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 28 (17 October 1868): 223.

²⁰² “Amusements,” *New York Times*, 2 November 1868.

²⁰³ “Amusements,” *New York Times*, 3 November 1868.

²⁰⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 33 (21 November 1868): 262.

²⁰⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 32 (14 November 1868): 254.

²⁰⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 16, no. 34 (28 November 1868): 271.

slow music, there is a steady involution and evolution of ferns, flowers, clouds, and rainbows, until the gods reach Olympus. The piece called ‘Chip of the Old Block,’ which followed the olio, was mirth-provoking; but portions of it are too broad to be in good taste.²⁰⁷

A Kelly and Leon’s program from 30 January (Figure 5.1), which they performed during their tour of the states before their trip to Europe, describes in detail the plot of their burlesque “La Bell L. N.” The afterpiece (part third) began with the overture performed by the troupe’s band. The program then reads “to conclude with Offenbach’s beautiful comic opera of Leon’s ‘La Bell L. N.’” The costumes were imported from Paris, and the chorus included “a number of sopranos selected from the leading choirs of New York City,” which may indicate that women performed in the chorus.

The characters of the burlesque, which the troupe called the “modern version of heathen dramatis personæ” are each described in a comedic paragraph. The character descriptions combine parts of the opera’s plot with local New York and American elements. Italics and capitalizations appear as printed. “Helen (soprano)—fond of Paris, which is not strange, seeing that L. N. is Supreme Ruler of that moral European city. According to mythological tradition, Helen was the daughter of Tyndarus and Leda, but not as *tender* as the Music of the *Leader*, or she would not have left her husband *Moneyless* and gone on her *Paris-ian* excursion to Troy . . . The Only Leon. Arrest-us (Orestes, mezzo-soprano)—son of All-Gammon and Clytemnesta, whose desire to be an orphan was so great, that when old Gammon died he killed his mama, and then piddled statues of

²⁰⁷ “Amusements: Kelly and Leon’s Minstrels,” *New York Herald*, 5 November 1868, 7.

Diana to the benighted denizens of Fulton Market...R. M. Carroll. Paris (tenor)—son of

Figure 5.1, Kelly and Leon's Minstrels' Program, 30 January 1869

KELLY & LEON'S



MINSTRELS

ACADEMY OF MUSIC
Saturday, Jan. 30, 1869.

Second Night in Providence.

Entire Change of Bill!
THE GREAT EVENT
1869 OF 1869.

KELLY & LEON'S
 Far-famed and World-Renowned Minstrels from
NEW YORK,
 Have started on their Grand Farewell Trip through the States, prior to their
Departure for Europe.

PROGRAMME FOR THIS EVENING. PART FIRST.

Overture.....	Kelly and Leon's Minstrels
Opening Chorus, "All Lovey Vines".....	Kelly and Leon's Minstrels
Blue's a Gal of Mine.....	J. M. Carroll
Little Maggie May.....	J. H. Stridger
Good Oldtime to Wear.....	H. Leslie
Twinkling Stars Quickstep.....	Kelly and Leon's Minstrels

PART SECOND.

SAUCY SAL, ... **THE ONLY LEON**
A PARTY BY THE NAME OF JOHNSON!
 S. S. TURLEY, Meyer, Dr. Bingham and Company.

THE GENDARMES
 From Odeonally Odorous Open of "GENEVIEVE DE BRABANT," and played with Immense Success at Kelly & Leon's, 179 Broadway, N. Y.
 The 6th Avenue Dancing Master..... J. H. Stridger and Wm. Brackway

CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK!
 (Written by LEON)
 Mrs. Cady Stanton, with "Ah son Ginge," from LA SOMNAMBULA..... **THE ONLY LEON**
 Mr. Cady Stanton..... Wm. H. Brackway
 Old Mr. Free Dog..... H. Leslie
 Short of Oakley

DOUBLE SAILOR'S HORNSPIPE!
 George and Willie Guy.

Figure 5.1 Continued

[illegible]

old Priam, not morally *Prime* but mentally, vocally, and physically *very Prime*, originator of boat travel to Troy and author of the Trojan row yet not a *rowdy*...S. S. Purdy.” The other character names are Cal-chase (Calchas, baritone), All-Gammon (Agamemnon, baritone), Money-less (Menelas, tenor buffo), A-killer (Achilles, tenor or baritone), A-jacks no. 1 (Ajax no. 1, tenor or baritone), A-jacks no. 2 (Ajax no. 2, tenor or baritone), Filopena, Looney, To-Bac-chus (Bacchis, soprano), Herald, Men-at-Arms, Grecians, Trojans, ladies of the court, etc...by a large corps of auxiliaries.

The six scenes of “La Bell” loosely follow the settings in Offenbach’s opera. The first scene, “Temple of Venus, front door, Jupiter and company, Clairvoyants” corresponds to Act I, which opens in a public square in Sparta, before the temple of Jupiter. The first scene combines many interesting elements from New York politics with Offenbach’s plot. Scene one appears as follows: “Grand chorus of Ethiopian Greeks. Cal-Chase after a *party*—on a Train—an ancient Phoenician Real State Broker—Appearance of L. N. and friends—Helen’s vocal vision, The Invocation—The Oracle—Ancient JUDDicial divorces—Arrest us—A new arrival—Paris—Registers from Troy, N. Y.—The first Fenian—Venus—*Veni Vidi—Vici—Vice*—I see is the Rule—Paris just from school—Is enamoured—*Con amore*—Helen in a quandary—The crab apple!—To the victor—The strong men of Greece—Profound Thinkers—The Royal Congress—A full—Three Kings and a pair of *ajacks*. Le chœur des Rois—All-gammon Speaker of the House – A-killer President of the Senate—Money-less on a Smelling Committee—The great question—Paris’ solution—LE JUGEMENT DE PARIS—not bottled up—That voice—Those voices—Mysterious command—The little bell tinkles—away to Crete, away, away—Departure of Money-less amid the cheering goodbyes of his friends—GRAND AND HIGHLY EMOTIONAL TABLEAUX.”

Very little of the music in this afterpiece is given in this program. The first scene opens with the chorus, and the “Le chœur des Rois” listed past the middle of the scene may be the opera’s Act one song by Offenbach entitled, “Voici les rois de la Grèce!” “Le Jugement de Paris” listed two lines down from “Le chœur” in scene one may be a song performed by Paris (Purdy).

The second scene, “Mulberry Street Sparta,” corresponds to the middle of Act I, when Paris arrives at Menelaus’ palace to claim his prize. The third scene, “Helen’s Boudoir in Palace,” corresponds to the beginning of Act two of the opera, which is set in Helen’s apartments. Helen (Leon) sings Offenbach’s song “Un mari sage est en voyage” at the end of the third scene.

Scene four may correspond to the end of Act two, although the connection is not clear based on its description in the program. Scenes five and six correspond to the opening of Act three, the beach at Nauplia (“Garden of the Hellespont, 69th Street”), and to the end of Act three on the boat to Troy (“Galley of Venus, Pier 41”), respectively. Each scene ends with a tableau vivant, the performers of which sometimes sing.

Conclusion

The style of minstrelsy performed during this season combined the old—song and dance, comedy, and an Ethiopian opera of T. D. Rice, one of the genre’s most important early figures—and the new, blackface parodies of Offenbach’s operas. This is the last season in which New York’s minstrel troupes performed similar shows in the extravagant style first introduced by Kelly and Leon’s troupe. During the next season minstrels develop more individual styles that combine blackface performance and variety in new and interesting ways.

