

'Dancing to the organ (in the Mile End Road)': Dance and Dancing Saloons

Passing through the bar of the public house, you ascend a flight of stairs and find yourself in a long [dancing] room, well lit by gas. It [the orchestra] consists ... of four musicians, bearded, shaggy-looking ... including a fiddle, a corner, two fifes or flutes ... The music itself is striking in the extreme, and at all event exhilarating in the highest degree. The shrill notes of the fifes, and the braying of the trumpet in very quick time, rouses the excitement of the dancers, until they whirl around in the waltz with the greatest velocity.

Bracebridge Hemyng , in H. Mayhew,
London Labour and the London Poor, part four,
'Those that will not work'

DESPITE THE POPULARITY of dancing in Victorian England, the emergence and development of dance saloons has been largely overlooked by writers fascinated with music hall and music-hall song. Despite being found across Victorian England, they are scarcely mentioned and, when they are, the coverage tends to focus either on London or on their insalubrity and immorality.¹ There is a similar neglect in the standard histories of music hall, notwithstanding the fact that dance, in various forms, was a major element in music-hall entertainment. The first section of this chapter, devoted to dance saloons, charts their geography but also relates their continued existence and evolution to the broader question of leisure and moral reform.

The second section focuses on dance in music-hall, stressing its diverse forms but also relating it to notions of national identity.

Dancing saloons

The term dancing (or dance) saloon embraced a wide variety of venues. Some were beyond reproach. Mr. Sinclair's 'commodious dancing saloon [in] Nelson Street,' Newcastle was the epitome of respectability.² Similarly, the 'excellent dancing saloon' at Ashridge, erected for use as part of the celebration of the majority of Earl Brownlow, was decorated in splendour that set it in a class of its own.³ But these were the exception rather than the rule. Most dancing saloons were at best modest. Their reputation was lower than that of the singing saloon. Particularly in the 1860s, but also again in the 1890s, they were often depicted as 'frightful sources of demoralisation,' contributing to the threat of the 'Social Evil' (i.e. prostitution). Their name was further sullied by association with the licentiousness of their Parisian counterparts and the rowdiness of similar places in the American west – or, even worse, in Australia.⁴ Especially in the ports, they were seen as a magnet for "gay" women and "fast" young men.⁵ More threateningly, they were also 'dens of iniquity,' in which innocents were led astray. As Rev. Enoch Mellor of Halifax explained, in dancing saloons 'young men and women meet, loose [*sic*] their reason and too often ... their virtue.'⁶ Press coverage also focussed on the violence, often associated with foreigners, that took place in them, as in the widely-reported murder of the Spanish sailor, Antonio Lopez, stabbed to death in France's dancing saloon, Liverpool in 1862.⁷

Not everyone thought that way. *Era* defended them, railing against 'the loose and slovenly way in which Temperance facts are too often got up and promulgated as truth,'⁸ More significantly, a number of senior policemen, notably, Sir Richard Mayne, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, took a more relaxed view, recognising the popularity of dancing and the more problematic alternatives. He told the select committee on theatrical licenses that he 'should not prevent people from meeting for music and dancing ... [but] would rather see the people dancing at such places than drinking in public houses.'⁹

Dancing saloons were to be found across the country. Every city, from Bradford and Leeds, through Birmingham and Nottingham, to Bristol and Portsmouth had several. So too did the east end of London the major ports, such as Liverpool, Hull and Middlesbrough; and garrison towns, like Aldershot, Colchester, and Plymouth. Equally they were to be found in smaller towns, like Barnard Castle, Barnstaple and Beverley, and in the 'rural villages ... [where] there is music and dancing in every little public house.'¹⁰ Further, in a continuation of an older tradition, temporary dancing saloons were associated with fairs, to which travelling musicians were attracted. Again, the geographical spread is striking, as was their popularity. As the *Bucks Herald*, commenting on the Michaelmas Mop Fair, noted 'the public houses drove a roaring trade, particularly where a dancing saloon lent its attraction.'¹¹

Many dancing saloons were in upstairs rooms in public houses or in an adjoining building; others were found above music halls.¹² Mid-century Liverpool had forty connected to public houses, in Bolton there were about ten dancing saloons attached to public houses or beerhouses, and in the east end of London, in the late 1860s, 'almost every tavern has a dancing room ... ablaze with gas.'¹³ Other dance saloons were opened in converted churches and chapels, in former warehouses, in part of a school for the blind and even in a lunatic asylum. Occasionally, they were to be found in the middle of 'respectable' streets, much to the dismay of inhabitants who did not take kindly to late night/early morning revelries.¹⁴ As with penny gaffs, to which they were commonly compared, small-scale entrepreneurs of leisure utilised any vacant property with an eye to turning a profit, however small. Many were short-lived but their continuing existence was evidence of the popular demand for dancing.

