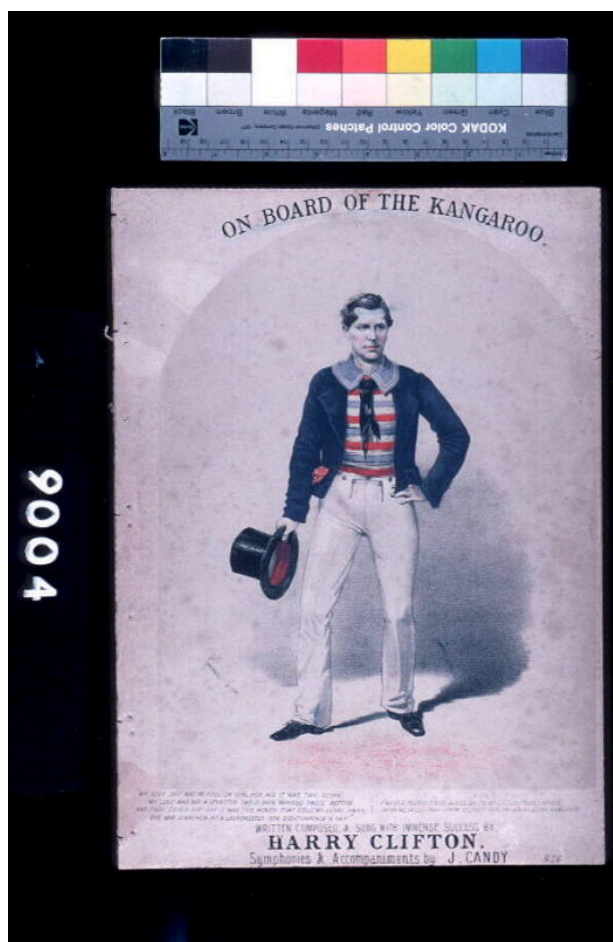


Basic Detail Report



00009004

Title

On Board of the KANGAROO

Date

c 1865

Primary Maker

Harry Clifton

Medium

Ink on paper

Dimensions

Overall: 337 x 244 mm

Name

Sheet music

History

The publication of music reached its peak in the 19th century as recital halls, theatre shows and parlour music became an integral part of social life in Britain, Australia

and America. Sheet music publishers flourished and their product was sold cheaply and widely distributed. In this sense, sheet music represented an easily accessible form of entertainment and social interaction. The song describes a sailor's life away from his lover, who marries someone else while he is at sea on the KANGAROO. The use of sailor's slang communicates the social and cultural elements to British seafaring culture. Themes of hardship and separation are cleverly expressed in the following verse: 'Our vessel it was homeward bound from many a furrin shore, And many a furrin present unto my love I bore. There was Tortoises from Teneriffe, and toys from Timbuctoo A Chinese rat, and Bengal cat, and a Bombay cockatoo.' Like the many other songs about a sailor's jilted state, this song functions as a cautionary but light-hearted story. The final verse illustrates this well: 'Farewell to dreams of married life! To soap, to suds, and blue, To "Glenfield starch", and "Harper Twelvetrees' washing powder" too: I'll seek some far and distant clime, I can no longer stay, And on some "Chinese Hottingtot" I'll throw myself away!' At the heart of each piece, sheet music displays prevalent social and cultural motifs. With each verse, life's questions are parodied or sentimentalised in a compelling way. This type of music forms part of a range of maritime themed songs; a vibrant collection of narratives designed to illustrate messages of love, friendship, identity and heroism.