

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC HALL IN BRIGHTON

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The development of music hall in Brighton parallels that in other towns of comparable size, though until late in the 19th century it was unable to establish itself as an acceptable form of popular entertainment. Beginning during the 1840s with public-house singing rooms of varying respectability, music hall diversified and became professional during the ensuing decade. Enterprising publicans enlarged their concert rooms (e.g. at the Apollo in Church Street) or adapted other entertainment premises (such as the Mighell Street circus) with elaborate decorations, tiered seating and fitted stages. Eventually in the 1860s purpose-built music halls, notably the Oxford, almost next to the Theatre Royal in New Street, emerged, coexisting for a time with the saloons. But the rise of the concert party, changes in social attitudes, and sheer economics, had by 1870 almost eliminated tavern music halls and set the pattern for the rest of the century.

The Victorian music hall took many different forms during the Queen's long reign, a fact seldom reflected in the pastiches performed today. Music hall has been claimed to be the only specifically British entertainment form, with its roots in the British public house, the focus of leisure activity for the great majority of 19th-century working men. Public houses provided their club-room, and housed the meetings of their trade or improvement societies, while also offering refreshment and social intercourse.¹

The universal human instinct to celebrate convivially with song and dance was quickly exploited commercially by tavern landlords: in Newcastle upon Tyne, as early as the 1820s, certain inns hired fiddlers who were regular attractions,² while one plaintiff in a case at York as late as 1852 described himself as a vocalist, singing at free and easies at the rate of a penny per pint on all the ale that was drunk by the customers.³

On the other hand, it would be wrong to ignore the influence on the development of music hall of professional music-making in the pleasure gardens, and of local glee clubs and harmonic societies which embraced middle- and

even upper-class clientele. All these were well established in the more important provincial towns by the middle of the 18th century, and during the next hundred years their traditions met and mingled with those of the emergent saloons or casinos, as the singing rooms were most usually called until the mid 1850s.

It is extremely difficult to detect traces of music hall in its early stages, especially in the provinces; its popularity came into public notice primarily through the passing of the 1843 Act for Regulating Theatres. This ruled, among other things, that any manager wishing to perform dramatic pieces (the definition of which was very broad indeed) had to obtain a licence from the local magistrates, and that no alcoholic drink might be sold in the auditorium. The former clause, which theatrical managers going through lean times were quick to make use of, made any kind of playlet or sketch in tavern rooms illegal, and was to be quoted on numerous occasions in Brighton.

It was only near the end of the 18th century that Brighton expanded from decayed fishing town to sizeable, and fashionable, seaside resort, and not till the mid 19th century was

there any appreciable industrial growth. The consequent absence of both the singing tradition and the pub-centred urban culture, by comparison with towns such as Nottingham, Sheffield and Newcastle,⁴ delayed the emergence of professional music hall. Having missed the heyday of pleasure gardens, Brighton never established any parallel to London's Vauxhall or Cremorne. The May and autumn fêtes on The Level (later on the cricket ground) were cheap and cheerful, but constantly under attack for noise and drunkenness, while the entertainment side was relatively unimportant, with peep-shows, freaks, and the like; whereas St. James's Fair in Bristol, for example, overflowed with music, theatre and circus. There were also occasional fêtes in the Royal Gardens, but the initiative in this respect was taken, not in Brighton, but in neighbouring Shoreham. Here J. H. Balley, the go-ahead proprietor of the Swiss Gardens (Fig. 1), capitalized on the train link with Brighton opened in 1840, and in 1844 actually gained a regular dramatic licence, enlarging his little outdoor theatre for the performance of farces and vaudevilles.⁵ His enterprise and its success effectively pre-empted any similar development in Brighton itself, and the Gardens later became a Mecca for day trippers, being (unlike music halls) open in the afternoons.

Of the performing arts in Brighton, the theatre was by 1840 the least important; vocal and instrumental music was by far the most fashionable, and circus the most popular. All contributed something to the eventual content of Brighton music hall programmes, but if one is to look for external influences on their early development, a more probable source may be found in the miscellaneous entertainments, 'MUSIC, SINGING, LOOS, and other AMUSEMENTS',⁶ provided as an attraction at the cheap-jack sales of the Queen's Bazaar in the autumn of 1844.