There was considerable variation in the size of venues and the number of participants. One purpose-built dance saloon in Manchester had a floor of approximately 1700 square feet and could accommodate 200 people, but this was an exception.¹⁵ The numbers attending varied from day to day and week to week. In one closely observed dancing saloon in Sunderland, the nightly numbers varied between forty and 120.¹⁶ Across the country, mainly young working-class people attended these

halls. For Mayne, 'the audiences are a very low class of people, and many of them are young.'¹⁷ In London, 'cooks, housemaids and nurses, [were] disporting themselves in the mazy valse';¹⁸ factory operatives likewise in Manchester and Preston, or Leeds and Huddersfield; soldiers in Aldershot and Colchester, sailors in Hull, Liverpool and London. The popular association with soldiers and sailors confirmed the worst suspicions about dancing saloons but, although the evidence is scattered, there was little difference between the habitués of the dancing and the smaller singing saloon. Drawn from the poorest, excluded by their poverty from all but the cheapest of music halls, they took their pleasure where they could.

Almost without exception, all charged for entrance. In some as little as 1d. but more commonly 3d in the 1860s and 1870s, rising to 6d by the end of the century. Some made an additional charge if beer was required, or if additional entertainment, such as a firework display, was on offer.¹⁹ As well as providing an opportunity to dance, many dancing saloons offered acts, not infrequently by 'nigger minstrels'.²⁰ The musicians were relatively few in number and, on occasions itinerants paid by the session. Pianos and fiddles were the most common instruments with the occasional cello, piccolo, harp and contra basso and even the odd concertina band to be heard. In 'a dancing-room in Ratcliff Highway,' the orchestra comprised 'four musicians, bearded, shaggy-looking foreigners ... including a fiddle, a corner and two fifes or flutes ... penned up in a corner of the room.'²¹ Hemyng, Mayhew's associate, praised the music, 'exhilarating in the highest degree, as dancers ... whirl round in the waltz with the greatest velocity.' The dancing room catered for sailors and their women, but he was struck by the absence of even 'the slightest tendency to indecency'²² In contrast, James Greenwood, a sympathetic and well-informed social commentator and journalist, painted a gloomier picture of the Three Frigates dancing saloon also on Ratcliffe Highway, which catered largely for sailors on leave. '[T]here is dancing to the music of a tinkling old piano ... which usually takes the form of a listless, dawdling waltz, [but] as a place of entertainment it is the dreariest of failures.'²³ Other observers commented on the prevalence of polkas and waltzes, jigs and quadrilles, but with virtually no reference to

specific tunes. The dancing itself was described (mostly by unsympathetic observers) as little more than 'bobbing up and down' as 'men and women [were] jigging around the room' with 'plenty of vigour ... but not a hint of grace [and] no accompanying sense of propriety.'²⁴ Mid-century dancing saloons were viewed with considerable suspicion and the negative reputation proved difficult to shake off. Writing in the 1890s, Charles Booth, another more sympathetic observer of working-class life, noted that 'of dancing, too, all classes are very fond, but it seems not easy to arrange so as to avoid the scandal which surrounds all dancing saloons.' And yet, 'the shilling balls ... are eminently respectable and decorous.'²⁵

The new dancing saloons, part of the growth in working-class seaside resorts, pointed to a different future, though the potential for mass social dancing was not to come to fruition until after the Great War. From Margate, Ramsgate and Southend to Bridlington and Scarborough, to Douglas (Isle of Man) and Morecombe, Southport and especially Blackpool, new facilities were developed as the combination of improving working-class real wages and cheap trains enabled young working men and women to enjoy the heady delights of a day, even a weekend, away. In Blackpool outdoor dancing platforms dated from the 1860s (Uncle Tom's Cabin) and 1870s (Raikes Hall Gardens) All-day dance music was on offer at the Central or People's Pier and the mid-1890s saw the opening of the Tower Ballroom (1894) and the Empress Ballroom (1896), both notable for their size and state-of-the-art sprung flooring. Similarly, in 'Merry' Margate, the dancing facilities offered by the old Hall by the Sea were upgraded with the construction of a purpose-built ballroom in 1898.

