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**The Neglected Art: Trends, Transformations, and Innovations in British Concert Party Entertainment, 1850-1950<sup>1</sup>**

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*Abstract:*

The genre commonly referred to as 'concert party' remains the most neglected by scholars of the different forms of 'popular entertainment'. This paper presents a new reading of this most distinctive and underrated branch of the theatrical profession. In the pre-first war period is highlighted the growth of an 'industry' which provided seaside amusement during the summer months. During the inter-war years however, a more sophisticated entertainment form developed whose performative characteristics drew increasingly on revue and cabaret. In the post-second war era saw further adaptations that gave rise to the 'Summer Show', an altogether more lavish spectacle that nonetheless inherited much of the concert party ethos of earlier times. Changes in audience expectations and public holiday preferences, the catastrophe of two world wars, and the emergence of radio broadcasting, were challenges all successfully negotiated, further underscoring the resilience and adaptability of the genre. In the wider context, concert party not only offered a critical path to the variety stage, but because of its simplicity of basic form, it also provided a convenient template for experimentation and innovation. The author is an independent theatre historian.

*Keywords:*

Popular Entertainment, Costume Concert Party, Super Concert Party, Cabaret Concert Party, Radio Concert Party, Cabaret, Revue, Pierrot Troupe, Summer Show.

Integral to the popular culture of an earlier era, and still remembered today with poignancy, especially in the context of war, the British concert party nonetheless remains a neglected field of scholarly investigation. Its appeal to all ages and social groups during summer months at the seaside ‘pitch’, promenade, or pier pavilion, was based on the principles of smartness of appearance, refinement in manner, freshness and originality of repertoire, and of ‘fun without vulgarity’. The outward simplicity of form and apparent artistic inconsequentiality of content however has resulted in its continued standing as a mere trivial pursuit unworthy of serious study. In consequence, the number of articles devoted exclusively to the genre (including the Pierrot form) in the British context, published in academic journals, is few indeed.<sup>2</sup> However, once the unbridled sentiment surrounding the genre is set aside, a surprising diversity and complexity in form and function reveals itself, challenging the popular conception. The distinctive attributes of concert party, both visual and performative, drew partly on antecedent Pierrot influences. From this primitive ‘straw hat and a song’ form the genre however was to gradually diverge and develop its own identity, a transformation that has received little critical study. Earlier accounts on ‘popular entertainment’ either ignore or fail to recognize concert party as a legitimate art in its own right,<sup>3</sup> or at best are highly selective and superficial in their coverage of it.<sup>4</sup> This historiographical imbalance however finds partial rectification in various regionally focussed photo-histories,<sup>5</sup> and in the reminiscences of former artists like Clarkson Rose<sup>6</sup> and Leslie Henson.<sup>7</sup> Evocative images of Pierrot troupes and concert parties of old, with oft-repeated tales of the early seaside pioneers such as Clifford Essex, Edwin Adeler, Will Catlin, Andie Caine, and Will Pepper, are central to such populist accounts. In a radical departure from all previous depictions of concert party however, this paper offers a more penetrating and analytical study of the genre than has hitherto been undertaken. Central to this theme is an

exploration of how other entertainment forms, and new technologies, encouraged innovation, forcing the concert party archetype to transform, adapt, and hence survive.

### **Origins of the Modern Concert Party**

The divergence of the increasingly more sophisticated and professional concert parties of the 1900s from the distinctively attired (mostly amateur) Pierrot troupes of the 1890s was a process exhibiting many parallel and overlapping facets. The development of this distinct tradition was gradually to demarcate the genre from earlier entertainment forms. Like all historical transitions however, the process was typically hazy, and in attempting to trace origins, there is no precise start and end. While the origins of Pierrot from the *commedia dell'arte* extend back to the sixteenth century, the origins of concert party *per se* are tacitly assumed to have resulted from the rise of seaside entertainment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The stock account begins with the 'nigger minstrels' of the 1840s (*the* original Victorian seaside entertainment descended from buskers) being swept away by the Pierrot troupes in the 1890s, who in turn were displaced by the concert parties of the early 1900s.<sup>8</sup> The inference drawn in this simplistic schematic is that the modern ensemble was the product of a simple linear process. Closer examination however reveals evidence for a more mixed ancestry, with classical and musical hall influences contributing significantly to the genre's development. This therefore suggests a more complex evolution from different antecedents that coalesced into the new model form seen from the early twentieth century onwards. Dave Calvert, in his 'Royal Pierrots and White Coons' article, makes a similar point regarding non-linearity in mapping the ongoing fluidity and crossovers between Pierrot and the earlier blackface form.

Being nonspecific, the term 'concert party' is problematic given its different contexts of use. It is found at least from the beginning of the nineteenth century,<sup>9</sup> if not earlier, pre-

dating the term ‘variety’ that appeared in the 1880s.<sup>10</sup> At this early stage, a concert party consisted only of classical musicians and vocalists, more commonly associated with ‘Grand’ or ‘Operatic’ concerts.<sup>11</sup> Although not containing artists that would normally be associated with the modern ensemble such as ‘soubrettes’ or ‘humorists’, the bill of fare may well have included a comic song or sketch.<sup>12</sup> It was largely a musical grouping of almost any kind with solo artists, and instruments such as violin or cornet in addition to piano. A new development on this early model appeared in the mid- nineteenth century of concert parties as vehicles of wholly comedic entertainment through a star performer. Examples include the famed comic vocalist Sam Cowell, and the Irish comedian and vocalist J. H. Ogden. In this version of concert party, the concept of ‘concerteds’, that is a group of artists performing together (‘in concert’ as opposed to individually), had not yet fully appeared, although it was being applied to classical ensembles. At a further stage in development are seen performers who became famous as music hall artists, employing concert parties as backing companies to their entertainment. Alfred G. Vance’s ‘six-handed’ concert party of the 1860s and 1870s for example presented humorous, dramatic and musical sketches of very ‘modern’ composition comprising a soprano, serio-comic, balladist, baritone, and solo pianist-composer.<sup>13</sup> It also appears that an artist specifically described as a ‘soubrette and comedienne’ first appeared in Vance’s troupe in 1869, or at least, his was an early example of its use in this particular context.<sup>14</sup> Vance was one of the so-called *lions comiques*, a contemporary of George Leybourne (‘The Original Champagne Charlie’), the latter an early ‘darling’ of the music hall boom of the 1860s and 70s.<sup>15</sup> Vance established himself as a more up-market London concert artist but his ensemble also toured prolifically, exhibiting a pattern that anticipated the great touring concert parties of the 1910s and later by some four decades.<sup>16</sup> In the same mould as Vance were the contemporaneous concert parties of Harry Clifton, Harry Liston, and Arthur Lloyd,<sup>17</sup> among others, all of whom achieved fame in the music halls. Such parties exhibited,

in both composition and content, all the hallmarks of the modern ensemble, with entertainments comprising songs, impersonations and duets.

**GALLERY OF ILLUSTRATION.  
CROWDED HOUSES!!**

**J. H. OGDEN** and his **CONCERT PARTY**  
will give Three more  
**HUMOROUS AND POPULAR CONCERTS,**  
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On the *EVENINGS* of **THURSDAY, FRIDAY, and SATURDAY**  
19th, 20th, and 21st inst.