It is certain, however, that already in public houses and hotels, semi-organized entertainment was being established. The *Brighton*

Herald of 28 October 1843 advertised Tuesday Harmonic Meetings in the 'well-known Concert Rooms' of the Golden Cross Inn, no. 3 Pavilion Street,⁷ while a more cryptic advertisement in the same paper on 13 December 1845 records the cancellation of a benefit performance at the Prince George, 5 Trafalgar Street. There were also fortnightly 'Harmonic Societies' in the Royal Sovereign at 64 Preston Street in the autumn of 1846; the meeting on 19 November was reported to have been attended by a party from Shoreham, 'who expressed themselves highly delighted at the manner in which the various songs and glees (particularly the latter) were executed.'⁸ The term 'harmonic society' might conceal wide differences in attitudes to music; some provided no more than boozy sing-songs, and were more often referred to as 'free and easies' or 'convivials', but the meeting at the Royal Sovereign compares with similar developments in Nottingham, where such societies evolved into semi-professional glee clubs, exchanging visits and making 'complimentary calls' on each other's leading singers.

The first traces of that commercial exploitation which led eventually to music hall as a genre can be found in Brighton at the Golden Cross mentioned earlier. This is the first of the town's concert rooms to be noticed by the *Era*, whose edition of 3 September 1848 records that 'Messrs. James and William Creech have opened a new style of entertainment for the Brightonians, at the Golden Cross Hotel—the same as Evans's [the famous London song-and-supper rooms]—and some first-rate singers are engaged, Mr. W. Mayne, Mr. Crosby Hall, Mr. Charles, Mr. Gates, &c. The concert-room is opened four nights a week, and fills very well.' The serious pretension of this room may be gauged from the fact that Mayne was also announced to give a concert at the Town Hall the following Monday.

Even more significant, however, was the enterprise of Tom Swann and Leonard Burton. Swann had performed as a clown with Thomas Cooke's troupe at the Pavilion Riding Stables, adapted as a circus for the Christmas season of

SWISS GARDENS,
SHOREHAM.

FIRST TIME OF A NEW BURLESQUE

THE
PRINTERS

Of Brighton beg respectfully to announce that the **FOURTEENTH ANNUAL FETE**
in aid of their

SICK FUND,

Will be held at the above Gardens, on

THURSDAY, Aug. 18,

Under highly-distinguished patronage.

A CONCERT,

At **THREE** o'clock, in the Theatre.

Mr. E. HILLIER will sing

TWO NEW SONGS!

"I Wish I Was a Butterfly; or, Fair but False Matilda,"

And **Mr. T. GOOMS'S** Song,

"A POOR BOBBY'S WOES,"

As arranged by **Mr. W. R. LOCKYRAR.**

AN EXTRA QUADRILLE BAND.

At **SIX** o'clock, in the Theatre, with New Scenery, Dresses, Music, &c., the **NEW BURLESQUE**,
by a Brightonian, entitled

Pietro Wilkini.

An endless variety of Amusements.

CONCLUDING WITH

A GRAND BALL.

ADMISSION, ONE SHILLING. CHILDREN, HALF-PRICE.

Tucknott's Steam Printing Works, Brighton.

Fig. 1. An entertainment bill of the Swiss Gardens, Shoreham, for 18 August 1870 (whereabouts of original unknown).

1850-1, but he seceded from the company in mid April, and took over the Globe Inn, 38 Edward Street. Behind this, and abutting on Mighell Street, he built a circus of his own, possibly using foundations left behind by the equestrian proprietor Batty who had performed on the site in 1841. (It was common for there to be a recognized circus site where no permanent building existed, with a brick or stone foundation on which successive troupes erected a wooden arena.⁹) Swann's circus opened in August 1851; it was rather amateurish and lasted only a few weeks, but the building remained.

