

# **FROM MUMMERS TO MADNESS**

**A SOCIAL HISTORY OF POPULAR MUSIC IN ENGLAND,  
c.1770s to c.1970s**

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Published by University of Huddersfield Press

University of Huddersfield Press  
The University of Huddersfield  
Queensgate  
Huddersfield HD1 3DH

Email enquiries [university.press@hud.ac.uk](mailto:university.press@hud.ac.uk)

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN (Print): 978-1-86218-192-2

ISBN (eBook): 978-1-86218-193-9

Designed by Dawn Cockcroft

Front cover Madness photograph © Virginia Turbett

## *Dedication*

To Frankie and Ruby  
and all the musicians, the instrumentalists, singers and dancers,  
in the family, past and present.



## *Preface*

THIS BOOK IS in many ways the sound-track to my life. It is the product of two important strands that have shaped me. The first, the professional, is my academic career as a social historian with an interest, not just in policing, but in leisure in general and popular music in particular, which stretches over 50 years. The second, the amateur, is my participation in various forms of music-making, of varying degrees of mediocrity on my part, and largely within a family setting, which stretches over my lifetime.

My considerable debt to other scholars working in this field is abundantly clear from a perusal of the footnotes. Any errors or misrepresentations of their views are entirely my responsibility. I am grateful to my university colleagues, especially Rupert Till and Keith Laybourn, for their constructive comments and encouragement at times when my confidence in the project wavered. I am also grateful to Dawn Cockcroft of the University Press for her assistance and forbearance. My gratitude also goes to Becky Taylor, the Yorkshire piper, who kindly transcribed the tunes in the appendix. Finally, I must thank my students over many years, but particularly those from the Huddersfield University of the Third Age in 2017/18 and 2018/19, without whose enthusiasm and perceptive comments this book would never have been started.

My greater debt to the family is less immediately obvious but no less important. My paternal great grandmother, a regular attender at the music halls of north London in the late-nineteenth century, had an encyclopaedic knowledge of songs from music hall and minstrelsy, which she handed down to her grandson, my father, whose infectious style of piano-playing ensured many evenings of enthusiastic, multi-generational singing and playing that was greatly enjoyable for the participants, if not for the neighbours. My mother brought a love of country dancing and, through her father, a range

of Irish songs, from 'Bold Robert Emmett' to 'McNamara's Band,' a particular favourite for a family from Tottenham. It has been my good fortune to have a family who have taken seriously their responsibility to broaden my musical knowledge. In particular, my wife, Thelma, as well as weeding out the clumsier expressions and more long-winded sentences through her proof-reading, has been an invaluable source of information. My heart-felt thanks to you all.