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IS FIXED FOR  
**FRIDAY NEXT.** 123

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**KINNAIRD HALL, DUNDEE.**  
**ONE NIGHT ONLY.**  
**MONDAY, 28TH SEPTEMBER.**  
**TWO HOURS' GENUINE FUN**  
WITH  
**MR ARTHUR LLOYD**  
AND HIS LONDON CONCERT PARTY.  
**MISS MINNIE LLOYD ; MISS KATTY KING ;**  
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**MAGILTON, with his Enchanted Hat ;**  
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**MR ARTHUR LLOYD,**  
With the Song "Beautiful for Ever."  
Doors open at Half-past Seven ; Concert at Eight o'clock.  
Admission, 2s, 1s, and 6d.  
Tickets may be had of Messrs **METHVEN & SIMPSON,**  
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**ROYAL PUBLIC ROOMS, EXETER.**  
**FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY, AUGUST 11.**  
**THE GREAT VANCE,**  
**AND STAR CONCERT PARTY,**  
**FROM LONDON.**  
ARTISTES.  
**MISS KATE ALLWOOD, Soprano and Balladist.**  
**MISS MILLY HOWARD, Serio-Comic Vocalist.**  
**MISS ELLA ALLWOOD, Soubrette and Comedienne.**  
**MIRIAM ! The wonderful Solo Pianist.**  
**THE SISTERS ALLWOOD, Operatic and Burlesque Duettists.**  
**MR. HENRI DE-SOLLA, Tenor Vocalist,**  
**AND THE GREAT VANCE,**  
**The Comic Idol of the day, in all his popular songs and**  
**Impersonations.**

Examples of mid-nineteenth century advertisements for concert parties whose composition prefigures that of the modern seaside troupe (top: *Birmingham Daily Post*, 19 May 1859, p. 3; middle: *Dundee Courier & Argus*, 22 September 1868, p. 1; bottom: *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, 11 August 1869, p. 4).

It was also at this time that so-called ‘speciality acts’ such as ventriloquism were included in concert party programmes,<sup>18</sup> a feature that was to be developed to even more sophisticated levels in the twentieth century with multi-skilled artists. Openings for female artists also emerged in the 1860s, especially for those who could not only play the piano but also sing, for example, as second soprano or contralto.<sup>19</sup> These trends exhibit an early model of the multi-talented and adaptable artist (in contrast to the highly talented individualist) that would be the *de facto* required for the modern concert party of the twentieth century. In the 1880s came a further development with the appearance of the professional concert artist, although full recognition of the latter was still decades away. The 1890s saw the appearance of concert parties containing specialist ‘entertainers’ or ‘humorists’, in addition to a piano accompanist (who may have been male or female and an ‘entertainer’ also), and a number of vocalists, typically a baritone, soprano, and contralto. It is suggested therefore that in composition and performative potential, if not visual appearance, this archetype inherited (or was influenced by) some of the core characteristics of the classical and music hall forms, in addition to those of Pierrot. Importantly also, development of the key characteristics referred to above which defined the modern concert party, also gradually distinguished it from other entertainment forms as a distinct genre in its own right. The end result was the emergence of an ‘industry’ of touring and resident parties, which from the early twentieth century, enjoyed a period of unparalleled growth and proliferation. This continued at least up to the beginning of the first war, with a resurgence in the inter-war period, and further transformations after the second war. The early growth dynamic however was not simply the result of continuing popularity of concert party entertainment *per se*. Given the obvious impact of population growth, increased urbanization, spare time, and disposable income,<sup>20</sup> it could not have happened without the rapid expansion of the transport network to support coastal enterprises. This in turn made concert and alfresco entertainments more amenable for all social classes as leisure time

increased.<sup>21</sup> Concomitant with this pre-first war surge was the rise of the concert artist as a recognized profession within the theatrical arts.<sup>22</sup> The importance of the latter was to grow enormously over the inter-war period, offering not only a springboard to the variety stage, but also a legitimate profession in its own right.<sup>23</sup> In 1927, the Concert Party Proprietors Association (formed in November 1913) ceased to exist, the interests of concert artists, managers, and proprietors fully represented by the Concert Artists' Association,<sup>24</sup> a body that continues to this day.



The smart, formal look, well exemplified by Wilson James's *Gaieties* concert party (*Stage Year Book*, 1913). Courtesy of *The Stage*