Critics were horrified by the way in which 'dancing saloons,' attracted a new, and less genteel, clientele. In 1893 the *Isle of Man Times* condemned the invasion of 'a howling mob of trippers of the roughest description from Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham etc.' who frequent the 'dancing saloons and "boozing dens,"' transforming the 'fair town of Douglas into a haunt of ill-fame.'²⁶ There was, as the Rev. T Rippon thundered, 'something grotesque in [leaving] home deliberately at ten o' clock with the intention of dancing for three or four hours.'²⁷ More perceptive observers pointed to the

‘magnificent and admirably constructed’ pavilions, the diversity of their audiences, including ‘the young and light-hearted’ as well as people of ‘maturer age,’ and the orderliness with which events were conducted – ‘the worst I have ever seen has been a little extra joviality ... [at] Bank Holiday.’ They also stressed the positive economic impact of the new leisure facilities.²⁸

There is one final element in the dense – but confusingly labelled – undergrowth of musical provision to be considered: the casino. There was an upmarket London scene of the mid-nineteenth century, associated with Laurenti’s Casino and the Holborn Casino, and high-profile Royal Casinos in Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield, aping the London model.²⁹ Laurenti’s, in particular, was noted for its splendour. With a high-quality orchestra, a flamboyant conductor and a large dancefloor (2400 square feet), it attracted an upper-class clientele, while the Holborn attracted the slightly less well-to-do. Other casinos had no pretensions to grandeur.³⁰ The Royal Casino, Liverpool, housed in a converted warehouse in a poor district of the city, charged 2d admission but offered comics, singers and dancers, as well as the opportunity to dance. ‘Obscene singing [with] vicious allusions [and] gestures so indecent’ were enthusiastically received by the audience, as was the dancer, whose ‘petticoats are extremely short, exposing her person in a shockingly indecent manner.’³¹ But there was also a fiddler who provided polkas and waltzes to which audience members, especially sailors, performed ‘a giddy dance’ with professional girl dancers. As another observer noted, it was ‘the dancing which forms the attraction of the casino.’³² Manchester casinos likewise offered a mixed programme of ‘comic singing, instrumental performances, pantomime and buffoonery,’ as well as dancing, and attracted audiences which included ‘large numbers of young people of both sexes [but also including] husbands and wives, not a few with their children.’³³

But not all dancing took place indoors. Open-air musical entertainment remained important, even in the late-nineteenth century. Itinerant musicians and singers played in the main thoroughfares and backstreets of towns and cities as well as at country feasts and fairs. As Booth noted:

In the streets the love of dancing bursts out whenever it has a chance: let a barrel organ strike up a valse at any

corner and at once the girls who may be walking past, and the children in the gutter, begin to foot it merrily. Men join in sometimes, two men together as likely as not, and passers-by stand to enjoy the sight.³⁴

It is easy to be swept away by the bright lights of Blackpool or even Bridlington – and these developments highlight the potential for mass dancing, catering for a predominantly young working-class clientele – but these venues were the exception before 1914. Most working-class social dancing took place in smaller, less glamorous venues of varying degrees of respectability from town halls, assembly halls, pubs and working men's clubs to '3d hops' in rooms adjacent to dram shops.

Dance and the music hall

Dance was an important and varied element in the entertainment provided by music hall, but it was essentially a performance to be enjoyed. There were jigs, reels and hornpipes; boot, pump and shoe dances; negro dancers and Dutch imitators; sand dances, skirt dances, rope dances, the polka, the can-can and ballet. Sometimes dance was a small part of a wider act, often a finale; other times, it was performed in its own right, either solo or duo and occasionally in a troupe.

