

Between the Wars - the evolution of the costumed concert party

When the 1st World War ended and people went back to their routine of Summer holidays at the seaside, so the entertainment troupes returned too. Some started to drop the usual flowing, stylised costumes, conical hats and ruffs of pierrot, in favour of natty nautical outfits, a semi-military look or evening dress: this was known as the 'costumed concert party'.

Although concert parties had existed since Victorian times, they now became the predominant entertainment at the seaside, usurping what had become regarded as the old-fashioned pierrot image. They often performed indoors (or at least on more than just a simple fit-up on the sands) and they created increasingly spectacular productions. Some larger shows became known as 'super concert parties' and the idea of a small ensemble gave way to more of a seaside variety show. People still came to watch them daily, but they were also starting to compete with a vogue for holiday camps, motoring holidays and camping.

Many well-known entertainers of the 40s & 50s learned their trade through concert party entertainment in these inter-War years.



The Merry Folk, Weston-super-Mare, 1928



A young Max Miller is standing far right



Fred Rayne's 'North Regional Follies' - a young Beryl Reid is seated far right, 1936