During the following winter Swann again played clown in a circus, this time run by Leonard Burton, and shortly after the end of the season Burton bought out Swann and began to use the building behind the Globe for miscellaneous entertainments. In the tavern itself he introduced Baron Nicholson's 'Judge and Jury' entertainment, a feature of the notorious Coal Hole in London's Strand, with mock trials of imaginary (and usually scabrous) *causes célèbres*.¹⁰

From this developed the first attempt at professional music hall outside the inn rooms, sited in the old circus, and known simply as Burton's Music Hall. This was not a unique change of use; other instances can be found in Bristol, Sheffield, and Newcastle. By January 1853 it was in full swing, as may be deduced from the fact that the *Era* reported an attempt by Henry Farren, near-bankrupt lessee of the Theatre Royal, to have it suppressed for playing dramatic pieces in unlicensed premises. However, 'the only result of threatened litigation [was] the suppression of the Christmas ballet or pantomime . . . The prices being a mere nominal sum, it is no wonder at its being an eyesore to the legitimate establishments.'¹¹ There was some genuine point to the complaint, since Burton's prices were 2*d.* to 6*d.*, while those of the Theatre Royal were 1*s.* to 4*s.*

Notices of the programme in the *Era* prove that this was not the only way in which this music hall was diversifying; in February Burton

engaged Henriques' performing dogs and monkeys, and mounted a tableau of 'The Ship on Fire'; in March he had a 'negro melodist and tambourine player' and the conjuror Rosencrantz; and in April a performer on the *globe roulante* who also juggled with Indian clubs. Success, as ever, begat imitation: on 7 May 1853 the Regent Tavern in Church Street opened its Apollonian Rooms 'for a series of concerts under the directorship of Mr. Valentine, of the Theatre Royal',¹² though here the accent does genuinely seem to have been on music.

On 20 November Burton's Music Hall burned to the ground, but undeterred by this loss, and possibly encouraged by a totally disastrous ending to Farren's lesseeship of the Theatre Royal the following spring, Burton started on a replacement on the same site, to be called the Sussex Music Hall. This, Brighton's first purpose-built casino, consisted of 'a new and spacious hall . . . with boxes, pit and gallery', and a stage 'of considerable dimensions'. The performances, according to the *Era* of 30 July 1854, were intended to consist principally of ballets and singing, neither of which, if strictly adhered to, could infringe the limitations of the Theatres Act, but both of which could be elaborated considerably by an ingenious manager.

The enemies of music hall therefore concentrated on opposing the renewal of the licence of the Globe Tavern, which connected with the Sussex, and of the Regent Tavern. The secretary of the Town Mission claimed that the Sussex was 'a "demoralizing nuisance" and a temptation to boys to commit petty theft in order to obtain the price of admission'. However, there were also tributes to the good order and decency obtaining in the house, and Burton was allowed the renewal of his licence on condition that he removed the bar from the gallery of the Sussex and stopped up communication between the two buildings. The Regent, on the other hand, lost its licence, the police claiming that 'the house had been open and dancing and singing going on as late as six o'clock in the morning'.¹³

There is evidence that, despite this successful outcome, Burton was affected by the adverse publicity; the Sussex seems to have changed managers rapidly at least twice, and closed for several periods in the spring of 1855. With its revival in the early summer came competition from other taverns, such as the Canterbury Hall in the Queen's Head, Steyne Street, where 'the room is novel and unique, the host obliging, and the vocalization judiciously managed'. After the summer season the manager, J. Edwards, closed the hall, but reopened in the new year; among other artists he engaged Mrs. Henry Farren, deserted by her husband when he fled to America after his theatrical bankruptcy.¹⁴

More elaborate was the Myrtle Tree Concert Hall in North Street, the exact whereabouts of which I have not been able to trace. The proprietor Taylor described his programmes euphemistically as 'nightly vocal and instrumental music reunions'; but he also had an elaborate stage with a 'novel circular frontage', while following alterations in December 1855 the *Era* reported: 'The new elliptic gallery and unique stage are tastefully adorned with articles of *vertu*, capacious looking-glasses, and choice oil-paintings by eminent masters, thus rendering the *tout ensemble* cheerful and exhilarating.'¹⁵ This sort of rococo decoration was quite common as an up-market move; other examples were the City Concert Hall in Bristol and the Surrey in Sheffield. It is highly probable that there were other Brighton singing rooms which had no need or wish to advertise, for this was a peak period of expansion in provincial music hall.