The ability to dance was an important part in the career development of many music-hall artists. Jenny Hill, 'the Vital Spark,' was a notably vivacious dancer, particularly in her early stage career, Dan Leno started (with his brother) as a clog dancer, and Marie Lloyd not only started as a very young dancer (with her sister), but made skirt dancing a central part of her later act. The list could be extended with ease, but, as well as the stars, there were other middle-ranking stalwarts whose reputation depended in no small measure on their dancing skills. Playing to racial stereotypes, several Irish performers, such as Pat Corri, Paddy Feenan and Pat Feeney, added a jig or a reel to their jokes and songs. Feeney, 'a regular "broth of a boy" ... [was] a most expert dancer.'³⁵ Heralded as the 'Prince of Hibernian vocalists and dancers, [he] concluded with a long-sustained and splendidly executed step dance that gained for him tremendous plaudits.'³⁶ But it was not just the Irish, Arthur Lloyd and J W 'Over' Rowley combined song

and dance.³⁷ The latter, Yorkshire-born, regularly appeared as 'Lancashire Joe,' with a clog-dancing routine which 'glorified it at the expense of the quadrille, the polka, the Can-Can and every other imaginable dance.'³⁸

Other acts focussed more exclusively on dancing skills, though this could be combined with the comedic (clowns or men in drag), the unusual (skipping and clog-dancing or dancing on stilts) and the grotesque (one-legged dancers and even dancers with two wooden legs). Clog-dancers, mainly English or American, but occasionally Dutch and even French, were staples of many a bill in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, especially in the midlands and north of England. The Brothers Leno were but one of a number of clog-dancing duos at the time.³⁹ Clog dancing was also associated with championships, local, regional and even 'world,' with the events taking place at local music halls over several days.⁴⁰ The 1880 world championship was held at the Princess Palace, Leeds between 17 and 22 May, and was won by Dan Leno. The 1898 event, reflecting a recent revival of interest in clog-dancing, took place at the People's Empire, Bow.⁴¹ However, few champion clog-dancers became top-flight entertainers in their own right. Tom Leamore, reckoned to be as good a dancer as Dan Leno, owed his career to his ability to sing. '[P]opular though clog-dancing was ... the performer could never command a really large salary.'⁴² James Burns, the surprise winner in 1898, had a brief solo career, largely in provincial halls, but soon disappeared.

The most successful clog-dancing act around the turn of the twentieth century was the Eight Little Lancastrians, aka the Eight Lancashire Lads, which included the London-born Charlie Chaplin. Most of their appearances were in the halls of northern England, but they appeared several times in London and their success was based on a combination of 'pleasing vocalisation and clever clog dancing.'⁴³ Appearing in New Brighton in the summer of 1898 they were on the same bill as 'Tiller's Eight Diamonds.'⁴⁴ This was one of several themed troupes of formation dancers trained by John Tiller.⁴⁵ With an emphasis on straight lines and geometric figures, the troupes played variations on a basic tap and kick routine. They were best known for the 'Pony Trot' and the 'Mystic Hussars'

routine. Such was their popularity that they appeared in the Royal Command Performance of 1912. The emphasis was on spectacle with 'their beautiful dresses and smart dances.'⁴⁶ They also appeared in pantomime and ballets, such as 'In Sunny Spain, or the Troubles of a Tourist' and the 'Delft Pottery.'⁴⁷

Not unlike blackface minstrels, exotic Caledonian 'others, such as 'the MacDonald dancers, genuine experts in jigs, reels and hornpipes' or the Great Northern Troupe of Characteristics Male and Female Dancers, grander in name than number, were to be found, but with an obvious and importance difference – these troupes comprised real rather than pretend Scots or Irish.⁴⁸ Commonly described as 'wild,' picturesque,' even 'barbaric,' they played up to stereotypes that flattered the sense of English superiority. while entertaining audiences in a variety of venues across the British Isles. 'The Clan Johnstone Troupe of International dancers,' in their 'picturesque Highland costumes,' offered 'dancing in many forms [and gave] a picturesque effect ... when the quintet join in a wild reel in the lurid glare of torches held in their hands.'⁴⁹ Led by prize-winning piper, Albert Johnstone, the 'pipe major ... played on the bagpipe some of the wild barbaric stirring melodies which some people call pandemonium but is really genuine primitive music.'⁵⁰ The language is striking: what exoticism to put before an English audience! However, any sense of threat from the 'barbarian' was tempered by the fact that these troupes were aware of Scotland's place in the wider Imperial scheme, through such military spectacles as the Great Northern Troupe's 'Bonnie Scotland.' Similarly, the Clan Johnstone, stirred 'the patriotic pulse' as Pipe-Major Johnstone played "The Cock of the North," that moving melody that prompted many a gallant action at the storming of Dargai," though he followed this up with a 'lively Irish jig.'⁵¹