## **Analysing the Dynamic of Concert Party**

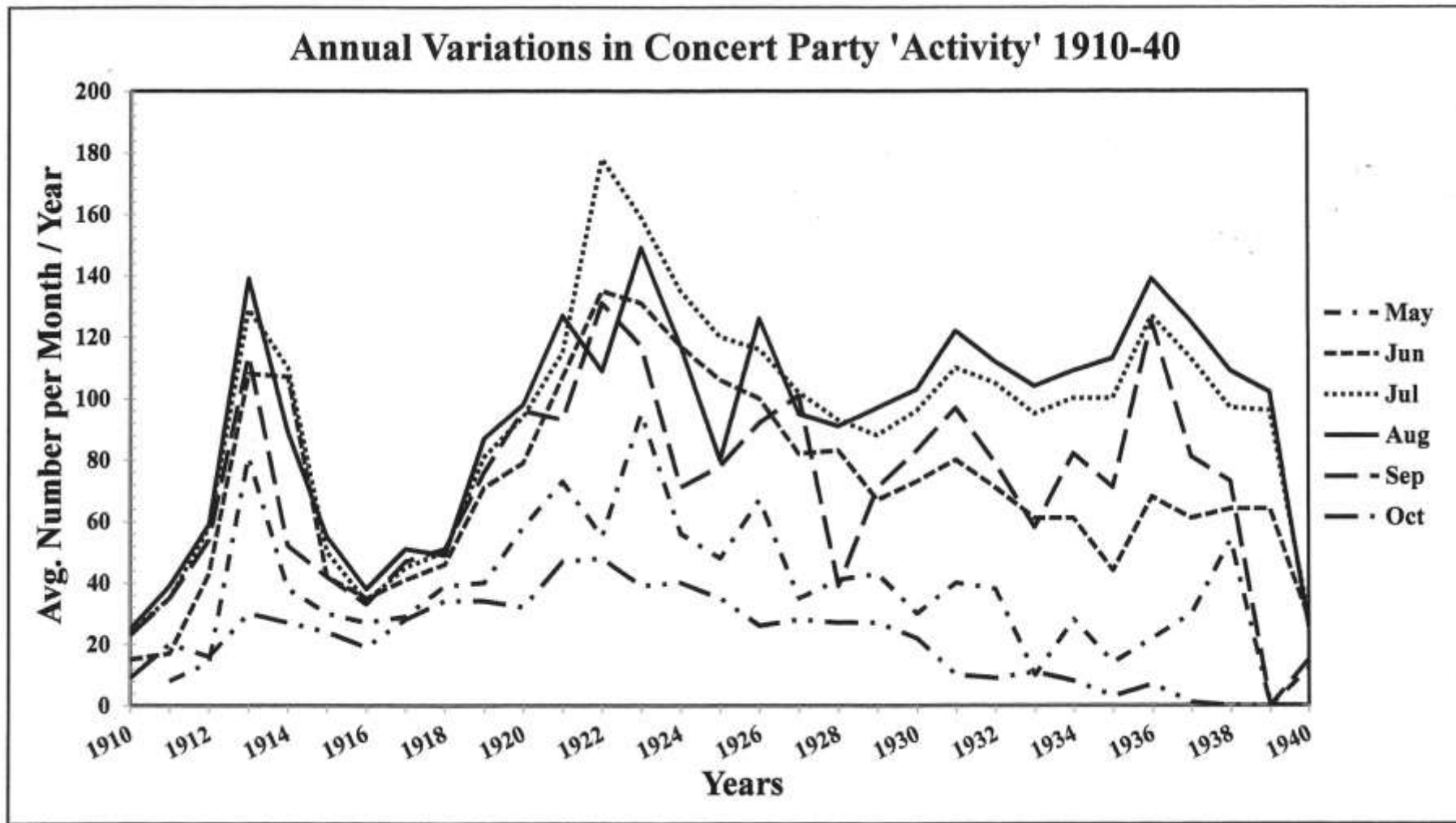
In a seminal article on summer entertainment published in 1927, Charles Heslop, comedian and proprietor of *The Brownies*, considered concert party to have reached its zenith in the period 1910-14.<sup>25</sup> Bill Pertwee on the other hand referred to the period 1919-39 as 'The Golden Years of Concert Party'.<sup>26</sup> From these ostensibly qualitative statements, it is difficult now to surmise the criteria for basing Heslop and Pertwee's different assertions, especially since the two pre-war periods are obviously not comparable. Now while indices of concert party 'growth' or 'popularity' etc. in these or other periods are not easily quantifiable, one measure of 'activity' within the industry itself can however be obtained from analysis of the weekly touring lists that were published in the *Stage* newspaper. The first touring list of 'Pierrot and Concert Parties' first appeared in the 9 June 1910 issue (p. 3). This was followed in the 27 October 1910 issue (p. 15) by an advertisement for George Robins's *Gay Gondoliers*, the very first for a concert party, and the inclusion of a 'Concert Artists and Entertainers' advertisement section on the same page. Robins's advertisement reveals, coincidentally, a significant development, more descriptive of appearance than of performative attributes. In vogue was the expression 'Costume Concert Party' or 'Costume Comedy Company' (as was Robins's party described). Heslop considered the term to have been a misnomer believing it to have started in the late 1900s,<sup>27</sup> but the term in fact first appeared in the 1890s,<sup>28</sup> a decade or more before the beginning of the period of gradual decline of the Pierrot troupes and the corresponding ascendancy of the 'costume' concert parties. The term became so entrenched in the vernacular that it was still in use up to the 1940s,<sup>29</sup> albeit at a much reduced level. From early times, the range of concert party attire varied enormously, some retaining vestiges of Pierrot influence. The clue was sometimes in the name, for example: *Pink Pierrots*, *Robin Hood Quartet*, *Royal Purple Pom-Poms*, *Scarlet Entertainers*, *Purple and Gold Entertainers*, *Crimson Ramblers*, *Red Hussars*, *Naval Cadets*

etc. Other names clearly evoked the first war years – *Blighty Entertainers, Shrapnels, Khaki Pimpernels, Military Optimists, and Tanks* etc.



George Robins's *Gay Gondoliers*, an exemplary 'Costume Concert Party' (*Stage Year Book*, 1920). Courtesy of *The Stage*

From 1,584 weekly issues of the *Stage*, a monthly average of touring and resident parties combined was calculated for each year over the period 1910-40 inclusive, and the results presented graphically. For ease of discerning the more important 'summer season' data series however, the graph only shows the months May to October. The caveat in interpreting these data is that they must be viewed in relative not absolute terms because they are not necessarily representative of the sum total of concert party 'business' which was taking place at one time. Proprietors submitted their details to the *Stage*, and the lists published free-of-charge however, so it is reasonable to assume that a majority would have taken advantage of this free service.



Graph showing the average number of concert parties 'active' for the months May to October over the years 1910-40 inclusive, compiled from the weekly touring lists published in the *Stage* newspaper.

The first observation of note is that August 1913 represented the first pinnacle of concert party 'activity' in the British Isles with an average of 139 parties (made up from between 60-64 touring and 75-78 resident) engaged during this month. Following a nadir of activity in each month at the height of the first war in 1916 is seen a rapid recovery after 1918. In July 1922 is seen the biggest peak of 'activity' over the entire period of analysis with an average of 178 parties engaged, made up from between 75 to 85 touring and 90 to 102 resident. A contributing factor in this post-first war surge was, as noted earlier, the increasing pool of concert artists from which new concert parties were encouraged to form. Although a gradual decline in 'activity' is seen after 1922, from 1929, it picks up again and is, for the most part, sustained and consistent - if not increasing - during the 'season' months of June to September up to 1937. Note also that the figures for August 1936 happen to be almost identical to those for August 1913 indicating that the industry maintained a degree of stability despite increased competition from other forms of entertainment, most notably cinema, revue, and musical comedy. With the onset of the second war came a predictably sharp decline in 'activity' from 1938, and in 1940 there were no more than about twenty concert parties engaged (inland because most resorts were closed) during the summer months. Such was the impact of the second war on the indigenous entertainment industry that from the 26 September 1940 issue of the *Stage* up to the 24 June 1948 issue, no touring lists exist and so no analyses are possible for these years. It would be incorrect however to infer the 'death' of the industry, more its suppression. Touring lists however reappeared in the 1 July 1948 issue under the new heading of 'Summer Shows', this being the beginning of the post-second war era where the emphasis was on 'Summer Entertainment' in a sense broader than simply 'Concert Party'.

## **Influences of Revue and Cabaret**

The inter-war period saw the ascendancy of the rival genres, revue and cabaret, and with them, far-reaching consequences for the concert party archetype. The extent to which they elicited diversity and entrepreneurial innovation becomes apparent only by detailed study of individual cases as exemplars of a general trend. In this respect, two broad resultant variants are identifiable, 'Super' and 'Cabaret'. In 1917 appeared the 'Super Concert Party', the first advertised example of which was for Sydney Lester's *A La Mode*,<sup>30</sup> Lester being the first to coin the phrase. In 1919, some seven years after cabaret began its slow emergence in London before finally coming of age in the mid-1920s, another variant emerged called the 'Cabaret Concert Party'.<sup>31</sup> These developments were indicative of a trend where more revue-like entertainment was offered to meet enhanced audience expectations. The 'Super' prefix alluded to a more 'advanced' type of entertainment that promised more than the usual concert party 'sit-around' fare. A survey of those referred to as 'Super' (up to 1937 when the term disappears) suggests they represented a 'proto-revue' or 'revuette' hybrid of typically seven to ten artists. Because full-scale revue incurred greater production costs and required bigger stage settings, the 'Super' model offered, in theory at least, the best of both worlds. They were invariably publicized as elaborating on costumes, staging, scenery and effects, as well as offering more sophisticated and varied show content; a blend of music, comedy, artistry, and speciality acts (such being more important than topical or thematic content), all delivered at high speed. One further characteristic of such ensembles was that they possessed one or more artists who often combined the roles of soubrette or comedian with dancing, a feature not found in the traditional concert party of the pre-first war period. The *Sun Rays* 'Super Concert Party', for example, included a soubrette-dancer, comedienne-dancer, light comedian-dancer and quaint comedian-dancer, in addition to two sopranos (operatic and mezzo), tenor and pianist.<sup>32</sup> The famous *Quaintesques*, whose proprietor was the female