Whether because of competition or weak management, the Sussex reverted in the spring of 1856 to being a circus, but by November it was back in the music hall business, and varying its attractions with tableaux from *Macbeth* and an *à propos* comic song about a ghost in the Old Church Yard which turned out to be a wandering goat.¹⁶ In March 1857 Burton engaged as manager E. Morley, who made a feature of elaborate ballet spectacles (*Tubal Cain's Visit to*

Fairyland was the unlikely title of one of them), and flirted with danger by including sketches.

There were still residents who saw the Sussex as nothing but a temptation to the young, whatever Burton could allege in the way of providing 'innocent recreation'. Local clergy and tradesmen united in complaining of noise and drunken disturbances; Henry Nye Chart, the new and energetic manager of the Theatre Royal, objected to the renewal of the inn licence in September 1857 on the grounds of illegal dramatic performances. Burton admitted this had happened under Morley, but claimed he had resumed personal management and the violations would not recur. Once more the magistrates insisted on the total separation of the music hall from the public house before they would agree the Globe Inn's licence.¹⁷

But the reprieve was shortlived. On 4 November the Sussex burned down for the second time, and on this occasion Burton was not insured; the company 'had declined to renew the risk'.¹⁸ A national appeal was made for the unlucky owner, and from the proceeds of the appeal and various benefit performances, Burton was able in May the following year to set up in the Lamb and Flag, Cranbourne Street, where he ran a flourishing minor concert room.¹⁹ Meanwhile local music hall went underground, the Myrtle Tree becoming principally a venue for amateur dramatic performances by the Brighton Histrionic Society.

The apparent lull did not last long. The Apollo, at 87 Church Street, owned by the Crimean survivor, Courtness, opened a new season on 30 August 1858, with an enlarged stage and modernized saloon, while in December the same year the Myrtle Tree became a music hall again, its manager, J. Kempster, engaging a variety of singers and other attractions such as a Lancashire dancer.²⁰

The spring of 1859 was a turning point. Burton gave up the Lamb and Flag early in the year, owing to ill-health, and disappeared from the scene; but for a similar reason Harry Fulford, a successful comic singer who had man-

aged the Bedford Head Tavern in Upper King Street, Bloomsbury, decided to move to Brighton. He took over the Apollo and, after alterations and enlargement, reopened it as the Canterbury on 18 July 1859. According to the *Era*:

The frequenters of the late 'Apollo Saloon', will find it difficult to make themselves believe that the handsome, commodious, and well-ventilated room . . . is anything respecting the same as the low-pitched, close, and not over-cleanly place of which they have been habitués. By throwing two stories into one, erecting galleries round, with private boxes, constructing a new stage, with drop scene by Wilson, along with five crystal chandeliers by Defries, with thorough ventilation through a shaft over each, and painting and redecoration by Jones—a hall has been made which the proprietors may be pardoned for saying 'is of its size the handsomest room in England'.²¹

According to Fulford's own advertisement, the new Canterbury could hold 500,²² and it was speedily recognized that Fulford was setting new standards in Brighton for his class of entertainment.

Even the moralistic London Graduate who published his survey *Brighton As It Is* in 1860²³ admitted that the Canterbury was 'a considerable improvement upon the other dirty public houses with which this portion of the town is infested'. His description, however, is still a useful antidote to any tendency to overrate the new facilities, as he described the 'small tradesmen with their wives and families' in the boxes, the 'operatives, in their work-a-day habiliments' in the pit, the sprinkling of obvious prostitutes, and the miscellany of entertainers on the stage.

The bills of the Canterbury, by now freely advertised in the Brighton press, show how widely music hall was by now throwing its net. Singers predominated, comic, serio-comic,

bravura, ballad and sentimental; but dancing was a regular feature, and ballet corps were freely used in spectacles. There were conjurers like the veteran 'Professor' Buck; the German *siffleur* Herr Susman; a variety of acrobats and animal trainers; and on one occasion Louis Levy, 'Shakesperian Dramatic and Buffo Comic Singer and Champion Skate and Spade Dancer', a host in himself, one might say. There is, however, no sign of any particular development of local talent, such as occurred on Tyneside.