As *Era* noted 'there is nothing more popular with an English audience than a well-executed hornpipe or a lively jig.'⁵² Irish troupes, such as Pat Corri's Irish Minstrels, offered a similar entertainment, combining popular songs like 'The Harp that Once Through Tara's Halls' and 'The Last Rose of Summer' with a variety of dances, the show culminating in 'a wild Irish jig, in which Mr Corri jun., attired as an old Irishwoman, is joined by Paddy Fannin and the rest of the company.'⁵³ The

less-well known Matthews troupe, comprising four boys and four girls, danced hornpipes but also 'jigged, shouted and gesticulated in the usual stage Hibernian style,' thereby playing up to the stereotype, in *Era's* words, of 'the reckless and exuberant Hibernian ready to tell his history, dance endless jigs and fight the whole world with ... his shillelagh.'⁵⁴ In comparison with blackface minstrelsy, Caledonian troupes were few in number and their impact less, but they were not unimportant, contributing to the diversification of popular music in England and to the creation of 'others' in the dominant popular culture of the day.

The largest and probably best-known troupes to be found in music hall were the ballet companies. The importance of ballet to music hall, particularly the Alhambra and the Empire in Leicester Square, in the late nineteenth century has been clearly demonstrated by recent research.⁵⁵ Further, as the time devoted to them demonstrates, ballet productions were important to these music halls, but, as the work of the Tiller dancers illustrate, ballets were also an important part of provincial music hall.⁵⁶ But this was not the Romantic ballet of the early nineteenth century, of *Giselle* or *La Sylphide*, nor later of *Swan Lake*, though the Empire did stage a production of the comic ballet, *Coppelia*, at the request of its leading dancer Adeline Genée. The leading ballerinas, mostly foreign and trained in the Italian school of dancing, were noted for their virtuosity; late nineteenth century ballet was more about spectacle. Rank-and-file dancers, dismissed by George Bernard Shaw as 'rows of commonplace dancers,' performed limited steps and had more in common with the drill and straight lines of the John Tiller troupes - but without the taps and kicks.⁵⁷ Notwithstanding these limitations, the exposure of flesh and unnatural bodily postures attracted the criticism of Mrs Ormiston Chant and fellow moral reformers. For the Bishop of London 'the sight of such dancing ... is a very grievous temptation.' Indeed, in his eyes, ballet was 'wholly evil ... and does great mischief to many young men,' he opined, before adding as an afterthought, and 'possibly to many young women.'⁵⁸ This did not limit the number of ballets staged, nor their popularity. There were many ballets produced. The Alhambra and Empire between them staged some 140

new ballets (or between four and five per year) in the period 1884–1915 and they were only the better-known providers. Elsewhere in London and across the provinces the attraction of the ballet was considerable. For the male members of the audience there was the sense of accessibility, if not attainability, held out, in different ways, by leading ballerinas and members of the corps de ballet. For female members, the attraction was probably more in the hope held out on the female-dominated stage of escape and a degree of independence, albeit precarious.

The subject matter of these ballets varied considerably. *In Sunny Spain* was a piece of escapism, which also included the attraction of the sanitised horror of the bull ring. *Dover to Calais*, *Paris* and the *Gay Mabilie* offered different attractions. So too did *Ramsgate* and *By the Sea*, though the English seaside was safer and more morally wholesome. But other ballets had a more overt social/political purpose.⁵⁹ *The Revolt of the Daughters* faced head-on the question of the 'New Woman,' as did *On Brighton Pier*, with its shocking 'Lady Cyclist Galop' scene, complete with a dancer scandalously attired in knickerbockers. Other ballets, such as *Life* and *Dolly*, not unlike some contemporary melodramas, commented on the contrast between wealth and grinding poverty in the richest city in the world.⁶⁰