impersonator Billie Manders, contained ten artists that included a male dancer, a violinist, and a singing ventriloquist,<sup>33</sup> features that again indicate a subtle shift away from the more simplistic earlier model. A further important feature of this type of concert party, which distinguishes it from full revue, was the absence of a chorus (dancing and/or vocal). The entertainment named *Stunts of 1926*, for example, regularly toured as a revue with the usual chorus but was able to revert to 'Super' format by simply excluding the chorus while retaining all the original material and (eight) artists.<sup>34</sup> While revues with chorus demanded bigger stages and elaborate props, a simple downgrading was all that was required to allow the entertainment to perform on virtually any size of stage or platform. This feature of the elemental concert party form as a building block which could be easily modified depending on local circumstances, such as the size of a pier pavilion, or the type of 'season dates' being secured (i.e. winter or summer, touring or resident), further underscores its great adaptability. The 'Cabaret Concert Party' variant on the other hand was very much a 1920s phenomenon that took its cue from the rise of cabaret. It was the playwright Ivan Patrick Gore, a regular contributor on the latter for the *Stage* newspaper (1925-31) and for the *Stage Year Book* (1921-28), who remarked in 1925 that 'Cabaret is the new omen of good luck for small concert parties'.<sup>35</sup> Cabaret in 1920s London was an intimate and exclusive (i.e. expensive) form of after-dinner or between-meals entertainment pioneered by Clifford Whitley and his *Midnight Follies* at the Hotel Metropole in which beautiful girls and a band formed the backbone. One less obvious attribute of the cabaret variant was that it was often the result of amalgamation of artists from other parties, musical ensembles or bands, to form an entertainment with even more diverse speciality skills. Moving almost into the category of revue were for example the hugely successful *Queeries* cabaret party of Roy Cowl which contained ten artists (including five dancers), the Melodia Quintet (later 'Melodia Syncopators'), and the Silver Serenaders.<sup>36</sup> The inclusion of 'Cabaret' in the description of a

concert party however did not necessarily imply some new form of entertainment but in some cases was merely a publicity ploy. Lal Edwards' *Six and a Bit* troupe for example started as a typical concert party in 1916 (other than the inclusion of one juvenile performer, a feature she specialized in). However, by 1924 it becomes a 'Comedy Cabaret Show' but with very much the same composition.<sup>37</sup> Leslie Vane's *Elevators* also started life as a typical concert party in 1922, went through a 'Super' phase in 1926 offering burlesques and sketches, and from 1927 had transformed into a 'Cabaret' show with jazz quartette.<sup>38</sup> The 1930s saw a further - perhaps predictable - variant called the 'Super Cabaret Concert Party', as exemplified by *The Silver Squibbs*,<sup>39</sup> but these were very much along earlier lines. The 'Cabaret' variant (like the 'Super' variant) began to disappear after 1937, one example of the last remaining being the *Super Tit-Bits*.<sup>40</sup>

### **A Tradition under Threat**

The perceived threat posed by revue in particular to concert party's traditional form was to provoke a lengthy discourse, prompted by a lead article published in the 28 April 1927 issue of the *Stage* newspaper (p. 16). The fault lines emerged in fourteen consecutive issues of the latter between April and July 1927 in which more than forty individual 'Letters to the Editor' appear on the subject. The ensuing rhetoric provides a unique insight into the economic, artistic, and audience-related factors that influenced the different directions the industry was taking. An analysis of the correspondence reveals two main factions. On the one hand were the progressives who opposed the (apparent) orthodoxy propounded by Heslop. In the opposing camp were the reactionaries who sided with Heslop, advocating the retention in principle of the traditional concert party model. The reactionaries' main argument was that it was no more possible to turn concert party into revue than it was to transform it into pantomime, a standpoint taken by the majority. In his article on 'Summer Entertainment'



referred to earlier, Heslop had argued that ‘elaborations’ of scenery, effects, dresses etc. and the drift towards ‘jazz-revue’ and ‘cabaret concoctions’ (which he expounded as ‘imitation revue concepts’, ‘scenic and accessory ambitions’, and ‘encroachment from other forms of entertainment’) had gone far enough. If concert party was to survive, it should ‘revert-to-type’ but ‘modernised and speeded up’. He also stressed that ‘Individualistic work is the keynote to concert party work’ and that to ‘merge it in elaborate ensembles or fritter it away in dances or drown it in jazz songs is to make an end to the concert party *raison d’être*’.

Heslop however recognized that summer pavilions were not London theatres, and further that in the context of the metropolis, because of competition from cabaret and intimate revue especially, developments were required to the old concert party format. The progressives on the other hand considered concert party old-fashioned and stereotyped - dying if not already dead - and that it must respond to changes in audience tastes with an altogether different type of show that exhibited more variety with frequent changes of costumes and scenery. They argued that the ‘advanced’ or ‘Super’ form was not only here to stay but was also predicted to be the seaside entertainment of the future.<sup>41</sup> The issue of company size, and the coyly termed ‘feminine element’, also emerged in the debate. While all agreed concert party to be an intimate form of entertainment there was disagreement on whether in making a production bigger, intimacy would necessarily be lost. It was after all an entertainment primarily for the holiday resort; a distinctly family affair in which quality, not quantity, was the prime ingredient. Ronald Frankau (proprietor of *The Cabaret Kittens*) dismissed the term ‘Super Concert Party’. Although appearing to be in the reactionary camp he nevertheless asserted that audiences wanted ‘variety of type’ and that ‘the way to kill concert party is for every proprietor to try to conform to one pattern’.<sup>42</sup> Among the most vociferous of the progressives was one who asserted that the ‘old-style show is dead’; ‘revue and cabaret must be the keynote’, the ‘girl element must predominate’. He continued, ‘in the past, concert party has

relied too much on its male side' and it is the 'female element that draws the money'.<sup>43</sup>

Another progressive agreed: 'The larger concert party has come to stay . . . The days of Adeler, Sutton and Catlin when men were the draw, have gone – the girls now attract'.<sup>44</sup>

Movement, life, colour, and dancing were therefore the order of the day, an approach very much in line with the American imported jazz ethos whose acceptance stemmed from the foundations laid in earlier decades by the rise of ragtime.<sup>45</sup> Clarkson Rose, another progressive, while agreeing with Frankau that intimacy was the keynote disagreed with him that 'that a well-dressed, well-lighted and well-staged show detracts from intimacy or personality'. Rose believed in 'Super' shows 'because the public want them and no other . . . Old-fashioned and stereotyped shows failed to draw audiences'.<sup>46</sup> History shows that the progressives won the day. The 'Super' entertainment form, grounded as it was on the simple concert party model, was to pave the way for the big shows of the post-second war era.