Chapter Six: 1869-1870

The approach to minstrel show performance varied more from troupe to troupe during this season than in any other examined in this study. The three resident and/or long-standing troupes that performed in New York—Bryants', the San Franciscans, and Kelly and Leon's—each presented shows in clearly-defined and individual styles. Both Bryants' and the San Francisco Minstrels returned to a more traditional mode of performance and repertoire than was seen in at least the two previous seasons, although the San Franciscans did experiment with pantomime afterpieces. Kelly and Leon's continued to perform burlesque opera afterpieces and legitimate operetta in their signature extravagant style, although they did incorporate traditional blackface elements like the walkaround. Variety acts that were seen during the previous season, such as Harry Gurr, the Man Fish, were rarely seen at minstrel halls, but elements of variety appeared in minstrelsy via the pantomime and operetta that troupes performed. Variety companies with minstrelsy—Pastor's, the Theatre Comique, the Waverly, and Risley's Combination Troupe—combined songs and musical acts, dance, gymnastics, stunts, and blackface acts in their traditional format.

Troupe activity

Very little blackface minstrelsy was performed in New York during the summer season. Hooley's Minstrels from Brooklyn had been performing at Wood's with the Gregory Combination in June, and possibly in May, and were the last of the minstrel troupes in New York to close (on 26 June).¹ The Georgia Minstrels, who moved from Dodworth Hall to the Empire Rink on Third Avenue by 19 June and remained there until

¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 12 (26 June 1869): 94.

they departed for a tour of Europe (mostly in Germany) on 25 January,² continued through the summer. It is unknown if they performed without cessation during this period. George Danforth, bone soloist, Bob Height, comedian, Alf. Smith, essence dancer, and C. B. Hicks were the company's headliners.³

By all reports, minstrelsy once more was flourishing at the beginning of the fall. Except for Tony Pastor's troupe, which began its season at 201 Bowery on 7 August,⁴ the minstrel and variety companies in New York opened rather late. After closing on 12 June, the San Francisco Minstrels took ten weeks off and opened with many new performers⁵ on 30 August at their old hall at 585 Broadway,⁶ and Bryants' reopened in Tammany Hall two weeks later to crowded houses all week.⁷ Both troupes experienced good business during the fall,⁸ and by December attendance was so heavy at Bryants' that the *Clipper* recommended that patrons purchase tickets in advance⁹ due to ticket speculation.¹⁰

The Theatre Comique¹¹ and Charley White's Waverly Theatre¹²—both variety halls with minstrelsy—opened during the middle of October. Robert Butler took over management of the Theatre Comique at the beginning of January,¹³ and by mid-February

² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 43 (29 January 1870): 342.

³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 11 (19 June 1869): 87.

⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 18 (7 August 1869): 142.

⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 11 (19 June 1869): 87.

⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 21 (28 August 1869): 166.

⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 24 (18 September 1869): 190. Bryants' reopened on 13 September 1869.

⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 25 (25 September 1869): 198. "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 26 (2 October 1869): 206.

⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 36 (11 December 1869): 286.

¹⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 37 (18 December 1869): 294.

¹¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 28 (16 October 1869): 222. The Theatre Comique opened on 16 October 1869.

¹² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 30 (30 October 1869): 238. The Waverly opened on 18 October 1869.

¹³ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 40 (8 January 1870): 318.

advertisements called the company “The Comique Minstrels in new songs, glees, and jokes, also with ballet and pantomime.”¹⁴ Allen, Pettingill, Delehanty, and Hengler’s Minstrels (hereafter, Hengler’s) joined the company at the Waverly on 29 November after returning to New York from a western tour.¹⁵ The troupe moved to Tammany Hall in a different part of the building than Bryants’ Minstrels on 8 January and remained there for four weeks.¹⁶ They closed at the end of the month and went to Boston.¹⁷

Kelly and Leon’s took over the Waverly Theatre (720 Broadway), their old hall, on 7 February. They had given up the theater when they left New York thirteen months earlier¹⁸ and hoped to re-establish themselves in New York.¹⁹

Business took a downward turn in March.²⁰ Lent also caused a drop off in attendance at theaters,²¹ although it did pick up for the Easter Monday matinees.²² Theatre earnings for March were about the same as in previous years. Halls with legitimate drama, such as Wallack’s and Booth’s, earned the highest revenues—\$49,990 and \$37,226, respectively—while minstrel halls earned approximately one fifth of those amounts. Minstrel companies charged about the same as, if slightly less than, legitimate companies for admission, but their small halls limited revenues.²³ The difference between minstrel and legitimate halls’ earnings may be attributed mostly to this difference in seating (and standing) capacity and not to lack of popularity (Table 6.1).

¹⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 46 (19 February 1870): 368.

¹⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 35 (4 December 1869): 278.

¹⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 40 (8 January 1870): 318.

¹⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 44 (5 February 1870): 350. They closed on 29 January 1870.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 50 (19 March 1870): 398.

²⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 49 (12 March 1870): 390.

²¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 2 (16 April 1870): 14.

²² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 3 (23 April 1870): 19.

²³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 4 (30 April 1870): 30.

Table 6.1

Theater Name	\$ Earnings for March 1870	Ticket Prices	Number of Seats in hall
Wallack's	49990	.50-1.50 and 12 for private boxes	1583 seats
Booth's	37226	.50-1.50	*
Fifth Avenue	21073	.50-1.00	1000+ seats
Niblo's Garden	18818	.50-1.50	3000
French Theatre	*	.50 - 2 and 10-15 for private boxes	*
Theatre Comique	14670	.35-1.00 and 5 and 6 for private boxes	1400
Kelly and Leon's Minstrels	9480	.50-1.00	*
Bryants' Minstrels	8303	.50 and .75	900 seats
San Francisco Minstrels	6500	.50-1.00 and 6 for private boxes	*
Tony Pastor's Opera House	7718	.25-.75 and 5 and 8 for private boxes	*
Bowery Theatre	7545	.20-.75	1385 seats

Theatrical Record: City Summary, *New York Clipper* 18, no. 4 (30 April 1870): 30.

Risley's Combination Troupe, led by the minstrel Cool White, opened at Tammany Hall on 11 April,²⁴ probably in the same part of the building that had been occupied by Hengler's Minstrels. Risley's show was comprised mostly of the "nigger element," along with gymnasts, Irish eccentricities, ballet, and other variety acts.²⁵

The San Francisco Minstrels closed two weeks earlier than they had planned in mid-May, due to losing several of their members to summer engagements with other companies. David Wambold, their star tenor, became very ill during the spring and

²⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 2 (16 April 1870): 14.

²⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 4 (30 April 1870): 30.

travelled south to recover. He returned to the troupe on 16 May after an absence of three months,²⁶ but it closed about six weeks later and left for a tour of the West.²⁷

An Elks benefit, the first of those events this season, was seen at the Academy of Music during the afternoon of 28 September, and minstrels from both Manhattan and Brooklyn performed;²⁸ it was called a “monster minstrel and musical jubilee.” Members of the San Francisco, Hooley’s, and Bryants’ Minstrels and performers from Tony Pastor’s, the Waverly Theatre’s (Charley White’s), the Olympic Theatre’s in Brooklyn, and the Theatre Comique’s companies appeared.²⁹ Most of the benefits for individual performers were given at the end of the season, but not all were successful. S. S. Purdy took a benefit at Kelly and Leon’s on the evening of 8 May,³⁰ which was well attended despite the rain,³¹ and Bryants’ afternoon benefit for Tommy Burns at their hall on 31 March went well and raised \$2000.³² However, Bryants’ afternoon (2 p. m.) benefit for Little Mac on 5 May was a failure. Only 350 people attended, and many of the scheduled performers did not appear.³³ Like Bryants’ benefit for the troupe’s vocal quartet—Russell, Grier, Rockefeller, and Brandisi—most benefit tickets cost about \$1,³⁴ which was at the high end of minstrel admission prices. Dan Bryant’s benefit, in which he appeared as Handy Andy,³⁵ was performed during the evening on 2 June at the Academy

²⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 7 (21 May 1870): 54.

²⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 4 (30 April 1870): 30.

²⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 24 (18 September 1869): 190.

²⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 25 (25 September 1869): 198.

³⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 5 (7 May 1870): 38.

³¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 6 (14 May 1870): 46.

³² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 1 (9 April 1870): 6.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.* This performance took place on 19 May 1870 at 2 p. m.

³⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 7 (21 May 1870): 54.

of Music³⁶ and was the troupe's closing performance of its most successful season.³⁷ Bryants' then left New York for a three-month tour of the country.³⁸

Troupe size was about the same as in the previous season and ranged from thirty to sixty performers. Companies used terms such as the Theatre Comique's "Mammoth Troupe"³⁹ to describe the size of their companies. Hengler's triple company advertised twenty-two stars and had at least that many extras.⁴⁰

Minstrel audiences were a diverse mix of economic and social levels, sexes, and ages. Matinees were especially popular with, and were designed to attract, women, who were free to attend afternoon performances without escorts. Eugene of Bryants' Minstrels even sang the wench song "Coming from the Matinee" as a reflection of this trend.⁴¹

A respectable image was very important to and still sought after by New York's minstrel troupes. The San Franciscans advertised themselves as "the most legitimate entertainment of Negro minstrelsy in the world,"⁴² and Bryants' advertised their singers as "the finest vocalists in the profession."⁴³ The Theatre Comique ran an advertisement stating "that the rich and poor can enjoy [its show],"⁴⁴ and in April the troupe ran an ad calling itself "The Monster Troupe of the World, with no vulgarity, no smoking, and no drinking."⁴⁵ This advertisement may have been a response to the previous week's reports concerning the disreputable and all-male audience that attended Risley's Combination

³⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 8 (28 May 1870): 62.

³⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 7 (21 May 1870): 54.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 38 (25 December 1869): 303.

⁴⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 41 (15 January 1870): 327.

⁴¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 37 (18 December 1869): 294.

⁴² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 23 (11 September 1869): 183.

⁴³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 26 (2 October 1869): 207.

⁴⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 33 (20 November 1869): 263.

⁴⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 2 (16 April 1870): 11.

Troupe in Tammany Hall. The *Clipper* reported that Risley's was treated poorly by the audience, "an assemblage of men, who were drinking and smoking."⁴⁶ Apparently, Tammany Hall, possibly because of its political ties, operated above the anti-liquor law, which forbade the sale of alcohol in theaters. On 30 April the *Clipper* reported that although smoking was no longer allowed in Tammany Hall, drinking continued.⁴⁷

Show Format

All of the minstrel troupes in New York performed traditional first parts with instrumental music, songs, comedy, and olios comprised of dance acts, skits, songs, and occasional instrumental solos. All of the troupes also performed finale walkarounds, which represented a change in programming, since walkarounds had been performed infrequently after the 1865-66 season. The main differences between troupes occurred in their choice of afterpieces.

Music in general and vocal music, in particular, was a feature of the San Francisco Minstrels' shows.⁴⁸ C. Lavalley directed the orchestra,⁴⁹ which was comprised of a cello, cornet, clarinet, first and second violins,⁵⁰ banjo, and percussion. The troupe primarily performed original afterpiece burlesques in the traditional style of blackface performance, such as "Theatrical Agency," although they also produced two highly popular pantomimes during the season.⁵¹

⁴⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 2 (16 April 1870): 14.

⁴⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 4 (30 April 1870): 30.

⁴⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 36 (11 December 1869): 286.

⁴⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 2 (16 April 1870): 11.

⁵⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 23 (11 September 1869): 182.

⁵¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 32 (13 November 1869): 254.

Bryants' Minstrels' shows were quite similar to the San Franciscans in their emphasis on vocal music, lack of variety acts, and overall emphasis on traditional minstrel performance. But Bryants' continued mostly to produce burlesque afterpieces of Italian opera and some of Offenbach's operas and legitimate theater in the elegant style that had become popular in New York during the last few seasons. The troupe performed traditional first parts, which were comprised of music and the comedy of the two endmen—Dan Bryant and Unsworth.⁵² The first part had around fifteen performers and included instrumental music, ballads sung by Dempster, Dwyer, Brandisi, and Grier, and such comic songs as "Little Brown Jug" and "Swate Castle Garden" sung by Bryant and Unsworth, respectively. J. H. Ross led the orchestra,⁵³ which was comprised of clarinet, flute, three violins, cornet, double bass,⁵⁴ banjo, and percussion. The shows concluded with burlesques of contemporary theater, such as "New York by Gaslight."⁵⁵

Kelly and Leon's shows were similar in some respects to those of Bryants' and the San Francisco Minstrels, but differed greatly in other ways. Kelly and Leon's performed regular first parts and olios, which featured vocal music, short skits, instrumental music, and the jokes of the endmen, which the *Clipper* complained were funny but too old and performed in a too "boisterous" or old-fashioned style. Their olios featured Leon's prima donna acts and often opened with him in drag singing songs such as "When Sammy Comes House" [sic] and performing stump speeches on such subjects as "Women's Rights," and what they termed "fancy dances."⁵⁶

⁵² "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 28 (16 October 1869): 222.

⁵³ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 40 (8 January 1870): 319.

⁵⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 24 (18 September 1869): 190.

⁵⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 38 (25 December 1869): 302.

⁵⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 46 (19 February 1870): 366.

Kelly and Leon's afterpieces set them apart from Bryants' and the San Francisco Minstrels. Their repertoire of opera burlesque, especially Offenbach, and legitimate operetta was the most forward-looking of the New York troupes. However, they did incorporate the walkaround, which, for example, ended their performance of Herve's operetta, "Le Petit Faust."⁵⁷

Hengler's Minstrels also performed traditional three-part programs. The first part of their show had fourteen performers, and the band was comprised of two cornets, flute, clarinet, two violins, double bass, banjo, and percussion.⁵⁸ They performed such afterpieces as the Ethiopian Extravaganza "Raising the Wind"⁵⁹ and Shakespeare burlesques.

Pastor's shows followed the model that he had established in 1865: well-balanced shows comprised of vocal music, dance, stunts, skits, musical acts, blackface minstrelsy, banjo solos, Irish songs and skits, and local musical burlesques of legitimate theater.⁶⁰

When the Theatre Comique opened in October the company was performing variety shows, of which a larger portion was devoted to blackface minstrelsy than at Pastor's. According to the *Clipper* Charles Howard was a "real representative of an old 'nig,'" and in his act called "Old Uncle Snow," he represented in both makeup and actions a "real old grey headed moke with his bucket of whitewash ready for a job." Howard also gave imitations of African American "shouters" at a camp meeting, and his act closed with the song and dance "Shoo Fly" performed as a walkaround by the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 35 (4 December 1869): 278.

⁵⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 40 (8 January 1870): 319.

⁶⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 21 (28 August 1869): 166.

troupe.⁶¹ At the end of January the show at the Theatre Comique changed. In addition to the blackface acts that appeared throughout the programs, the company performed a regular minstrel first part with Hart on bones, Ryman on tambourine, and Coes as the interlocutor.⁶² The rest of the entertainment was variety with Jennie Kimball in songs and Charles A. Gardner in “Dutch” song and dance. The *Clipper* described their new show as “minstrelsy, burlesque, and ballet.”⁶³

The show at the Waverly Theatre also combined variety with minstrelsy. Charley White performed his “original and witty sayings,” as well as two double acts entitled, “Black Blunders” (a rehash of “Handy Andy”) and “A Big Mistake,” a sketch by Andy Leavitt. Also in the show were Frank Gibbons in gymnastics, Ada Alexander and Jennie Benson in songs, Mlle. Ricci, danseuse, J. S. Forbes’ drum solo, Sgt. Burke’s Zouave Drill, Harry Bloodgood in songs, dances, and a stump speech,⁶⁴ and Irish farce.⁶⁵

A few differences in programming existed between variety and minstrel companies during this season. Animal acts such as a troupe of performing dogs,⁶⁶ magic acts,⁶⁷ and female performers appeared only at variety halls. It is unknown if any of the women in variety troupes blacked-up in the Ethiopian corps during this season. Also, variety companies, and especially Pastor’s, were more fluid in terms of personnel than the minstrel troupes.