Some of the most interesting ballets, paralleling a genre of music hall song, were explicitly political, extolling the virtues of the Empire, the Queen and imperialist politicians, notably Disraeli. The hugely popular *Le Bivouac*, a 'Grand Military Spectacular Ballet,' of 1885 was but one of several successful pro-imperial ballets. *The Girl I Left Behind* and *Our Army and Our Navy*, brought together the Queen and the humblest of her subjects as defenders and upholders of a 'glorious' empire. The identification between ruler and (happily) ruled was equally explicit in *Victoria and Merrie England*, which opened just before the queen's diamond jubilee. And if British history was the story of a nation's ascent to greatness, then every opportunity was taken to highlight the short-comings of other European great powers, not least Russia. *The Cross and the Crescent*, which opened in 1878 was a response to the threat posed by Russia. The audience, doubtless aware of anti-Russian sentiment in the press, greeted Russians with hisses

and Turks with sympathetic cheers. In *L S D* the rulers of Europe were seen coming to London seeking British financial support. France was moderately well-received, but Russia was met with derision and instructed to mend its ways 'and not send his subjects to Siberia.'⁶¹ Unsurprisingly, the war in South Africa produced patriotic ballets, such as *Britain against the Boer* and, especially, *Soldiers of the Queen*, which re-opened in December 1899 and ran for almost a year. The success of these imperialist ballets, like that of the jingo songs discussed later, is well known but it is easy to be misled into thinking that opinion was unanimously in favour of Imperialism. Equally easy but misleading, is the assumption that public opinion was shaped by pro-imperial popular culture. The popularity of *Soldiers of the Queen*, for example, might well have reflected pre-existing imperialist sentiments. Audience members brought with them values and assumptions with which they ascribed meaning to the spectacles before them.

Some concluding observations

Much criticised in their day and largely ignored later, dancing (as well as singing) saloons do not fit easily within the Whiggish view of music hall development. And yet they were an important part of the history of popular music, not least because they catered for a different audience – the men and women for whom music hall was too expensive, or in other ways inaccessible. Their high-profile and vociferous critics were not typical. More telling were the continuing investments of leisure entrepreneurs, large and small, and the observations of various chief constables, for whom they were very much the lesser of several evils

The opportunities to enjoy dance and dancing were considerable. Music hall entertainment offered a variety of dancers. Although much of the emphasis was on enjoyment, of the nimble and intricate footwork and the extravagant costumes, there was, in certain instances, an ideological dimension, sometimes implicit, as in the performances of certain Celtic troupes, at other times explicit, as in the imperial ballets. But it was dancing as spectacle; something to be watched. In contrast, the dancing booths and saloons offered the chance to dance the night away. There was in the dancing booth, a

clear sense of continuity with the early nineteenth century. The dancing saloon, like the singing saloon and music hall, was a logical development of pre-existing leisure provision in changing socio-economic circumstances. Gradually, especially in Blackpool and on the Isle of Man in the late-nineteenth century, there emerged something that prefigured the palais de dance of the inter-war years. Here was the opportunity for working-class men and women to dance *en masse*. The shift in tone and perception was gradual but the dance hall craze that materialised after the Great War had its roots in the late nineteenth century.

Endnotes

- 1 The exception is L Jackson, *Palaces of Pleasure*, London, Yale University Press, 2019, chap. 4 'The Dancing Room.'
- 2 *Newcastle Daily Journal*, 3 April 1862
- 3 *Bucks Herald*, 18 July 1863
- 4 Rev R W Carpenter in *Hampshire Telegraph*, 26 May 1860
- 5 *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 March 1870. See also *Hull Packet*, 5 November 1880.
- 6 *Blackburn Standard*, 20 June 1860. For similar sentiments see *Sheffield Independent*, 22 Sept. 1860, *Newcastle Guardian*, 17 Aug. 1861 and *Leeds Mercury*, 6 June 1862.
- 7 *Liverpool Mercury*, 1 January 1862 & 26 March 1862. See also *Blackburn Standard* and *Derby Mercury* both 1 Jan. 1862, *Leeds Mercury*, 2 Jan 1862, *Newcastle Courant*, 3 Jan. 1862, *Examiner*, 4 Jan 1862 and *Morning Post*, 15 Jan. 1862. See also the shock report of a notice forbidding the carrying of knives in a Whitechapel dancing saloon, printed in German. *Morning Post*, 8 October 1872
- 8 *Era*, 29 December 1861
- 9 Select Committee on Theatrical Licences, 1866, 373, Q.1080. In contrast the chief constables of Liverpool and Sheffield gave evidence highly critical of dancing saloons.
- 10 S C Theatrical Licenses, 1866, 373, Report and Minutes of Evidence, Q.435. This evidence related to the county of Middlesex but there is similar evidence from as far afield as Devon and the West Riding that small pubs had dancing saloons.
- 11 *Bucks Herald*, 17 October 1863
- 12 *Leeds Times*, 5 April 1862, *York Herald*, 29 October 1864, *Bury and Norwich Post*, 17 October 1865 and *Sheffield Independent*, 3 August 1868
- 13 Select Committee on Public Houses, 1852/3, 855, Minutes of Evidence, QQ3950, 4437/8. *Manchester Times*, 12 September 1868, reproducing an article that first appeared in *Cassell's Magazine*.