Murray Ashford and Wilby Lunn's *Folkestone Bouquets*, a portent of the 'Summer Show' of the post-second war era. Lunn is standing in the back row third from the left, his wife Connie Hart is seated in the front row at the far left. Courtesy of *The Stage* (13 July 1939, p. 13)

### **Concert Party in a Wireless World**

The inter-war years saw concert party also adapt to the new technology of radio broadcasting. In addition to the broadcasting of 'live' shows relayed from different locations, concert party also acquired a new 'sit-at-home' audience offering private listeners the illusion of seaside entertainment in their own homes. The success of studio-based broadcasts in particular is quite remarkable given that the traditional essence of concert party entertainment depended as much on the visual as the audible, and not least, on the intimate relationship between artist and audience. A new type of concert party was thus born, a sub-genre possessing a quite different artistic identity to its predecessor. Archie de Bear, a co-founder and manager of the original *Co-Optimists* (who themselves became a regular feature on early radio) commented

that ‘Ever since broadcasting started . . . I have been convinced that the best medium of light entertainment on the air is what is known as the concert party’.<sup>47</sup> Denis Gifford also remarked that the ‘Ancestor of all radio variety shows was the Concert Party, at first bringing pre-packed entertainment from the theatrical stage to the microphone, later developing original shows created for broadcasting’.<sup>48</sup> The thumbnail sketches Gifford offers in his ‘A-to-Z’ guide on radio broadcasting in these respects are however merely brief sightings that hide a mostly unwritten and important history that justifies separate treatment. Naturally, the story is intimately bound to the history of the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) Limited that came into existence on 18 October 1922, attaining Corporation status by Royal Charter on 1 January 1927.<sup>49</sup> It became clear to the early BBC pioneers that concert party’s appeal to radio listeners was no less so than to its more traditional ‘live’ audience, and thus was born ‘the broadcasting [by relay] of famous seaside resort concert parties by means of a microphone placed in the auditorium on the sands or in the concert halls’. Concert party was just one component in the BBC’s evolving strategy of transmitting ‘light entertainment’ (variety, vaudeville, etc.) to a largely non-specific audience dissociated from its means of production. Studio-based work however required the development of new presentational techniques that gave rise to the evolution of a so-called ‘radiogenic’ style of entertainment.<sup>50</sup>

The first ‘radio concert party’ proper, formed specifically for studio work, was *Radio Radiance*.<sup>51</sup> Developed by James Lester, it was first broadcast from the London (2LO) station on 6 July 1925.<sup>52</sup> It was in fact no more than a sequence of sketches and songs without a central theme, being the forerunner of true radio revue entertainment later developed by Ernest Longstaffe.<sup>53</sup> In addition to the six artists was the ‘Chorus of Dancing Radios’, who although not seen, were nevertheless heard.<sup>54</sup> *Radio Radiance*, which incidentally produced the first and perhaps greatest of all radio comedians in Tommy Handley, gave its farewell broadcast on Thursday 21 January 1926 from London.<sup>55</sup> Its successor was another studio-

based concert party revue entertainment (with Handley) called *Listening Time*, but not referred to by Gifford. Produced by Lester, it was first broadcast on Saturday 13 February 1926 from London, and included Handley with six other artists and the 'New Radio Revue Chorus'.<sup>56</sup> It offered sketches, solo and concerted numbers, a quartet, and a finale, very much in the mould of a traditional concert party.<sup>57</sup> A contemporaneous radio concert party was *The Radio Follies* that started broadcasting from London on 12 May 1926,<sup>58</sup> a few weeks prior to the end of *Listening Time*. They were broadcast on Forces radio during the war and lived on (in name only) until at least 1949 as one of the many *Follies* entertainments of the entrepreneur Ernest Binns.<sup>59</sup>

In 1927 appeared two more radio concert parties, *The Radioptimists* (also omitted by Gifford), and the BBC's first official concert party of its own called *Entre Nous*.<sup>60</sup> The former originated in Scotland, being first broadcast from Aberdeen (2BD) on 29 September 1927.<sup>61</sup> *Entre Nous* (referred to as a 'Radio Revuette') was first broadcast on 6 August 1927 from London. It ran to two editions,<sup>62</sup> and marked the birth in use of two pianos for such entertainments.<sup>63</sup> Martyn C. Webster, the original producer of the Scotland-based *Radioptimists* subsequently recreated the entertainment in the Birmingham (5IT) studio, relayed on Midland Regional radio on 12 September 1934.<sup>64</sup> The BBC's *Entre Nous* continued until October 1927, its revival (on the National channel) occurring after a gap of eight years on 3 January 1935 as an entertainment of songs and variety turns devised and produced by Gordon McConnel and Stanford Robinson.<sup>65</sup> The original comperes were Ivy St. Helier and Dick Francis, later joined by Davy Burnaby (co-founder of *The Co-Optimists*) from 1937.<sup>66</sup> The entertainment was adapted briefly for Forces radio as *Strictly Entre Nous*, running during May 1940.<sup>67</sup>

The 1930s saw a new wave of concert party entertainments broadcast from the studio and relayed from live venues. The decade (in particular the years 1934-36) represented the

zenith of the radio version of the genre.<sup>68</sup> Ronald Frankau's *Cabaret Kittens* were broadcast from the studio on Midland Regional radio in 1930,<sup>69</sup> and some of the *Co-Optimists* old-guard (Davy Burnaby, Stanley Holloway etc.) with the help of Harry S. Pepper (son of Will C. Pepper of *White Coons* fame), gave three special studio broadcasts in August on National and Regional radio under the title of 'Co-Optimistically Yours'.<sup>70</sup> In 1931 Frank A. Terry's concert party revue *Pleasure on Parade* broadcast on Northern Regional radio, relayed from the Floral Pavilion, New Brighton.<sup>71</sup> The basis of this entertainment was Terry's concert party *The Super-Optimists* that ran up to 1940 having broadcast 65 times in the 1930s alone.<sup>72</sup> The BBC's *Follies of the Air*, billed as a new style of concert party revue, or 'Radio Folly Show' of 'Broad comedy, gentle satire, and good tunes', were first broadcast on 14 September 1933 (running until 1950) as part of the Corporation's strategy to increase variety coverage to sixteen hours a week.<sup>73</sup> In 1934, the BBC introduced a new 'seaside' radio concert party *The Air-do-Wells* to develop further studio technique. Devised and produced by Max Kester and Bryan Michie, it was first broadcast on 26 July, running until 1937.<sup>74</sup> The *Air-do-Wells* were unusual in that they were not only studio-based but also toured, the BBC taking 5 per cent of their profits.<sup>75</sup> Their debut before a live audience took place at the Pavilion, Bath, on Easter Monday 13 April 1936, reproducing their studio show in the first part of the programme. Although there was much to recommend this novelty, they were considered to be rather too 'bound to the mike', the vocalists being far more effective when they left the 'mike' alone.<sup>76</sup> In August Bank Holiday week of 1935, Eric Maschwitz introduced a unique series of hour-long concert party excerpts, *Round the Concert Parties*, relayed by landline to Broadcasting House from different seaside resorts. Presented and arranged by Harry S. Pepper on the National channel on 5 August 1935 (until August 1939), the first broadcast included *The Bouquets* from the Spa Theatre, Scarborough, *The Arcadian Follies* from the South Pier, Blackpool, *Fools in Fantasy* from the Gaiety Theatre,