⁶¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 28 (16 October 1869): 222.

⁶² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 45 (12 February 1870): 358.

⁶³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 43 (29 January 1870): 342.

⁶⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 30 (30 October 1869): 238.

⁶⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 32 (13 November 1869): 254.

⁶⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 49 (12 March 1870): 390.

⁶⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 7 (21 May 1870): 54.

Types of acts

Traditional minstrel first-part and olio acts were performed by all of the minstrel and variety troupes in New York. However, changes are seen in the relative popularity of these acts and in the types of burlesque afterpieces that were performed during this season. In addition to ballads and comic songs, opera arias were performed, such as the San Francisco Minstrels' prima donna Frank Kent's performance of the drinking song from *Lucrezia Borgia*.⁶⁸ Vocal quartets and quintets also were heard, in addition to vocal sextets such as Bryants,' which was comprised of J. Brandisi, Rockefeller, Grier, Dwyer, Russell, and Dempster.⁶⁹

Gymnastics acts were most popular at variety halls but were occasionally seen at minstrel halls as well. Pastor's George Leopold, England's champion horizontal bar performer, first appeared with the troupe in January,⁷⁰ and Purdy and Meyring of Kelly and Leon's Minstrels performed an olio act called "The Aerialists" (Figure 6.1, Kelly and Leon's Minstrels' program, 19 July 1870, *The Brooklyn Daily Programme*, Museum of the City of New York).

Fewer instrumental solos besides those on banjo were heard than in the previous four seasons. In addition to Withers' Boehm flute solos,⁷¹ the African Dwarf Tommy, an experienced minstrel and veteran of many different troupes, performed violin solos with Kelly and Leon's.⁷² The troupe wrote the following description of his olio act in a program (Figure 6.2, Kelly and Leon's Minstrels' program, 22 July 1870, *The Brooklyn*

⁶⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 23 (11 September 1869): 182.

⁶⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 24 (18 September 1869): 190.

⁷⁰ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 41 (15 January 1870): 327.

⁷¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 44 (5 February 1870): 350.

⁷² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 6 (14 May 1870): 47.

Daily Programme): "This wonderful nondescript was captured by the British soldiers in Abyssinia. His height is thirty-eight inches; weight 192 pounds; circumference of chest

Figure 6.1,
Kelly and
Leon's
Minstrels'
Program,
19 July
1870

PARK THEATRE

**KELLY & LEON'S
MINSTRELS.**

EDWIN KELLY MANAGER

FOR ONE WEEK ONLY!
Commencing on Monday, July 18th.

**Entire Change of Performance
Every Other Night.**

Programme for Monday & Tuesday, 18 & 19.

PART FIRST.

Overture	Kelly & Leon's Minstrels
When the Roses Blow	Mr. Edwin Kelly
Zu Lauterbacher	Mr. Dave Wilson
Harry's Secret	Master Harry Cawthorne
They Call Me a Ragamuffin	Master Lewis Fink
The Budget	Mr. S. S. Purdy
Grand Finale	K. & L's Mammoth Company

PART SECOND.

FOLLIE DRAMATIQUE!.....THE ONLY LEON

The Aerialists.....Messrs. Purdy and Meyring

BONE SOLO.....MR. DAVE WILSON

GROQUET!

Tommy.....Master Willie Guy | Louisa.....Master George Guy

To conclude with the New Comic Opera,

LE PETIT FAUST

AVERTURE "Le Petit Faust" ORCHESTRA

Figure 6.1 Continued

To conclude with the New Comic Opera,

LE PETIT FAUST

OVERTURE—"Le Petit Faust," ORCHESTRA
CONDUCTOR, MONS. F. ZAULIG.

Doctor Faust, an old bachelor and venerable gentleman but dreadfully discontented with his situation, having an eye for the sweet and fair of this "fleeting show," and like the age somewhat hypocritical..... **Mr. Edwin Kelly**

Mephisto, an Agent of the "dark unknown" like many others, very kind and obliging so long as it suits his purpose, but a devil of a fellow when put out..... **Mr. George Gny**

Valentine, a Soldier, brave as a lion, and commander of the forces off to the war, in search of fame, fortune and a good appetite..... **Mr. S. S. Purdy**

Desire, a mischievous boy, a long time at school, hot tempered, but often gets a Cooling from his father, who is a Burgess..... **Mr. J. B. Carter**

Sibel, a bad boy, a wicked boy, a fighting boy, and a general disturber of the peace, but takes care of his clothes, which is a comfort to his parents..... **Mr. J. H. Surridge**

Altmeier, another of the same sort, and a tattler tale, and a cowardly, cowardly custard, eat your father's mustard..... **Mr. G. Granville**

Monitor, a muff, down with him..... **Mr. Dave Wilson**

MARGUERITE, Sister of Valentine, 16-18 years, but knows as much as one twice her age, or any other man, a young lady of pugillistic proclivities, an embryo woman's rightest, and a veritable "girl of the period," **LEON**

Agnes, a meek and gentle being, pure and lovely as the lily of the valley, with a "hankering" arter boys..... **F. Volo**

Lizette, an exact counterpart of Agnes, only more so..... **Mr. Sam Price**

Girls, Boys, Soldiers, Policemen, Countrymen & Brothers.

Synopsis of Music.

Chorus—"Put your Head In," Faust

Solo, Tenor—"It is too Bad, your Time to Waste," Faust

Chorus—"Valiant Soldiers," Valentine

Solo, Tenor—"When a Good Soldier," Marguerite

Solo, Soprano—"Flower of Purity," Marguerite

Chorus—"She is so Good," Mephisto

Solo, Baritone—"I am Mephisto," Mephisto

Chorus—"Youth and Love," Faust

Solo—"Love has O'ercome Me," Faust

Solo—"Vaterland, o Vaterland," Marguerite

Duet—"Liebe, Liebe Freundin," Faust and Marguerite

Chorus—"Come Go, Let's Leave," Marguerite

Chorus—"The Hours pass Lightly Away," Valentine

Solo—"Death by Sister Dear," Marguerite

Solo—"Now the Dance of Fate Begins," Marguerite

Chorus—"Come to the Ball," Faust

Chorus, Finale—"Dance, Dance, Dance," Faust, Marguerite, Valentine, Mephisto and Chorus.

Figure 6.2, Kelly and Leon's Minstrels' Program, 22 July 1870

BROOKLYN, JULY 22, 1870.

PARK THEATRE

KELLY & LEON'S MINSTRELS.

EDWIN KELLY MANAGER

LAST TWO NIGHTS.

Programme for Friday & Saturday Even'gs.

PART FIRST.

Overture.....	Kelly & Leon's Minstrels
My Spirit Star.....	Mr. Edwin Kelly
Zu Lauterbacher.....	Mr. Dave Wilson
Put Me in My Little Bed.....	Master Harry Cawthorne
They Call Me a Ragamuffin.....	Master Lewis Fink
Bu, be, bi, bo.....	Mr. S. S. Purdy
Grand Finale.....	K. & L's Mammoth Company

PART SECOND.

THE GIRL PAR EXCELLENCE! - - THE ONLY LEON

AFRICAN DWARF TOMMY!

Also,
A Choice S
of
BABY
LIN
AND
LADIE
UNDERG
MENT
In Great V
-AT-
M r s .
SHERMA
312 & 3
Fulton
near Pierro

S.
An aris
Inquiry as
shots from
that "elbow
known; v
claimed, "O
ow! I v
Brown's?"
A pair
responded
eggs. The
travagant
Mr. Ske
fendant sw
"No, sir,
used a word
ended with
swearing, h
me. Verdi
call the ne
as. the But

Figure 6.2 Continued

AFRICAN DWARF TOMMY!

N. B.—This Wonderful Nondescript was captured by the British Soldiers in Abyssinia. His height is 33 inches; weight 192 pounds; circumference of chest 48 inches. During his wonderful performance he will give a history of his capture, play a Violin Solo, sing a Song, and perform a Native Dance. He really has to be seen to form any idea of his versatility.