- 14 The disused People's Institute was in Ancoats (*Manchester Daily News*, 7 January 1863), the lunatic asylum in Northampton (*Northampton Mercury*, 23 October 1880), the school for the blind was in Liverpool (*Liverpool Mercury*, 13 March 1862) and the shocked inhabitants of a respectable row of houses were in Leeds (*Leeds Mercury*, 1 September 1882).
- 15 *Manchester Courier*, 29 November 1862. For example, the *Bradford Observer*, 9 March 1865, referred to a dancing saloon filled with 200 to 300 young men and women while the *Birmingham Daily Post*, 8 March 1870 reported a Liverpool dancing saloon with some 200 young people present. The City of London public house in Yarmouth reportedly attracted crowds of around 200. *Bury and Norwich Post*, 17 October 1865.
- 16 *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 10 February 1881
- 17 S C Theatrical Licences, Q.969
- 18 Quoted in *Dundee Courier*, 1 April 1884
- 19 For example, Dalton Gardens in Huddersfield charged 2d admissions but 6d when there was a firework display. *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 28 May 1870
- 20 J Hollingshead, *Ragged London in 1861*, reprinted London, Dent, 1986, p.36
- 21 P Quennell, ed., *London's Underworld*, London, Spring Books, 1951, p.61
- 22 Quennell, ed., *London's Underworld*, p.62
- 23 'Our Saturday Nights' no.xvi 'Capering Ashore' in *Manchester Courier* 16 April 1887. The sailors who dominated the clientele probably had different expectations and different opinions of the place.
- 24 *Western Times*, 9 February 1861, *Liverpool Mercury*, 7 August 1866 and *Bradford Observer*, 9 February 1871
- 25 A Fried and R. Elman, eds, *Charles Booth's London*, London, Pelican, 1971, p.309
- 26 *Isle of Man Times*, 4 March 1893. For similar late century sentiments – dancing saloon proprietors as brothel keeper – see *Yorkshire Evening Post*. 7 Sept. 1892.
- 27 *Isle of Man times*, 28 November 1893. For Rippon dancing was nothing more than 'hugging set to music.' See also *Isle of Man Times* 10 February 1892, 10 & 14 January, 4 March and 28 November 1893. Such comments are illustrative of a general conservative concern with 'intemperate,' 'immodest' and 'promiscuous' dances.
- 28 Paul Pry 'The Morality of Douglas,' *Isle of Man Times* 5 December 1893. See also various letters in the same paper disowning the accusations of immorality in the town.
- 29 Jackson, *Palaces of Pleasure*, pp.103–14
- 30 For example, 'a singing room or casino' at Heckmondwike, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 15 February 1868, or 'the Colorseum [*sic*] a sort of casino or singing room in Northgate, Halifax, *Leeds Mercury* 13 March 1858 or the 'casino or music room' attached to the Old Spa Inn, Scarborough, *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 12 October 1861. The Head Constable of Sheffield, J Jackson, told the Select Committee on Theatrical Licences that 'many persons consider a casino a singing room.' Q.7268
- 31 *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 July 1856
- 32 *Liverpool Mercury*, 30 December 1869