Ilfracombe, and *The Ocean Revue* from the Ocean Theatre, The Pier, Clacton-on-Sea.<sup>77</sup> The technology developed in achieving *Round the Concert Parties* is used in 1936 in *Shows from the Seaside*, introduced once again by Pepper with Davy Burnaby. The first broadcast on 1 June 1936 included *The White Coons* (who first broadcast 31 August 1932) and reminiscences from Leslie Henson.<sup>78</sup> Not only did concert parties enjoy additional publicity through broadcasting but also so did the great personalities of the genre similarly benefit. The four-part series *Concert Party Cavalcade*, first broadcast 12 August 1938, included recorded cameos of the careers of some concert party performers, managers and proprietors from the North.<sup>79</sup> The series, which ended in May 1939, also included studio interludes and live performances compered by Edwin Adeler, one of the great early pioneers of seaside entertainment.<sup>80</sup>



*The White Coons* concert party broadcasting from a studio in Pierrot attire (*BBC Annual*, 1937, p. 120). Courtesy of the BBC

Although the zenith of concert party broadcasts had more or less ended by the outbreak of the second war, and notwithstanding broadcasts to the Forces during this period, a number of post-war radio concert parties deserve mention. The first and most successful was the Midland Region's weekly concert party show *Radio Ruffles* (omitted by Gifford) presented by Ted Kavanagh, which ran from February 1949 until February 1953.<sup>81</sup> This was Kavanagh's road back to radio since the death of Tommy Handley in January 1949 and with it the end of *It's That Man Again* (ITMA), the most famous of wartime comedy shows which Kavanagh (together with Handley and producer Francis Worsley) helped create in July 1939. *Radio Ruffles* included ex-ITMA stars Lind Joyce, Dorothy Summers, Clarence Wright, and later Bob Monkhouse and Avril Angers, becoming especially popular with listeners in small Midland towns who demanded light relief from Saturday afternoon sports commentaries.<sup>82</sup> *The Light Optimists*, who broadcast on the Light Programme between July and October 1953, provided another but less successful post-war attempt to capture the seaside mood on radio. One of the writers was the late Denis Gifford himself, with a cast that included Clive Dunn and Dilys Lay.<sup>83</sup> However, as commented in one newspaper, 'Listeners were promised new artists, new writers, new ideas . . . [but] it all turned out to be no better than any seaside concert party at the smaller resorts'.<sup>84</sup>

One further fact apparent from this overview is that not only did the creation of the radio concert party (and 'live' broadcasts) sustain the popularity of the genre, and prolong careers (that of Davy Burnaby being a good example), it also helped to nurture the development of the 'Radio Personality'. In 1939 the *Daily Mirror* columnist Bernard Buckham, commenting on Pepper's broadcasting experiments with the BBC, wrote 'We must all admit that the concert party broadcasts were a distinct achievement'.<sup>85</sup> It was in fact Buckham who credited himself with the original idea (before Pepper arrived on the scene) that the BBC should extend (live) concert party broadcasts from around the coast at the



expense of Saturday evening variety shows.<sup>86</sup> The death-knell of the radio model of concert party entertainment came with the rise of television that ceased in September 1939 only to resume transmissions in 1946. It was, according to Andrew Crisell, the BBC's coverage of the Coronation of Elizabeth II on 2 June 1953 (considered the first ever 'media event') which 'symbolised the point when TV surpassed radio as the major mass medium'.<sup>87</sup> However, even though it was apparent by 1948 that listeners were getting weary from 'eternal concert party stuff',<sup>88</sup> a few such as *Radio Ruffles* and *Follies of the Air* nevertheless maintained their audience appeal and continued to be broadcast from the studio well into the 1950s.

### **The Rise of the Summer Show**

In the post-second war era, concomitant with the aforementioned rise of television and gradual decline of radio concert party entertainment, concert party developed into its most advanced form; the 'Summer Show'. Both the *Stage* newspaper and the *Stage Year Book* reflect this well, the latter published continuously between 1908 and 1928, and after a twenty-year lapse, continuing publication in 1948.<sup>89</sup> Plans to revive the 'Concert Party Register' surfaced in April 1947 and it reappeared the following month.<sup>90</sup> By the end of 1948, title registrations totalled 120 indicating that the scheme introduced more than three decades earlier continued to find favour with proprietors.<sup>91</sup> 'On Tour' lists resumed in the 1 July 1948 issue (p. 12) under the heading 'Summer Shows', and while concert party titles were also published in the *Stage Year Book* after the war, from 1949 onwards they were referred to as 'Summer Show Titles'.<sup>92</sup> An important comment in the 'Concert and Entertainment Notes' section of the 13 January 1949 issue of the *Stage* (p. 4) suggested that since the term 'Concert Party' was as 'doomed to obsolescence' as the words 'The Pierrots' it had superseded many years ago, the term should be dropped and replaced with 'Summer Entertainment'. This was a policy decision not of the *Stage* newspaper but of the industry itself, more specifically the

Concert Party Proprietors' Committee of the Touring Managers' Association (formed in 1900). Wilby Lunn had posed the question: 'Will concert-party come back after the war?' He made the point that despite the war, concert party was neither depressed nor had it gone out of business but had adapted to the situation (the artists also); it had 'realised its opportunities and taken itself to audiences elsewhere.' More specifically, Lunn was referring to the 'Entertainments National Services Association' (ENSA) and the use it had made of the resource since September 1939, and the resultant curtailment of normal seaside entertainment activity. Lunn also evoked the spirit of Pierrot so firmly rooted in concert party, insisting that 'Pierrot has merely donned a war-time guise' - their spirit lives on and will return.<sup>93</sup> Clarkson Rose, whose progressive stance against concert party orthodoxy appears earlier, in a reply to his 'old friend' Lunn, disagreed, his remarks anticipating the changes to come:

'I sincerely hope concert-party, in the sense in which I knew it, will never come back . . . [but] let's have Pierrot back by all means. Pierrot is a definite seaside institution, and reigned long before concert-parties decided that Pierrots were too old-fashioned, or not class enough, and that they needed some sort of suburban grooming . . . Pierrot shows would stand a chance after the war by their very contrast if they remained Pierrots. But I don't think the concert-parties, as Wilby and I knew them, would stand any more chance against the modern first-class seaside entertainment than the old silent pictures would against the present-day "talkies".'<sup>94</sup>

Rose and Lunn's differing stances exhibit nuances that reflect just how polarized were the views on the future development of the genre. The former, also a famous Grand Dame in pantomime, was something of a pioneer. With his wife, the comedienne Olive Fox, he took a simple six-handed Pierrot party (*Twinkle*) formed at Ryde in 1922, bypassed the multi-coloured 'costume' model of concert party through which so many passed, and instead moved directly to the summer show model of larger and more varied composition from the 1930s onwards using twenty or more artists in formal attire.<sup>95</sup> Lunn (whose wife and co-

artiste was the comedienne Connie Hart) on the other hand was more of a traditionalist who in a talk to Equity in 1949 on ‘concert party progress’, rued the passing of the old terms, reminding his listeners that “stars” do not make concert party, although concert party had made many “stars”. Summer shows called for a different type of artist . . . Different types of resorts demanded different types of shows’.<sup>96</sup> The summer show (with sometimes an entertainment on ‘Ice’ as an alternative) was still popular in 1955 because of paid holidays, and with television having no impact on business.<sup>97</sup> And yet despite the syndicated summer show with its star names, lavish décor, and limitless resources, the ‘sturdy backbone’ of British seasonal entertainments remained the old and firmly established shows like the *Fol-de-Rols*, *Twinkle*, the *Bouquets* and others whose ethos drew heavily from the simple concert party tradition, composed of artists making their way up through the rank and file.