HAPPY DARKIES.....GEORGE & WILLIE GUY

LISCHEN & FRITZCHEN.

Fritzchen.....Mr. Edwin Kelly | Lischen.....The Only Leon

BONE SOLO.....MR. DAVE WILSON

This Evening will be acted an ORIGINAL BURLESQUE, in five acts, of
Contemporaneous Society, based on the reigning New York
Sensation, and entitled

FRONY FRONY?

Henry Sartorys.....Edwin Kelly
Brigard.....Dave Wilson
Comte de Valreas.....J. H. Surridge
Baron de Cambri.....S. S. Purdy
Gilberte.....LEON
Louise, her sister.....Sam Price
Baronne de Cambri.....J. E. Carter
Angelique.....Lawrence Graham
Georgie.....Master Clarence Burton

SYNOPSIS:

Act 1—The Home at Les Chamerettes.....LOVE
Act 2—Paris. Private Theatricals.....MARRIAGE
Act 3—Home in Paris.....SEPARATION
Act 4—Venice.....DESERTION
Act 5—Paris.....

The New and Original Music by Prof. F. W. Zaulig. The New Scenery by Henry Wallace. The New Furniture by Walnut Maple & Co. The Piano is from the Warerooms of Forte & Co. The Basel Picture from the Studio of Gietz. Floral Ornaments from I. L. Hogen, 41144 5th Avenue.

Doors open at 7:14; Performance to commence 8:30.

forty-eight inches. During his wonderful performance he will give a history of his capture, play a violin solo, sing a song, and perform a native dance. He really has to be seen to form any idea of his versatility.” Dave Wilson and Dave Reed performed olio bones solos at Kelly and Leon’s (Figure 6.2), and Bryants’ Minstrels, respectively.⁷³ A few of the best-known banjoists who performed during this season included Kelly and Leon’s James Clark in his imitation of the Trinity Church Chimes on the banjo,⁷⁴ the Theatre Comique’s banjoist and baritone, George Coes,⁷⁵ Pastor’s Lew Brimmer,⁷⁶ and the San Franciscans’ Billy West, who accompanied himself in the banjo song, “The Wig Maker.”⁷⁷

German or “Dutch” characterization acts remained regular fare at minstrel and variety halls. Pastor’s company performed such skits as “The Dutchman in Strange Lodgings,”⁷⁸ Oberist of the San Francisco Minstrels sang “The Tyrolean Song,”⁷⁹ and the *Clipper* praised Johnny Allen of Hengler’s for his “Dutch” business.⁸⁰

Traditional minstrel dances such as Peel and Barry’s (of Bryants’ Minstrels) burlesque dance and J. H. O’ Neil’s (of Kelly and Leon’s) essence dance⁸¹ were performed along with newer stunt dances. Norman and Lavalley⁸² of the San Francisco Minstrels originated the performance of clog and other styles on raised marble slabs and were copied by dancers in almost every troupe, including Carroll of Bryants’⁸³ and Sands

⁷³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 37 (18 December 1869): 294.

⁷⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 48 (5 March 1870): 382.

⁷⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 40 (8 January 1870): 318.

⁷⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 24 (18 September 1869): 190.

⁷⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 47 (26 February 1870): 374.

⁷⁸ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 3 (23 April 1870): 19.

⁷⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 47 (26 February 1870): 374.

⁸⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 38 (25 December 1869): 302.

⁸¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 7 (21 May 1870): 54.

⁸² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 49 (12 March 1870): 390.

⁸³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 41 (15 January 1870): 326.

of Hengler's.⁸⁴ While performing at Pastor's, Delehanty and Hengler teamed up with Kerns and Mc Andrews in a challenge quartet dance, which is one of the few group challenge dances performed.⁸⁵

Minstrels, following the practice of Tony Pastor, also began to import the most popular acts, songs, and skits from London. Leggett and Allen, cloggers who performed at London's Alhambra Theatre, joined the San Franciscans in mid-September⁸⁶ and also performed a pedestal dance act.⁸⁷

The song and dance duos that were performing in New York during this season competed with and burlesqued each other more than was seen in any previous season. Delehanty and Hengler, two of Hengler's headliners, were a famous song and dance and clog duo whose performances of "Walking in Starlight," "Shoo Fly,"⁸⁸ and "Dew D' Andes"⁸⁹ met with great success. They moved to Pastor's in September, and the *Clipper* commented that their work was "interspersed with the real old style nigger business."⁹⁰ The Hibernian Boys joined Pastor's in October and performed a take-off on Delehanty and Hengler's "Walking in the Starlight" song and dance.⁹¹

Delehanty and Hengler were the first to perform one of the most popular pieces of the season, "Shoo Fly," which was subsequently performed by all of the other minstrel and variety companies in New York. The strophic, two-verse song with chorus (Example 6.1) is typical in terms of form,

⁸⁴ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 37 (18 December 1869): 294.

⁸⁵ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 21 (28 August 1869): 166.

⁸⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 25 (25 September 1869): 198.

⁸⁷ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 26 (2 October 1869): 206.

⁸⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 35 (4 December 1869): 278.

⁸⁹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 37 (18 December 1869): 294.

⁹⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 23 (11 September 1869): 182.

⁹¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 26 (2 October 1869): 206.

Example 6.1, "Shew! Fly, Don't Bother Me"

SHEW! FLY, DON'T BOTHER ME.

COMIC SONG AND DANCE.

OR
WALK ROUND.

Words by **BILLY HEVERN**, arr. by **ROLLIN HOWARD**

Allegretto con spirito.

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto con spirito'. The score consists of four systems of music. The first two systems are instrumental piano introductions. The third system begins with the vocal melody, which includes the lyrics: 'I think I hear the angels sing, I think I hear the angels sing, I sleep in the sun this nigger knows, I sleep in the sun this nigger knows, I'. The fourth system continues the vocal melody with the lyrics: 'I think I hear the an - gels sing, The angels now are on the wing, I sleep in the sun this nig - ger knows, I fly come sting him on the nose, I'. The piano accompaniment provides a rhythmic and harmonic foundation for the vocal line.

I think I hear the an - gels sing, I think I hear the angels sing, I sleep in the sun this nig - ger knows, I sleep in the sun this nigger knows, I
 I think I hear the an - gels sing, The angels now are on the wing, I sleep in the sun this nig - ger knows, I fly come sting him on the nose, I

Submitted according to Act of Congress, J. D. 1909, by William Smith A. Perry, to the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the District of Mass.
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Example 6.1 continued

feel, I feel, I feel, That's what my moth-er said, The
feel, I feel, I feel, That's what my moth-er said, When-

an-gels pour-ing 'las-ses down, Up-on this nig-ger's head.
er-er this nig-ger goes to sleep, He must cover up his head.

CHORUS

Shew! fly, don't both-er me, Shew! fly, don't both-er me,
Shew! fly, don't both-er me, I belong to comp-ny G. I

Example 6.1 continued

The image displays a musical score for the song "I Feel Like a Morning Star" by Duke Ellington. The score is arranged in four systems, each featuring a vocal melody line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "feel, I feel, I feel, I feel like a morning star, I feel, I feel, I feel, I feel like a morning star, I feel, I feel, I feel, I feel like a morning star." The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a more complex melody in the right hand, often using triplets and sixteenth notes. The vocal melody is a simple, catchy line that follows the lyrics. The score is presented in a clear, legible format with standard musical notation.

feel, I feel, I feel, I feel like a morning star, I feel, I feel, I

feel, I feel like a morning star, I feel, I feel, I feel, I

feel like a morning star, I feel, I feel, I feel, I feel like a morning star.

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harmony, and melodic scheme for song and dances of this period. The simple verse melody is comprised of two eight-bar phrases, the second of which repeats the melody of the first phrase in eighth notes instead of dotted eighths and sixteenths. The catchy melody of the chorus employs the same pitches as the solo but in more interesting rhythms, especially syncopated figures. The melodies of the ten-bar introduction and the eight-bar concluding dance sections are fiddle tunes based on the vocal melodies.