- 33 *Leeds Mercury*, 7 February 1852. John Adams spoke of 'a new species of public entertainment, called a Casino, which consists of music and dancing' and which was very popular in London. SC on Public Houses, 1852/3 Paper submitted.
- 34 *Charles Booth's London*, p.309
- 35 *Era* 15 August 1875
- 36 *Era* 14 January 1882. Feeney started his career as a comedian, working the halls of the midlands and north of England before moving to London. *Era* 23 May 1875, 2 April 1876, 28 September 1879, 4 & 25 January & 15 August 1880, 16 April & 6 August 1881.
- 37 Rowley, born in Bradford, spent much of his time in Huddersfield. His ability to perform a standing somersault, which he did, often several times an evening, to the cry of 'Over, Rowley,' explains his nickname.
- 38 *Era* 13 August 1871
- 39 See for example the Brothers Travers (*Era* 18 December 1859), the Brothers Carr (*Era* 25 November 1860 & 17 September 1865) and Mr & Mrs Barker, 'clog dancers and delineators of Negro life.' (*Era* 16 February 1862).
- 40 George Belmont, 'Clog Dance Reminiscences,' *Era* 23 October 1897
- 41 *Era* 30 May 1880 and 19 February 1898
- 42 'A Chat with Tom Leamore,' *Era* 29 September 1894
- 43 *Music Hall and Theatre Review* 4 August 1899
- 44 *Stage* 7 July 1898
- 45 Other troupes included Tiller's Troubadours, Tiller's Mascots, the Fairy Troupe, the Forget-me-nots, and the Rainbow troupe.
- 46 *Dundee Courier* 7 January 1902
- 47 *Manchester Courier* 4 April & 19 December 1908 and *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 24 February 1912
- 48 *Era* 18 January 1896. There were only five dancers in the Great Northern Troupe. *Era* 8 June 1896. See also 21 July 1894 and 14 December 1895. The bill at the Tivoli, London was headed by George Robey and Gus Elen.
- 49 *Era* 4 June 1898, 30 July 1898 and 22 April 1899
- 50 *Northampton Mercury*, 14 February 1902. There were various solo instrumentalists on stage including Scots and Irish pipers, violinists (including a young Paganini), concertina players (especially duet concertina virtuosos), xylophonist and others.
- 51 *Era* 21 July 1894 and *Bristol Mercury* 17 January 1899. See also chapter 11.
- 52 *Era* 14 May 1871 and see 31 July 1870.
- 53 *Era* 5 February 1871. The 'wild Irish jig' is not named but could well have been 'The Irish Washerwoman,' a well-known jig in the London-Irish community and later adopted as a march tune by the London Irish Rifles during the Great War.
- 54 *Era* 5 December 1869. Fannin's career dates from the late-1850s when he appeared as 'an Irish jig dancer and brogue singer' in Leeds and lasted for two decades. He performed across the United Kingdom and established himself as 'the most agile dancer in England.' Corri started as a comedian, became a singer of English songs ('The Miller of Dee' and 'Tom Bowling' before discovering/reinventing himself as Irish. *Era* 18 April 1858 and 18 December 1859. For the fighting Irishman image see *Era* 28 August 1864.

- 55 See particularly, A Carter, *Dance and Dancers in Victorian and Edwardian Music Hall Ballet*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005
- 56 Productions were put on six days a week and several ran for months to sold-out houses at several London music halls with capacities that ran from 1500 to 4000. See J Pritchard & P Yeandle, "Executed with remarkable care and artistic feeling": popular imperialism and the music hall ballet,' in P Yeandle et. al., eds., *Politics, performance and popular culture*, Manchester University Press, 2016, pp.152-73 at p.157
- 57 A Carter, 'Over the Footlights and Under the Moon: Images of Dancers in the Ballets at the Alhambra and Empire Palaces of Varieties, 1884-1915,' *Dance research journal*, 28(1), 1996, pp.7-18.
- 58 *Era* 10 October 1885 and 27 August 1887
- 59 The following paragraph draws heavily on Pritchard & Yeandle, 'Executed with remarkable care and artistic feeling.'
- 60 Other ballets looking at London life include 'Round the Town' and 'Round the Town Again,' while 'A Dream of Wealth' was a re-working of Dicken's 'Christmas Carol.'
- 61 *Era* 4 January 1880. Cetewayo also makes an appearance, getting 'a genial laugh from the audience' as he dances grotesquely but he received nothing from Britain.