Greatrex Newman’s *Fol-de-Rols* summer show at Scarborough originated from George Royle’s concert party of 1911 (*Stage Year Book*, 1950). Courtesy of *The Stage*

With the rise of the ‘Summer Show’ in the post-second war period emerged two opposing ‘movements’. The eulogising of Wilby Lunn, for example, was indicative of the beginning of an intense wave of nostalgia about the lost art form of the seaside Pierrot and concert party show.<sup>98</sup> Counter to this sentiment however was disparagement from other quarters, with ‘end-of-pier stuff’ the ultimate label of denigration when reviewing some West End play.<sup>99</sup> Such criticisms came mostly from highbrow dramatic critics of the likes of Bernard Levin, whose derogatory asides the likes of Clarkson Rose always rebutted.<sup>100</sup>

## **Conclusions**

Concert party, like other forms of entertainment, was predominantly a commercial venture with few artistic pretensions. Further, unlike the milieu of the Victorian theatrical landscape into which it was born, it neither reflected social class nor was class-specific segregation of audiences or of content at all evident. In these and other respects (most obviously their shared spiritual home of the seaside liminal space), the distinction between concert party in its more primitive form and that of Pierrot appears less clear-cut. Later developments and increasing sophistication however, especially of performance structure, presentation, and content, were increasingly to demarcate the former from the latter. Over a period of 100 years its form and nature was to be dramatically transformed in ways which vindicated to a large degree the predictions aired by progressive voices in the later 1920s. It may be argued that these changes challenge, if not invalidate, the long-standing assumption of a singular genre archetype. In a broader context, evidence for its significant contribution to both the variety stage, and to the popular culture of Britain at least up to 1939, is persuasive. The writing of former artists and local historians, and little more than cursory study of the careers of less well-known concert artists, is testament to this. The photo-history, albeit sympathetic and informative, though written by uncritical enthusiasts, has been the bedrock of populist accounts. However, a more

comprehensive enquiry is now necessary, the present research being only a preliminary step in this direction. Hybridisation with, and influence on, other entertainment forms, the changing nature of audiences as influenced by the rise of radio and cinema, and the representation of women, are possible avenues in this respect. The danger of ‘compartmentalizing’ an entertainment form, and thus detracting from its critical interplay with other forms, finds expression in relation to the Edwardian theatre, and more specifically with respect to musical comedy and music hall. In the opinion of various authors, this period (1901-10) ‘has endured its fair share of uncritical nostalgia’ and of ‘sentimental indulgence’,<sup>101</sup> a view that might equally apply to concert party. Images of Pierrot troupes and concert parties are so deeply ingrained in the modern psyche, reimagined to suit the nostalgia for the past, that serious enquiry has been stifled. Concert party’s archetypal distinctive identity of the early 1900s was, through adaptation and successful negotiation of many external forces, transformed into a multifarious hybrid by the 1950s. These transitions challenge the popular conception of a singular form when the reality is one of differentiation.

## Notes and References

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<sup>1</sup> The author wishes to thank Professor Michael Pickering (Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University, Leicestershire, UK) and Dave Calvert (School of Music, Humanities and Media, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, UK) for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Ince, 'Pierrots Perfected: Louis Rihll and Artistic Developments in Concert Party Entertainment on the London and Provincial Stage, 1900-1930', *Theatre Notebook*, 68.2 (2014), p. 87-119. See also Dave Calvert, 'From Pedrolino to a Pierrot: The Origin, Ancestry and Ambivalence of the British Pierrot Troupe', *Popular Entertainment Studies*, 4.1 (2013), p. 6-23, and by the same author, 'Royal Pierrots and White Coons: the British Pierrot Troupe in the Racial and National Imaginary', *New Theatre Quarterly*, 29.2 (2013), p. 107-20.

<sup>3</sup> Allardyce Nicoll, *English Drama 1900-1930: The Beginnings of the Modern Period*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973), p. 150-213.

<sup>4</sup> Ernest Short, *Fifty Years of Vaudeville*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1946), p. 147-56, and by the same author (with Arthur Compton-Rickett), *Ring Up the Curtain*, (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1938), p. 242-9.

<sup>5</sup> The most comprehensive of this type is Bill Pertwee's *Beside the Seaside*, (London: Collins and Brown, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Clarkson Rose, *Beside the Seaside*, (London: Museum Press, 1960), and by the same author, *With a Twinkle in My Eye* (London: Museum Press, 1951).

<sup>7</sup> Leslie Henson, *My Laugh Story*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), and by the same author, *Yours Faithfully: An Autobiography*, (London: John Lang, 1948).

<sup>8</sup> Rose, *Seaside*, p. 59-83; Pertwee, *Seaside*, p. 6-11.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, *Morning Post*, 22 January 1816, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Dave Russell, 'Varieties of life: the making of the Edwardian music hall', in Michael R. Booth and Joel H. Kaplan, eds., *The Edwardian Theatre: Essays in Performance and the Stage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), p. 63.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Miss Louisa Pyne's Grand Operatic Concert Party (*Era*, 18 November 1866, p. 9).

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Gartnavel Concerts (*Glasgow Herald*, 16 January 1864, p. 4).

<sup>13</sup> *Era*, 8 October 1865, p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, 11 August 1869, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Bailey, *Popular Culture and Performance in the Victorian City*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), p. 101-27.

<sup>16</sup> See Vance's tour of Great Britain and Ireland (*Era*, 2 August 1868, p. 1).

<sup>17</sup> *Era*, 26 July 1868, p. 1, 31 March 1867, p. 12, and 2 December 1867, p. 12, respectively.

<sup>18</sup> *Era*, 5 May 1867, p. 16.

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, 'Wanted as pianist' (*Era*, 17 August 1856, p. 1) and 'Lady Vocalist wanted' (*Era*, 15 November 1863, p. 16).

<sup>20</sup> Dave Russell, 'Popular entertainment, 1776-1895', in Jane Milling, Peter Thompson, and Joseph Donohue, eds., *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, (3 vols.), Vol. 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004), p. 375.

<sup>21</sup> John K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century*, (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000), p. 27, 94.

<sup>22</sup> George Robins, 'What is a Concert Artist?', in L. Carson, ed., *The Stage Year Book*, (London: 'The Stage', 1912), p. 26-8.