“Shoo Fly” was performed in both double act and group walkaround versions. The San Francisco Minstrels advertised “Shoo Fly” as a double song and dance by Queen and West⁹² and in a version that was probably a walkaround called “The Fat Men Shoo Fly Weight Don’t Bodder Me.”⁹³ Reynolds, Hughey Dougherty, Add Ryman, Johnny Hart, Charles Howard, and Morrissey Little of the Theatre Comique also performed it as a walkaround.⁹⁴ Seymour and Kerns, of Pastor’s, and Delehanty and Hengler, who had joined Bryants,’ were performing “Shoo Fly” in December.⁹⁵ After Delehanty and Hengler left the troupe, Dan Bryant and Dave Reed continued to perform it⁹⁶ dressed differently from the originals but with the original music and most of the original act.⁹⁷ On 7 May Dan Bryant and Dave Reed performed the piece for the 200th time,⁹⁸ which reflected its great popularity.

Burlesque imitations of legitimate performers, including those from previous seasons, continued to be popular. At Pastor’s, Frank Kerns performed his local wench burlesque song and dance on Lingard’s Captain Jinks character, “Mistress Jinks of

⁹² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 2 (16 April 1870): 11.

⁹³ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 40 (8 January 1870): 319.

⁹⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 38 (25 December 1869): 303.

⁹⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 36 (11 December 1869): 286.

⁹⁶ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 43 (29 January 1870): 342.

⁹⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 29 (23 October 1869): 230.

⁹⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 5 (7 May 1870): 38.

Madison Square.”⁹⁹ Dan Bryant appeared in “Grecian Statues in Black,” in which he parodied classical posing acts.¹⁰⁰ Eugene of Bryants’ Minstrels continued to perform comedic imitations of the soprano Mad. E. Parepa Rosa¹⁰¹ and the dancer Bonfanti,¹⁰² who previously had been the subject of burlesque by Francis Leon.

The San Franciscans returned to the old style of blackface performance in their burlesque afterpieces. The *Clipper* called their burlesque of downtown stock brokers, “The Female Brokers of Wall Street,” a country type of minstrel entertainment, which sums up the general style of their productions during this season.¹⁰³ In this piece Birch played Miss Good-Haul [Victoria Woodhull]; Backus played Miss Laugh-Lin [Tennessee Claflin]; Bernard played Jim Fisk; Mulligan played C. Wanderbilt [Cornelius Vanderbilt]; Oberist, Norman, and Templeton played Hatch and Co.; Billy Emmett played Mr. D. Brat; and Billy West played Mr. Sharp.¹⁰⁴ The character names in this musical burlesque are based on Woodhull, who ran for President of the United States in 1872, her sister, Claflin, and Vanderbilt, who financed the sisters’ venture into Wall Street stock trading.¹⁰⁵ Although this piece was based on contemporary figures in an urban milieu, its production style was in direct opposition to the extravagant and elegant style of productions seen during the previous few seasons.

Local elements, such as naming characters and places in minstrel burlesques after famous people and places and utilizing stories from local and national news, continued to influence minstrel afterpieces and skits at variety halls. Pastor’s company performed the

⁹⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 19 (14 August 1869): 150.

¹⁰⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 26 (2 October 1869): 206.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 26 (2 October 1869): 207.

¹⁰³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 51 (26 March 1870): 406.

¹⁰⁴ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 50 (19 March 1870): 399.

¹⁰⁵ Burrows and Wallace, 984. Adrienne Fried Block

local musical burlesques, “Richard III,”¹⁰⁶ “Life in the Empire City,”¹⁰⁷ and “The Orphan Boy of the Bowery.”¹⁰⁸ The three scenes in Bryants’ afterpiece, “The Black Statue,” were described as “poses of Kit Burns fastening his sandals before King Solomon,” “the fighting gladiator before the Excise Commissioners,” and “George Washington taking a drink at three o’ clock in the morning at Chris Conners.”¹⁰⁹

Many of the themes and acts from the previous season continued to be popular. Burlesques on Lydia Thompson’s blondes were performed by Kelly and Leon’s—“The Unbleached Blondes”¹¹⁰—and the San Francisco Minstrels—“‘The Fat Men’s Ball’ with Birch, Backus, Mulligan, and Bernard as the heavy weights and Billy Emmett, Ira Paine, Oberist, and Sturgiss as the blushing blondes,”¹¹¹ in which they danced a burlesque quadrille.¹¹²

Orientalism and burlesques of Japanese and Chinese acrobat troupes, although less popular than in the previous two years, appeared occasionally. For example, Kelly and Leon’s one-scene afterpiece, “Ching Chow Hi,” which was produced in their signature extravagant style, took place in China, and had rich and showy costumes. The *Clipper* described the characters as “native Chinese and disguised Americans” and praised the music, especially the boy sopranos in the chorus. It closed with a scene that had been popular in earlier burlesques of Asian acrobat troupes, in which members of the company “flew” to the top of the hall on moving ropes.¹¹³

¹⁰⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 44 (5 February 1870): 351.

¹⁰⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 24 (18 September 1869): 190.

¹⁰⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 7 (21 May 1870): 54.

¹⁰⁹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 29 (23 October 1869): 230. Bryants’ “The Black Statue” is different from Charley White’s afterpiece of the same name.

¹¹⁰ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 6 (14 May 1870): 47.

¹¹¹ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 40 (8 January 1870): 318.

¹¹² “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 41 (15 January 1870): 326.

¹¹³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 1 (9 April 1870): 6.

Revivals of old burlesques with varying degrees of personnel and content changes were also quite popular. Kelly and Leon's advertised that their revival of "'La Belle L.N.'" had local hits, beautiful dresses the same as the ones made for the original opera, original music, featured choruses, and new scenes."¹¹⁴ Bryants' also announced many revivals,¹¹⁵ including Dan Bryant and G. W. H. Griffin in their burlesque of Offenbach's *Geneviève de Brabant*, "The Gendarmes," which had met with great success during the previous season.¹¹⁶ Hart and Kelly of Kelly and Leon's performed the characters Jake and the Statue, respectively, in Charley White's "The Black Statue"¹¹⁷ (Figure 2.3, pp. 140-44), which was performed by Christy's Minstrels during the 1865-66 season. Johnny Queen of the San Francisco Minstrels also performed a "Black Statue" burlesque act called, "'The Street Sweeper,' in which he appear[ed] as 'the Black Statues.'"¹¹⁸

Kelly and Leon's revival of Hervé's operetta, "Le Petit Faust" (last performed during the 1867-68 season) in February, "with new music, scenery, and costumes as played in Paris for over 400 nights"¹¹⁹ (Figure 6.1), was described as a "burlesque with a prolific supply of puns."¹²⁰ Kelly and Leon again played the lead roles of Faust and Marguerite, respectively, but in this performance the burlesque ended with a grand walkaround by the "Clodhopper Troupe" (the company).¹²¹ Also new in this revival were the six boy sopranos in the chorus, "the new and startling tableau, 'The Home of Mephisto,'"¹²² and a broadsword fight between Purdy and Kelly.¹²³

¹¹⁴ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 6 (14 May 1870): 47.

¹¹⁵ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 4 (30 April 1870): 27.

¹¹⁶ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 36 (11 December 1869): 286.

¹¹⁷ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 18, no. 6 (14 May 1870): 47.

¹¹⁸ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 28 (16 October 1869): 222.

¹¹⁹ "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 46 (19 February 1870): 368.

¹²⁰ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 47 (26 February 1870): 374.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² "Amusements: Ad page," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 47 (26 February 1870): 371.

Beginning in December, the San Francisco Minstrels completely changed their afterpiece repertoire from traditional blackface style burlesques to a pantomime similar to such pieces as *Humpty Dumpty*, which was performed at the Olympic Theatre.¹²⁴ After a successful run of more than three months, “Hash Pantomime” or “Hash, or the Best Hash in the City” closed on 5 March¹²⁵ and was replaced by a new pantomime, “The Thirteen Temptations, or Fisk Raised One.”¹²⁶ Little is known about these works, except that they combined blackface, music, pantomime, and probably tableaux and scenic backdrops.