Like most provincial music halls the Canterbury was necessarily limited in the performers it could engage. Major stars like E. W. Mackney, Sam Cowell, Harry Clifton and Harry Liston could command fees far greater than a 500-seat hall, charging from 3*d.* to 1*s.*, brought in. Instead, from about 1859 onwards, they organized 'concert parties' touring the regions and booking assembly rooms, town halls, or, in Brighton, the Royal Pavilion. Drawing on an audience which preferred to enjoy a music hall entertainment without the accompaniment of tobacco smoke and beer, such artists could charge a minimum of 1*s.*, rising to 3*s.* for reserved seats.

Except for these concert party visits, however, Fulford's Canterbury dominated the music hall scene in Brighton for the first five years of its life. The Myrtle Tree, according to the London Graduate, had ceased to be a 'gaff' and become a low-class dance hall, but there are traces of a number of other tavern rooms. Some were revivals, such as the Prince George in Trafalgar Street which had been active in the 1840s and now in December 1859 advertised Harmonic Meetings;²⁴ there was also the Imperial Hotel at 43–4 Queen's Road, which claimed in the *Era* of 25 August 1861 to present 'Autumnal Vocal and Instrumental Soirees . . . (Gentlemen Only)', clearly another amateur 'free and easy' of a long-lasting type.

The Mighell Street site had not been abandoned. It was rebuilt and used at various times by equestrians, acrobats and Christy Minstrels under the name of the Alhambra. On Boxing

Day 1862 it was 're-opened *permanently*' (the italics are the *Era*'s) as a music hall, but the managers, Stacey and Bush, were a dubious pair, representative of the fly-by-night opportunists who infested the provincial music hall during its boom period. By May 1863 their management had collapsed, and a further attempt the following Christmas was even less successful. (According to the *London Entr'acte*, by 1870 the Alhambra had been taken over as a mission hall.)

A new and ultimately much more serious rival opened in July 1863, only a few doors to the north of the Theatre Royal in the New Road. Although the Pavilion, as the hall was initially called, was only a wooden structure set back from the road, its manager Youens was an energetic and capable character, determined to make his hall both popular and respectable. The initial weeks were successful enough to encourage him to decorate and improve the house, which he opened again in September as the Oxford Music Hall, a name it kept to the end of its career. The progress of the Oxford was not without incident, Youens coming quickly under fire for reliance on sensational acrobatic and gymnastic performances; but his early prosperity may be gauged from the fact that he was able in July and August 1864 to engage Alfred Vance, 'the great Vance', the outstanding *lion comique* of the day, and more usually found running his own, very successful, concert party.

Fulford, whose health was giving trouble again, resolved to get rid of the Canterbury. Unable to sell outright, he leased the hall to Wyndham Clark, a tenor singer of some pretensions, and retired to be mine host of the Egremont Hotel (which had itself in the past occasionally boasted some kind of saloon entertainment), at 111 Western Road.

The two halls, the Canterbury and the Oxford, ran side by side in reasonably amicable competition for some months. Wyndham Clark then handed over management of the Canterbury to R. A. Brennan, a lively Irish comic who began to broaden the appeal of the hall again.

Early in 1865 the *Era* reported the duettists Mr. and Mrs. Stoner in an olio, 'The Rose, Shamrock and Thistle', illustrated by a panorama; on the same bill were Messrs. Lewis and Wells in dog dramas, and the whole concluded with a Christmas entertainment, complete with harlequinade. Brennan's wife made a speciality of spectacular *ballets d'action*, such as 'The Gathering of the Clans'; the Canterbury must have been getting very near the legal limit.²⁵ Unfortunately in other matters Brennan was less satisfactory; he left in November 1865 under a cloud, having allowed the hall to degenerate into a 'state of dirt and neglect'. In disgust Wyndham Clark took the reigns again, and appointed a new manager, T. K. Symms, who advertised: 'It is to be distinctly understood that the present Manager does not sing through his nose or hail from Dublin. No Irish or knife-grinders need apply.'²⁶ The following week's advertisement was couched in even cruder terms. Clark 'cleansed, purified, painted and decorated' the Canterbury, but it clearly went through a very unsettled phase (Clark had bodily to evict one unsatisfactory manager).