<sup>23</sup> 'The Concert Artist: An Important Profession' (*Stage*, 15 June 1922, p. 6).

<sup>24</sup> *Stage*, 7 April 1927, p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Charles Heslop, 'Summer Entertainment: What will it become?' in L. Carson, ed., *The Stage Year Book*, (London: 'The Stage', 1927), p. 49-51.

<sup>26</sup> Pertwee, *Seaside*, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> *Stage*, 30 June 1960, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> *Stage*, 5 December 1895, p. 18; *Era*, 2 October 1897, p. 22.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, *The Legionaires* (*Yorkshire Post*, 5 April 1943, p. 6).

<sup>30</sup> *Stage*, 11 October 1917, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> *Stage*, 29 April 1919, p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> *Stage*, 17 June 1920, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> *Stage*, 9 April 1925, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup> *Stage*, 8 April 1926, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> *Stage*, 22 Jan. 1925, p. 24.

<sup>36</sup> *Stage*, 14 June 1928, p. 8 and 6 June 1929, p. 18.

<sup>37</sup> *Stage*, 27 March 1924, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup> *Stage*, 30 June 1927, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Stage*, 8 January 1931, p. 16.

<sup>40</sup> *Stage*, 25 May 1933, p. 14.

<sup>41</sup> *Stage*, 16 June 1927, p. 17.

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- <sup>42</sup> *Stage*, 23 June 1927, p. 22.
- <sup>43</sup> *Stage*, 23 June 1927, p. 22.
- <sup>44</sup> *Stage*, 7 July 1927, p. 19.
- <sup>45</sup> Russell, *Edwardian Theatre*, p. 68-9.
- <sup>46</sup> *Stage*, 21 July 1927, p. 19.
- <sup>47</sup> *Daily Express*, 17 May 1934, p. 15.
- <sup>48</sup> Denis Gifford, *The Golden Age of Radio: An Illustrated Companion*, (London: B. T. Batsford, 1985), p. 58.
- <sup>49</sup> Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol. 1: The Birth of Broadcasting*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1961), p. 3; Gifford, *Radio*, p. 23.
- <sup>50</sup> Scannell, Paddy and David Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting, Vol.1: 1922-1939*, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 260.
- <sup>51</sup> Gifford, *Radio*, p. 231.
- <sup>52</sup> *Radio Times*, 3 July 1925 (Vol. 8, No. 93), p. 58.
- <sup>53</sup> *BBC Year Book (1932)*, p. 198.
- <sup>54</sup> *Times*, 2 July 1925, p. 9. See also Briggs, *Broadcasting*, p. 288, and for a photo of the dancing chorus, see opposite p. 281.
- <sup>55</sup> *Radio Times*, 17 January 1926 (Vol. 10, No. 121), p. 156.
- <sup>56</sup> *Radio Times*, 7 February 1926 (Vol. 10, No. 124), p. 301.
- <sup>57</sup> *Guardian*, 13 March 1926, p. 14.
- <sup>58</sup> *Radio Times*, 7 May 1926 (Vol. 11, No. 137), p. 293. See also Gifford's entry for *Radio Follies* where he appears to be referring to a later ensemble (p. 224).
- <sup>59</sup> *Stage*, 14 July 1949, p. 8. The *Stage Year Book* for 1950 (opposite p. 48) shows a photo of *The Radio Follies* performing on stage at St Anne's-on-Sea.
- <sup>60</sup> Gifford, *Radio*, p. 23.
- <sup>61</sup> *Radio Times*, 23 September 1927 (Vol. 16, No. 208), p. 527.
- <sup>62</sup> *Radio Times*, 29 July 1927 (Vol. 16, No. 200), p. 189 (includes a photo of the artists).
- <sup>63</sup> *BBC Year Book (1932)*, p. 199.
- <sup>64</sup> *Radio Times*, 7 September 1934 (Vol. 44, No. 571), p. 653 (includes a photo of the cast in Pierrot attire).



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- <sup>65</sup> *Radio Times*, 28 December 1934 (Vol. 45, No. 587), p. 1102.
- <sup>66</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 23 March 1937, p. 18.
- <sup>67</sup> *The Times*, 13 May 1940, p. 8.
- <sup>68</sup> *BBC Annual* (1937), p. 33.
- <sup>69</sup> *Daily Express*, 29 July 1930, p. 15.
- <sup>70</sup> *Stage*, 24 July 1930, p. 12.
- <sup>71</sup> *BBC Year Book* (1932), p. 262.
- <sup>72</sup> *Stage*, 25 June 1931, p. 14.
- <sup>73</sup> *Radio Times*, 8 September 1933 (Vol. 40, No. 519), p. 566.
- <sup>74</sup> Gifford, *Radio*, p. 10; *BBC Annual* (1935), p. 42; *Radio Times*, 15 January 1937 (Vol. 54, No. 694), p. 50.
- <sup>75</sup> *Daily Express*, 12 June 1936, p. 19.
- <sup>76</sup> *Stage*, 16 April 1936, p. 7.
- <sup>77</sup> *Radio Times*, 2 August 1935 (Vol. 48, No. 618), p. 22.
- <sup>78</sup> *Daily Express*, 19 May 1936, p. 23; *Guardian*, 27 May 1936, p. 12.
- <sup>79</sup> *Radio Times*, 5 August 1938 (Vol. 60, No. 775), p. 58; *Stage*, 28 July 1938, p. 12.
- <sup>80</sup> *Stage*, 27 October 1938, p. 12.
- <sup>81</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 4 April 1949, p. 2; *Stage*, 26 February 1953, p. 3.
- <sup>82</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 6 February 1950, p. 4.
- <sup>83</sup> Gifford, *Radio*, p. 154.
- <sup>84</sup> *Daily Express*, 7 August 1953, p. 3.
- <sup>85</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 1 September 1939, p. 7.
- <sup>86</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 22 March 1938, p. 19 & 15 September 1938, p. 22.
- <sup>87</sup> Andrew Crisell, *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting*, (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 79-81.
- <sup>88</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 24 June 1948, p. 2.
- <sup>89</sup> *Stage*, 10 June 1948, p. 6.

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<sup>90</sup> *Stage*, 17 April 1947, p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> *Stage*, 16 December 1948, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> *Stage*, 30 November 1949, p. 4.

<sup>93</sup> *Stage*, 24 August 1944, p. 5.

<sup>94</sup> *Stage*, 14 September 1944, p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> *Stage*, 5 April 1934, p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Stage*, 11 August 1949, p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> *Stage*, 28 July 1955, p. 6.

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, the *Stage*, 10 February 1944, p. 4 and the *Times*, 12 August 1953, p. 4.

<sup>99</sup> Heslop also noted that concert party had become 'a rather despised form of entertainment with some people' (*Stage*, 26 June 1958, p. 8).

<sup>100</sup> *Stage*, 11 December 1958, p. 11, 16 June 1960, p. 5 and 1 November 1962, p. 19.

<sup>101</sup> Michael R. Booth and Joel H. Kaplan, eds., *The Edwardian Theatre: Essays on Performance and the Stage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), p. 1, 2, 36, 69.