Shakespeare burlesques experienced a resurgence in popularity in both minstrelsy and variety. Pastor’s company performed “Hamlet in Police Court”¹²⁷ and John F. Poole’s burlesque, “Hamlet the Second,” which brought together Shakespeare, Irish songs, and blackface song and dance. Seymour played the Ghost, and Kerns played the First Grave Digger and sang “Erin Go Braugh.” And as Ophelia’s remains were put in the ground, Kerns danced the “Essence” assisted by mourners. The burlesque ended with “Shoo Fly.”¹²⁸ Bryants’ performed a burlesque “Macbeth”¹²⁹ and “Hamlet” while Booth’s Theatre held a Shakespeare festival during April.¹³⁰ G. W. H. Griffin wrote the “Hamlet” blackface burlesque, in which each of Shakespeare’s fourteen main characters were reproduced. Dan Bryant and Griffin played the lead male roles of Hamlet, the Sar-

¹²³ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 48 (5 March 1870): 382.

¹²⁴ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 36 (11 December 1869): 286.

“Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 39 (1 January 1870): 311.

¹²⁵ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 48 (5 March 1870): 382.

¹²⁶ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 49 (12 March 1870): 391.

¹²⁷ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 51 (26 March 1870): 406.

¹²⁸ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 17, no. 47 (26 February 1870): 374.

¹²⁹ “Amusements: Ad page,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 3 (23 April 1870): 19.

¹³⁰ “Theatrical Record: City Summary,” *New York Clipper* 18, no. 1 (9 April 1870): 6.

dane and Claudius, King of Denmark, respectively, and Eugene, the troupe's burlesque prima donna, played the Queen.¹³¹

Conclusion

Minstrel troupes during the late 1860s often followed trends in repertoire and style, resulting in similar shows. After experimenting with ways of incorporating elements of legitimate theater, such as variety acts, less vulgar comedy, and an elegant afterpiece style, troupes during this season began to form individual approaches that embraced the old or new style or operated somewhere in between the two. Innovations in traditional blackface acts such as serious female impersonation and quieter, slow-paced song and dance reinvented these acts to appeal to the new tastes of late 1860s audiences and aided in the integration of minstrelsy into variety.

¹³¹ "Theatrical Record: City Summary," *New York Clipper* 17, no. 52 (2 April 1870): 414.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Minstrelsy flourished in New York from the 1840s through the 1870s. But the height of its popularity was in the 1850s, when no fewer than ten minstrel halls, not including variety shows with minstrelsy, operated in New York.¹ By the last season considered here that number had been reduced to four. In this dissertation I have examined minstrelsy in New York during the late 1860s and have presented new information about the most important changes and developments that occurred in blackface performance during this period.

During the five seasons examined in this study, twenty-nine minstrel troupes and thirteen variety troupes with Ethiopian corps operated in New York. Twenty-eight halls in New York presented blackface minstrel acts on their stages.

Aspects of show production such as starting times, the number of shows performed per week, and advertising practices remained much the same throughout this period. However, the length of shows decreased, and ticket prices increased, although the yearly revenues of minstrel troupes increased little due to the limitations of small halls and increasing production costs.

Minstrelsy retained its flexible three-part format, which received experimental treatment during the period of study. I have shown that the minstrel shows performed during the late 1860s were much more complex than the shows of the previous two decades in terms of acts presented, subjects of parody, and afterpieces. Minstrels performed a wider range of old and new acts in blackface and whiteface than ever before.

¹ Richard Moody, *America Takes the Stage: Romanticism in American Drama and Theatre, 1750-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977): 49.

There was an increasing amount of shared repertoire between minstrelsy and legitimate variety. In response to audience demands, minstrelsy became less vulgar and incorporated elements of variety such as panorama, tableaux vivant, light opera, gymnastics, acrobatics, animal acts, and magic.

Fluidity of audience existed between minstrelsy and legitimate theater, including opera. Minstrel audiences were mixed in terms of class, gender, and age, although matinee performances were instituted specifically for women and children.

One of the most interesting and important results of audience demands witnessed during the period of study is the beginning of the change from the old resident stock company system with actor/managers, such as Dan Bryant and Edwin Kelly, to loosely organized and large touring minstrel companies that were comprised of small autonomous minstrel and variety troupes. The demand for novelty and extravagance led to larger and more diverse troupes and essentially, the end of the stock company. Although a small number of long-term resident troupes, Bryants' and the San Francisco Minstrels, most notably, persisted in New York through the 1870s, this way of managing companies was at an end. Increased performer turnover during the late 1860s, especially at variety halls like Tony Pastor's, was the first sign of the changing times.

The decline of minstrelsy in New York was related to these changes in management practices, which widened the distance and decreased interaction between the audience and performers, thus breaking the close relationship that had existed between minstrels and their audiences, especially in New York's lively Bowery theaters. The separation of performers from a participating audience was one of the most important factors in the decline of the genre.

The increase in the size of troupes during the late 1860s and through the last three decades of the century led to a decrease in the total number of troupes and contributed to the end of the genre by removing minstrelsy from the small-scale productions, in which it operated most efficiently, and introducing it into large-scale shows. Gorman's *Spectacular Minstrels* and Haverley's *Mastadon Minstrels* were two of the "mammoth" troupes of the 1870s and 1880s.²

After the Panic of 1893 and the resulting four-year depression, syndicates of theater owners bought up hundreds of theaters around the country and formed circuits within regions in order to expedite the booking of traveling shows,³ which ushered in the vaudeville circuits. However, minstrel companies continued to perform in America well into the twentieth century, and blackface acts continued to be performed in a variety of show types even after minstrel companies became fewer in number.

The ethnic characterizations and wench acts of minstrelsy continued (in whiteface and blackface) in musicals such as those of Harrigan (Edward "Ned" Harrigan 1845-1911) and Hart (Tony Hart 1855-1891), which focused on city characters—mostly Irish, German, and Blacks—in comic situations but without the exaggerated old style of minstrelsy and sentimental maudlin melodramas. Harrigan, who was famous for his Irish hero, Dan Mulligan, and Hart, who was famous for his wench roles, were innovative in their portrayals of ethnicity but used a simple musical style, composed by David Braham (1838-1905).⁴ Minstrelsy later appeared in early film, most notably in the first feature-

² Ibid., 48-49.

³ Thomas L. Riis, *Just Before Jazz: Black Musical Theatre in New York, 1890-1915* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989): 17-18.

⁴ Ibid., 8.

length film with partially synchronized spoken dialogue, *The Jazz Singer* (1927), and television.

Portrayals of women in minstrelsy changed during the late 1860s to include both comedic “wench” parodies, as well as the performance of serious dance, legitimate songs, and fashion shows in drag. Women participated increasingly in blackface, although mostly in both black and white variety shows. Women such as Ella La Rue, Lotta, Naomi Porter, and the Worrell Sisters pioneered female blackface performance of song and dance and banjo after the war. Variety companies such as Tony Pastor’s continued to present women in blackface acts during the 1870s, and it was through these shows that minstrelsy was transferred later to the vaudeville circuit. Beginning in 1890, The Creole Burlesque Show, developed by Sam T. Jack and the famous black minstrel Sam Lucas, played in New York. Essentially a variety show, it used the old minstrel format, but with black women in the front semicircle, the famous male impersonator Florence Hines as the interlocutor, and two male endmen. Songs from the minstrel repertoire made up the bulk of the troupe’s shows, but other acts included comedy, bare-legged dancers, and smaller groups such as the De Wolf Sisters (singers), the clowns Jackson and Jones, and Mrs. Sam Lucas, who played a cornet solo.⁵

African American culture survived in minstrelsy through call and response, syncopation, drum patterns, dance movements, patting, dialect, comedy style, and the banjo, tambourine, and bones. According to Riis, “Where black performers and composers were active a strand of authenticity resided.”⁶

⁵ Moody, 12, 13, 15.