Youens, on the other hand, established himself more firmly. When in 1866 he applied for a spirits licence, for the second time, his solicitor claimed that the Oxford:

was visited by tradesmen and their wives and daughters, and Mr. Youens, since he had had it, would not allow children in except accompanied by their parents. To show the vast number of persons who had been attracted by the entertainments he would state that in the first year the number was 61,000; in the second, 77,000; and in the third, 88,000.²⁷

It is clear that by this time music hall in Brighton, as everywhere else, was becoming an independent professional entertainment, but in a town so conscious of housing 'the upper ten thousand' it was unwise to assume that it was totally accepted. In August 1866 the Alhambra

was briefly converted into the 'Theatre des Variétés' and run by no less a person than Henry Nye Chart, who after several years of successful management had just bought the Theatre Royal. While the interior of that theatre was being gutted and rebuilt, Chart thought he might turn a popular penny during Race Week by putting on what were effectively music hall performances. His bills were good, including W. G. Ross (of 'Ballad of Sam Hall' fame) and the Theatre Royal's own low comedian, Harry Cox, but the *Brighton Herald* thought it 'a mistake that Mr. Nye Chart entered into competition with [the other saloons], associating as the public does the name with a higher class of entertainment than those of Concert Halls'.²⁸ The venture met with only a lukewarm response.

Somewhat surprisingly, Youens decided in February 1867 to resign his share in the Oxford in favour of his partner Edward Cruse and to buy the Canterbury. Then, only a month later, the Oxford shared the fate of so many music halls and theatres, and was burned out. Damage was estimated at £800, and as usual the building was inadequately insured; the Italian String Band lost all their instruments, and a benefit concert was given for them, both by Youens at the Canterbury and by other Brighton musicians at the Town Hall.²⁹ Once more the Canterbury was left in sole possession of the field, and Youens generously ran a double company for a time so that the displaced performers should not be penniless.

It could not, however, be a permanent solution; it proved not even a satisfactory one. Notices of the Canterbury in the *Era* cease after June, suggesting that the local critic no longer found it worth visiting, and in November Youens decided to retire.

Meanwhile concert parties led by E. W. Mackney, Harry Clifton and Arthur Lloyd became frequent visitors to the Pavilion, while the Corporation had finally adapted the old Riding Stables as the Dome Assembly Rooms, which opened for concerts in June 1867. Fulford clearly thought he saw an opportunity, and from

October 1867 to January 1868 he hired the Dome for a series of 'Monday Popular Concerts', a popular euphemism for high-class music hall bills. But Fulford was no more successful than Nye Chart in attracting a middle-class audience, and he went back to the Canterbury in March 1868.

The Oxford was meanwhile rebuilt, to the design of Brighton architect George Tuppen, and under new ownership, that of B. W. Botham. On 3 August 1868 the New Oxford Music Hall opened, and the descriptions in the *Music Halls' Gazette* of 1 and 8 August make it clear that it was a small (40 ft. square) but fully equipped theatre. It was elaborately decorated in cream and lavender by Tony Drury, who had been responsible for the interior of the Dome Assembly Room, and Botham made a popular move by engaging as chairman George Allen, who as 'M. Allano', clown of successive Theatre Royal pantomimes, had become an institution in Brighton.

The programme at the New Oxford was good and varied, closely resembling that of other leading provincial halls. The opening bill included Asa Cushman and Joey Tennyson, American comedians, who had appeared for Fulford at the Dome; several comic vocalists; a black trapeze artist; and a small ballet troupe. Later Botham added monologue reciters, sentimental vocalists, and a female acrobat, Mlle. Aldine, who created a furor.³⁰ The prices were above average for a saloon and indicated the level of audience Botham hoped to attract, being 6d. to the balcony, 1s. to the stalls and boxes, and 1s. 6d. to private boxes. Faced with this opposition, the Canterbury seems to have given up, the last mention traced being in August 1868.