⁶ Riis, 5.

African American minstrels became more common during the late 1860s and into the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and black troupes played to black audiences with huge success. The most important of these were the Georgia Minstrels, who played in New York intermittently during the period of study. During the 1870s roles for black singers, banjoists, and supernumeraries grew in importance, and black composers began to write and publish their own songs and ballads. Original dramas with music, such as *Out of the Wilderness* (Joseph Bradford 1843-1886) and *Out of Bondage*, were first produced by black troupes during this decade and framed within a plot various elements of minstrelsy, such as character names, endman-style comedy, dances, group walkarounds, songs, and choruses. Late in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, black entertainers also performed minstrel acts in medicine shows and carnivals, especially in the South. The stock minstrel characters Eph and Dinah were retained in these shows.⁷

The link between blackface performance and later American popular forms is seen in the many characteristics shared by minstrelsy and genres such as rock, pop, jazz, rhythm and blues, hip-hop, and rap. These genres share such jargon as “jamming” and break-down or break dancing, as well as song form; love, local, and timely subjects; comical lyrics; and political commentary. They also have similar instrumentation, dance moves, combinations of song and dance, African, Anglo, and Irish musical characteristics, and the tradition of “challenge” exhibitions. Syncopation and call and response, two of the most important characteristics of African music to survive and thrive in America, have been prominent in American popular music since the mid-nineteenth

⁷ Moody, 4, 7-8, 9-10, 14, 19.

century. Minstrels combined these elements with Anglo melodies, which were also related to an oral and aural tradition.⁸

Dancers performed for tips at New York's Catherine Market during the nineteenth century and also on the streets and in parks on large pieces of cardboard during the late 1970s and through the 1990s. Elements of blackface song and dance style—fast steps, wild upper body movement, rapid hip jerking, shoulder and arm gestures, and clog—continued to be seen throughout the twentieth century and today and were derived both from African American and Anglo dance.⁹ Many black and black-derived stage shows of the late nineteenth-century featured dance in this athletic and inventive style, which was the basis for the hip and arm movements made famous by Elvis Presley and every subsequent pop star thereafter.

Like minstrelsy, rock, pop, rap, r & b, and hip-hop adapt to audience demands, are super-charged performances that grew out of folk traditions, are mobile arts suited to traveling, are performed by both professionals and amateurs, and are dominated by men. Also, from the time of early blackface minstrelsy of the 1840s to the present, performers from low socio-economic backgrounds have used popular American musical entertainment as a vehicle for gaining economic ground, thereby improving social standing.

These forms share the attitudes related to and misuse origins of blackface minstrelsy. Misogyny is used sometimes as a tool to attempt to control women and their roles in society as well as their bodies, and to reassert male dominance in sexual, work, and family settings. In the 1840s through the period of study, women's suffrage was a

⁸ Riis, 3-5.

⁹ Ibid., 14-15.

popular subject of minstrel parody. In this century, contemporary rap and hip-hop lyrics are alarmingly abusive toward women and homosexuals, and most women still do not earn the same pay as men in the music industry. These genres also function as social safety valves by providing the opportunity to release anger about social inequities.

It is important to study minstrel music in the context of its development but also to consider why it has remained a popular subject of study. Minstrel songs, some of which are still performed today, have become embedded in our collective consciousness and have affected American society in both positive and negative ways yet to be fully understood. The combination of African and of Anglo musical elements on American soil has resulted in some of the world's most popular dance and music styles, which are performed by musicians of all economic and ethnic backgrounds in America and in many other parts of the world. The exportation of American pop culture, which is also aggressive by nature, has, however, added to global instability by creating resentments in some countries that feel threatened by Western culture and values. In addition, much of the American popular music produced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as this century, cultivates negative portrayals of Blacks and Whites, men and women, showing all of us in limited, subjugated roles and divided as a people. It is very important for our future as a nation and for the world to discover how minstrelsy has affected the course of race relations in America and ultimately our place in and effect on the world.

The ease with which one may draw parallels between entertainment during the period of study and today leads one to conclude that very little has changed in terms of content and style of performance during the past century-and-a-half. Although minstrel

show acts do not appear together in a single show and performers do not “black up,” the same acts are seen by Americans and people around the world every day: eccentric styles of performance such as Jim Carey’s physical comedy; wench roles such as Martin Lawrence’s “Big Mama”; the song and dance routines seen in music videos and at pop concerts; tap, clog, and jig dancing seen in Broadway shows; ballad and quartet singing; comic and parody songs such as 95.5 WPLJ’s “Jersey Girl,” group comic performances in television sit-coms; and political commentary such as Jon Stewart’s *Daily Show*. Ultimately, I hope that my study provides insight into nineteenth-century popular entertainment and also provides other scholars with fresh material with which to develop ideas about the influence of popular culture on society and the manifestations of society in popular culture.

Appendix A

Minstrel Troupes in New York 1865-1870

Allen, Pettengill, Delehanty, and Hengler's Minstrels
Waverly Theatre, 720 Broadway

Bryant's Minstrels
Mechanics' Hall, 472 Broadway
Bryant's New Minstrel Hall, second floor of the Tammany Building

Buckley's Combination Troupe
Washington Hall, Harlem

Budworth's Minstrels
Fifth Avenue Opera House

California Minstrels
Academy of Minstrels, 720 Broadway

Campbell's Minstrels
Bowery Theatre, 199 and 201 Bowery

Charley White's Minstrels
Mechanics' Hall, 472 Broadway

Chase's Minstrels
Eighth Avenue Opera House, corner Eighth Ave and 34th Street

Christy's Minstrels
Fifth Avenue Opera House, 24th Street and Fifth Avenue
Old Bowery Theatre, 37 and 39 Bowery

Dick Sands
Bowery Theatre

Emerson, Allen, and Manning's Minstrels
Tony Pastor's Opera House, 201 Bowery

Georgia Minstrels
Broadway Opera House, 600 Broadway
Dodworth Hall, 806 Broadway
The Empire Rink on Third Avenue

Green's Mocking Bird Minstrels

Yonkers

Griffin and Christy's Minstrels
 Fifth Avenue Opera House
 23rd Street and Broadway

Heller's Minstrels
 Heller's Saloon, 585 Broadway

Iron-Clad Minstrels
 Tony Pastor's Opera House, 201 Bowery

Johnny Thompson (and company)
 The Eighth Avenue Opera House, 34th Street and 8th Avenue

Johnny Wild (and company)
 189 Broadway

Kelly and Leon's Minstrels
 720 Broadway

Ned Davis' Minstrel and Brass Band
 no location given

San Francisco Minstrels
 585 Broadway

Sanford's Minstrels
 Old Bowery Theatre

Sharpley, Cotton, and White's Minstrels
 Theatre Comique, 514 Broadway

Sharpley's Minstrels
 Sharpley's Bowery House

Theatre Comique
 no troupe name

Thorpe and Overin's Minstrels
 Temple of Music, 720 Broadway
 Corner of Grand and Crosby

Wood's Minstrels
 Wood's Minstrel Hall, 514 Broadway

Appendix B

Variety troupes with Ethiopian corps in New York 1865-1870

Butler's American Theatre

Mechanics Hall, 472 Broadway

Charley White's

444 Broadway

Theatre Comique, 514 Broadway

Waverly Theatre, 720 Broadway

Eighth Avenue Opera House

no troupe name given

Fattie Stewart and his Great Variety Entertainment

Alhambra Theatre, 616 Broadway

Harry Hill's Varieties

26 East Houston

New Hibernian Minstrels

New Apollo Hall, Broadway and 28th Street

Risley's Combination Troupe

Tammany Hall, in a different part of the building than Bryants' Minstrels

Tony Pastor's Opera House

201 Bowery

Varieties Theatre

37 and 39 Bowery

Worrell Sisters

New York Theatre, 728 Broadway

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