It should not be thought that tavern music hall, in Brighton or anywhere else, had totally disappeared, but its heyday was certainly over. The Imperial Hotel in Queen's Road once again opened a concert room at the end of June 1869, but in September the complaints made against the saloon were such that the magistrates at

brewster sessions gave the owners the option of closing the music room or losing their licence. Needless to say, they opted for the former, and the Oxford, though still unsuccessful in obtaining permission to sell wines and spirits, was left the sole Brighton music hall.³¹

This monopoly, combined with the excellent facilities of the Oxford, enabled Botham to engage a wide range of good sound performers. At one time the 'Can-Can' as interpreted by various 'French' troupes was all the rage, but other attractions included Ellen Thirlwall (previously a leading burlesque actress at the Theatre Royal); a Fairy Christmas Entertainment; Herr Schulze's polylogue entertainment *Masks and Faces*; Mme. Donti, a bravura soprano; and a Christy Minstrel troupe. This was a far cry indeed from the tavern room choruses of the free

and easies of thirty years earlier, and whatever the prejudice remaining, the Oxford proved a going concern; it is said to have been one of the last music halls to retain the services of a chairman.³² It continued, in fact, till 1892, when, after being burned down again, it was replaced by the Empire, 'one of the prettiest music halls in the kingdom', according to H. M. Walbrook.³³

Music hall was, by and large, a product of urban, industrialized populations, so it is not surprising that in Brighton it never attained overwhelming popularity, or evolved a regional personality, as it did elsewhere, particularly in the north. Nevertheless it developed along recognizable lines, and undoubtedly filled a gap in the provision of entertainment in a town otherwise somewhat prone to cater for its incomers rather than its indigenous population.

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Notes

¹B. Harrison, 'Pubs', in *The Victorian City*, ed. H. J. Dyos & M. Wolff, 1 (1976), 161-90.

²D. Harker, 'The Making of the Tyneside Concert Hall', paper read at Conference on Provincial Culture 1780 to 1870, Sheffield Polytechnic, 23 April 1981.

³*Era*, 22 Aug. 1852.

⁴Comparative material is mainly drawn from my Leicester University Ph.D. thesis, 1982, 'Provincial Entertainments 1840-1870'.

⁵*Brighton Herald*, 4 May 1844.

⁶*Ibid.* 5 Oct. 1844. 'Loo' was a popular card-game with money penalties.

⁷According to Folthorpe's *Directory* of 1850, Pavilion Street was 'at 9 Pavilion Parade'.

⁸*Brighton Herald*, 21 Nov. 1846.

⁹See pl. 4 between pp. 79 and 80 of H. A. A. Whiteley, *Memoirs of Circus Variety, &c. as I Knew It* (1981).

¹⁰*Era*, 15 July 1852.

¹¹*Ibid.* 11 Jan. 1853.

¹²*Ibid.* 8 May 1853.

¹³*Brighton Gazette*, 13 Aug., 7 Sept. 1854; *Brighton Herald*, 2 Sept. 1854.

¹⁴*Era*, 29 July 1855; 27 Jan., 24 Feb. 1856.

¹⁵*Ibid.* 2 and 16 Sept., 9 Dec. 1855.

¹⁶*Ibid.* 1 Feb. 1857.

¹⁷*Brighton Examiner*, 26 May, 1 and 8 Sept. 1857; *Era*, 13 and 20 Sept. 1857.

¹⁸*Era*, 8 Nov. 1857.

¹⁹*Ibid.* 23 May 1858. This building still stands, though the ground floor has been much altered.

²⁰*Ibid.* 15 Aug., 26 Dec. 1858.

²¹*Ibid.* 10 July 1859.

²²*Brighton Examiner*, 19 July 1859.

²³A Graduate of the University of London, *Brighton As It Is—Its Pleasures, Practices, and Pastimes, with a Short Account of the Social and Inner Life of its Inhabitants* (Brighton, 1860), of which pp. 81-6 deal with music halls.

²⁴*Brighton Examiner*, 13 Dec. 1859.

²⁵*Era*, 15 Jan., 19 Feb. 1865.

²⁶*Ibid.* 26 Nov. 1865.

²⁷*Brighton Herald*, 25 Aug. 1866.

²⁸*Ibid.* 11 Aug. 1866.

²⁹*Brighton Gazette*, 26 March 1867.

³⁰*Music Halls' Gazette*, 10 Oct. 1868; *Brighton Guardian*, 28 Oct. 1868.

³¹*Era*, 29 Aug., 12 and 19 Sept. 1869; *Brighton Herald*, 21 and 28 Aug., 10 Sept., 22 Oct. 1869.

³²H. M. Walbrook, *Robertson's Brighton* (Brighton, 1896), 22.

³³*Ibid.*; also C. Musgrave, *Life in Brighton from the Earliest Times to the Present* (1970), 308.